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**Items for information: follow-up to the policy decisions of
the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council**

Policy decisions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council that are relevant to the work of the Statistical Commission

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2015/216 and past practices, the Secretary-General is honoured to transmit a report in order to brief the Statistical Commission on the policy decisions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council adopted in 2015, or earlier, that are relevant to its work. The report also indicates the actions that were taken or are proposed by the Commission and the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat in an effort to respond to the requests made by the Assembly and the Council. The Commission is invited to take note of the present report.

* E/CN.3/2016/1.



Policy decisions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council that are relevant to the work of the Statistical Commission

I. Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development

A. Action requested by the General Assembly

1. In its resolution 69/313, the General Assembly endorsed the outcome document of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. In the resolution, the Assembly recognized the central role of national statistical systems in generating, disseminating and administering data. The Assembly welcomed proposals on improved statistical indicators and requested the Statistical Commission and international statistical agencies to facilitate enhanced tracking of data on all cross-border financing and other economically relevant financial flows and to regularly assess and report on the adequacy of international statistics related to implementing the sustainable development agenda. The Assembly also acknowledged that the availability of timely and reliable data for development could be improved by supporting civil registration and vital statistics systems, which generate information for national plans and investment opportunities.

B. Actions taken and proposed by the Statistical Commission and the Statistics Division

2. The work of the Commission on national accounts, trade and economic globalization statistics as well as on finance statistics is relevant for tracking data on all cross-border financing and other economically relevant financial flows. The Commission considers these topics on an annual or semi-annual basis. At its current session, the Commission will also consider data and indicators for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and demographic statistics, which include civil registration and vital statistics.

II. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

A. Action requested by the General Assembly

3. In its resolution 70/1, the General Assembly adopted the outcome document of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. In the resolution, Member States agreed to intensify efforts to strengthen statistical capacities in developing countries and expressed their commitment to developing broader measures of progress to complement gross domestic product.

4. Member States also envisioned a global indicator framework that would be developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal

Indicators and would be agreed by the Statistical Commission by March 2016. It would be adopted thereafter by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. They indicated that the framework should be simple yet robust, address all Sustainable Development Goals and targets, including for means of implementation, and preserve the political balance, integration and ambition contained therein.

B. Actions taken and proposed by the Statistical Commission and the Statistics Division

5. At its forty-sixth session, on 6 March 2015, the Statistical Commission created an Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, composed of Member States and including regional and international agencies as observers. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group was mandated to provide a proposal for a global indicator framework (and associated global and universal indicators) for consideration by the Commission at its forty-seventh session, to be held in March 2016.

6. At its first meeting, held in New York in June 2015, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group agreed to establish two discussion streams to which all members of the Group would be invited and encouraged to participate and to provide their contributions: the first stream would focus on conceptual frameworks and indicator concepts and definitions, and the second on identifying interlinkages among indicators across goals and targets.

7. In the period between 11 August and 14 September 2015, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group conducted an open consultation on the development of a global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals with all countries, regional and international agencies, civil society, academia and the private sector. Following the decision by the Co-Chairs and Co-Facilitators of the Group to extend the original deadlines, the consultation was closed on 8 September 2015 for agencies, and on 14 September 2015 for country observers.

8. The second meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group was hosted by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok. The focus of the meeting concerned the modalities for consultation on indicators, and the Group agreed that an electronic mechanism would be open during three days to observers (non-Group member States and representatives of regional commissions and regional and international agencies) and other stakeholders (civil society, academia and private sector) for their final comments on indicators that were coded as “green” prior to the meeting and were therefore not discussed.

9. In November 2015, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group held an open consultation with observers of the Group and other stakeholders on the proposed Sustainable Development Goals indicators that were coded as “green” in advance of the second Group meeting. The outcome document of the consultation contained the inputs on those indicators provided by the observers and other stakeholders during the open consultation.

