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## Statistical Commission

### Fifty-fourth session

28 February–3 March 2023

Item 5 (f) of the provisional agenda\*

**Items for information: disaster-related statistics**

## Core group of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics

### Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2022/324 and past practices, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the core group of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics. In the report, the core group informs the Commission of the progress made since March 2021 in implementing decision 50/116 to advance a common statistical framework on disaster-related statistics and outlines planned work of the Expert Group during the period 2023–2024.

The Commission is invited to take note of the present report.

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\* E/CN.3/2023/1.



# Report of the Core group of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics

## I. Introduction

1. At its fiftieth session, the Statistical Commission, in its decision 50/116, requested the Statistics Division, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction to work together, in consultation with members of the existing regional expert groups and task forces, to consider options and modalities for the establishment and coordination of a formal mechanism under the purview of the Commission to advance a common statistical framework on disaster-related statistics and a network across the expert communities to sustain cooperation, coordination and fundraising for enhancing statistics related to hazardous events and disasters. They were also requested to report back to the Commission at a suitable time.

2. In response to the request for a formal mechanism and a network, the aforementioned organizations formed a core group of partners, which also included the Economic Commission for Africa and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). As a first step, the core group sought to establish an inter-agency and expert group on disaster-related statistics. To that end, the core group undertook an extensive review of similar existing mechanisms and developed a proposed set of terms of reference, with the primary objective of developing a common statistical framework on disaster-related statistics.

3. As part of the Commission's consideration of item 4 (d) at its fifty-second session, in March 2021, a report of the core group of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics was included as a note by the Secretary-General for information and submitted to the Commission ([E