III. World Statistics Day

A. Action requested by the General Assembly

10. In its resolution 69/282, the General Assembly decided to designate 20 October 2015 as the second World Statistics Day under the general theme “Better data, better lives”. The Assembly also decided to celebrate World Statistics Day every five years on 20 October, and invited all Member States, members of United Nations specialized agencies, organizations of the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations, as well as civil society, including non-governmental organizations, such as research institutions, media and all producers and users of official statistics, to observe World Statistics Day in an appropriate manner. The Assembly stressed that the cost of all activities that might arise from the implementation of the resolution should be met from voluntary contributions and requested the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures for the observance by the United Nations of World Statistics Day in 2015 and to bring the resolution to the attention of all Member States, members of United Nations specialized agencies and United Nations organizations.

B. Actions taken and proposed by the Statistical Commission and the Statistics Division

11. The Commission will have before it, for information, the report of the Secretary-General describing the activities undertaken by the statistical community to mark the second World Statistics Day, held on 20 October 2015, which was celebrated with the theme of “Better data. Better lives.” (E/CN.3/2016/18). The report will present the coordination work undertaken by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and a summary and overview of activities undertaken around the world.

IV. Global geospatial information management

A. Action requested by the Economic and Social Council

12. In its resolution 2011/24, the Council took into account, inter alia, the urgent need to take concrete action to strengthen international cooperation in the area of global geospatial information management and decided to establish the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management in accordance with the terms of reference contained in the annex to the resolution. In making its decision, the Council stipulated that the Committee of Experts be (at least initially) established and administered within existing resources and organized accordingly and requested the Committee to present to the Council, in 2016, a comprehensive review of all aspects of its work and operations, in order to allow Member States to assess its effectiveness. The Council encouraged Member States to hold regular high-level multi-stakeholder discussions on global geospatial information, including through the convening of global forums, with a view to promoting a comprehensive dialogue with all relevant actors and bodies and emphasized the importance of promoting national, regional and global efforts to foster the exchange of knowledge

and expertise in order to assist developing countries in building and strengthening national capacities in that field.

B. Actions taken and proposed by the Statistical Commission and the Statistics Division

13. At its fifth session, held in New York in August 2015, the Committee of Experts considered the report of the Secretariat (E/C.20/2015/14), which provided a draft review of the work of the Committee during the period 2011-2015 and a succinct outline of the considerable achievements and progress made by the Committee in the area of global geospatial information management since its establishment in 2011. In its decision 5/113, the Committee agreed, inter alia, that it had operated effectively and in line with the mandate given by the Council over the past five years, producing real outputs, and that it was well placed to continue to contribute even more to the work of the United Nations; and recognized that the submission of the review report to the Council in 2016 would provide a unique opportunity to strengthen the subsidiary machinery of the Council in the area of geospatial information, including the regional cartographic conferences and the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names. The Committee approved the proposed process for finalizing the review, including holding a global consultation in October 2015, and subsequently entrusting the extended Bureau of the Committee, including the Chairs of the five regional committees of the Global Information Management Initiative, with finalizing the document for submission to the Council in January 2016.

14. The Commission considered the report of the Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information (E/CN.3/2015/37) at its forty-sixth session and took note of the major outcomes of the first Global Forum on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information, held in New York on 4 and 5 August 2014, in conjunction with the fourth session of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, held in New York from 6 to 8 August 2014, and the main findings of the International Workshop on Integrating Geospatial and Statistical Information, held in Beijing from 9 to 12 June 2014. The report also provided information on a consultative meeting of the Expert Group with regard to the review of its work programme and the preparation and formulation of plans for future progress. At the forty-seventh session, the Commission will have before it a further report of the Expert Group (E/CN.3/2016/31).

V. Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions on strengthening national capacity in statistics and on the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme

A. Action requested by the Economic and Social Council

15. In its resolution 2015/10 on the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme, the Council endorsed the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme, urged Member States to conduct at least one population and housing census under the Programme and underscored the need for countries to set quality standards for the conduct and evaluation of population and housing censuses in

order to uphold the integrity, reliability, accuracy and value of the population and housing census results, taking into full account the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. The Council also emphasized the importance of the Programme for sustainable development planning, especially in the context of the post-2015 development agenda, and requested the Secretary-General to prepare international statistical standards, methods and guidelines to facilitate activities for the Programme, to ensure coordination of activities among stakeholders in assisting Member States in the implementation of the Programme, and to monitor and regularly report to the Statistical Commission on the implementation of the Programme.

B. Actions taken and proposed by the Statistical Commission and the Statistics Division

16. At its forty-seventh session, the Commission will consider the report of the Secretary-General on demographic statistics (E/CN.3/2016/19). The report provides updated information on the implementation of the 2020 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses, focusing on the development of methodological guidelines for the management of population and housing censuses. The Statistics Division will undertake, as it has in previous rounds, a series of workshops to promote the revised set of the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses.

VI. Improving the quality and availability of statistics on crime and criminal justice for policy development

A. Action requested by the Economic and Social Council

17. In its resolution 2015/24, the Council invited Member States to develop national plans for the gradual adoption of the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes and the strengthening of national statistical systems on criminal justice in order to contribute to the effectiveness of their national legislation and policies. The Council encouraged Member States to continue their efforts to improve crime statistics at the global level, invited the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Member States to continue to support the implementation of the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes and requested UNODC to continue to develop, in consultation with Member States, technical and methodological tools to assist countries in producing and disseminating accurate and comparable statistics on crime and criminal justice. In addition, the Council invited Member States and other donors to provide extrabudgetary resources for the purposes described above and requested the Executive Director of UNODC to report to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its twenty-sixth session on the implementation of the resolution.

B. Actions taken and proposed by the Statistical Commission and the Statistics Division

18. In its decision 46/103, the Statistical Commission recognized the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes as an international standard for data collection, both from administrative records and survey-generated data, and as an analytical tool to elicit unique information on crime drivers and factors; confirmed UNODC as the custodian of the International Classification and agreed with the creation of a technical advisory group to provide substantive advice to and support the maintenance of the International Classification; endorsed the outlined implementation plan for the International Classification at the national, regional and international levels; recognized that countries need time and adequate resources to implement the International Classification and encouraged countries to undertake steps for a gradual implementation of the International Classification. The Commission requested UNODC to include an assessment of national capacities in the proposed implementation plan. It also welcomed the progress made on the activities established in the road map to improve crime statistics at the national and international levels as discussed and adopted by the Commission at its forty-fourth session, in 2013, and reconfirmed the road map. The Commission encouraged Member States and international organizations to sustain their efforts and strengthen their statistical systems on crime and criminal justice, to include crime statistics in their national strategy for the development of statistics, and to provide support to the activities set out for the period from 2015 to 2020 in the report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes. In addition, it encouraged Member States to adopt the new international standards and best practices in crime statistics to support the data demands for monitoring the sustainable development goals in the areas of violence and justice. The Commission appealed to Member States and donors to provide the necessary resources to allow for the successful implementation of the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes and other activities outlined in the road map.

VII. Follow-up to General Assembly resolutions on international migration and development

A. Action requested by the General Assembly

19. In its resolution 69/229, the General Assembly emphasized the need for reliable, accurate, disaggregated, nationally relevant and internationally comparable statistical data and indicators on international migration, including, when possible, on the contributions of migrants to development in both countries of origin and countries of destination in order to facilitate the design of evidence-based policymaking and decision-making in all relevant aspects of sustainable development. The Assembly invited the entities of the United Nations system and other relevant international organizations and multilateral institutions, in accordance with their mandates and as appropriate, to assist Member States in their capacity-building efforts in this matter.

B. Actions taken and proposed by the Statistical Commission and the Statistics Division

20. The Commission will have before it the joint report of Statistics Norway, the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT), Eurostat and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on progress in the work on statistics on refugees and internally displaced persons (E/CN.6/2016/14). The report includes information on the International Conference on Refugee Statistics, held in Antalya, Turkey, from 7 to 9 October 2015. The International Conference was organized by TURKSTAT, Statistics Norway, UNHCR, Eurostat and the statistical office of the European Free Trade Association. Its broad objective was to address best ways to advance the work on principles for official statistics on refugees and on a handbook for official statistics on refugees. At the Conference, agreement was reached on the importance of improving the broader understanding of flows and stocks of refugees and asylum seekers by building more efficient information systems that would serve both administration and official statistics. Statistics on refugees and asylum seekers were prioritized, but statistics on internally displaced persons were also included, as a second step. In order to conduct the work efficiently, it was suggested that a Committee composed of experts from both national statistical institutes and international organizations be established. The Commission will also have before it, as a background document, a draft outline and the draft contents for a handbook on refugee statistics, as well as a road map.

VIII. Improving the collection, reporting and analysis of data on persons with disabilities and the rights of the child

A. Action requested by the General Assembly

21. The Council, in its resolution 2015/4, encouraged Member States, the United Nations system and all relevant stakeholders to improve disability data collection, analysis and monitoring for development policy planning, implementation and evaluation, fully taking regional contexts into account, and to share, where appropriate, relevant data and statistics with relevant agencies and bodies within the United Nations system, including the Statistical Commission, through appropriate mechanisms, and underlines the need for internationally comparable data and statistics disaggregated by sex and age, including information on disability.

22. In its resolution 70/145, on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto, the General Assembly recalled that processes for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels would be, inter alia, based on data that is high quality, accessible, timely, reliable and disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability and geographic location and other characteristics relevant within national contexts.

23. Furthermore, in its resolution 70/137, on the rights of the child, the General Assembly expressed deep concern about the lack of recent information and statistics on the status of child-headed households and the need for such information to inform appropriate policy responses by Member States and the United Nations system. The Assembly called upon States to strengthen research data collection and

analysis on the girl child, disaggregated by household structure, sex, age, disability status, economic situation, marital status and geographical location, and improve gender statistics on time use, unpaid care work and water and sanitation.

B. Actions taken and proposed by the Statistical Commission and the Statistics Division

24. The Commission will have before it, for information, the report of the Secretary-General and the Washington Group on Disability Statistics (E/CN.3/2016/32). The report provides a review of recent activities and developments on disability statistics by international stakeholders active in this area. The report provides a summary on the work of the Washington Group on Disability Statistics, in particular, about ongoing tests of various modules for the measurement of disability and the Group's collaborative efforts with the United Nations Children's Fund, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Government of Australia and the Department for International Development of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The project launched by the Statistics Division in 2015 to strengthen disability statistics, with the financial support of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Government of Australia, is also introduced in the report.

IX. Multi-year programme of work for the annual ministerial reviews of the Economic and Social Council

A. Action requested by the Economic and Social Council

25. As mandated by the Council in its resolution 2006/44, a meeting of the Council with the chairs of the functional commissions is held in the early part of each year. The theme of the annual ministerial review for 2016 is "Implementing the post-2015 development agenda: moving from commitments to results". The substantive contributions of the functional commissions of the Council and expert bodies are considered essential to the success of the reviews.

B. Actions taken and proposed by the Statistical Commission and the Statistics Division

26. At its forty-seventh session, the Commission will consider the report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators on the development of a global indicator framework for monitoring the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (E/CN.3/2016/2). In its report, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group describes the activities it has undertaken since its establishment pursuant to Statistical Commission decision 46/101 and highlights the outcomes of its first two meetings and the process for the development of the global indicators. The proposed global indicators developed by the Group are set out in the report. The proposal includes both indicators that are fully defined as well as indicators that will require some refinements following further methodological development and discussion. A workplan on the latter set of indicators will also be presented in a background document to the Commission.

27. Points for decision by the Commission include: (a) a global indicator framework for monitoring the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to be submitted for endorsement by the Council and the General Assembly in line with their respective mandates; (b) a proposed workplan to further develop the indicators still requiring refinement and/or methodological development; (c) a proposed workplan for the implementation of the global indicator framework; and (d) a work programme for the Group for the period from March 2016 to March 2017.

28. The Commission will also have before it the first report of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Post-2015 Monitoring (E/CN.3/2016/3). The report highlights the outcomes from its first two virtual meetings, held via teleconference on 7 October 2015 and on 11 November 2015, as well as details on the preparations for its first physical meeting, scheduled for the beginning of January 2016. The Commission will be invited to discuss revisions to the Group's terms of reference, to discuss the proposed concept note for the organization of a world data forum in 2016 and to comment on the work programme of the Group for the period from March 2016 to March 2017.
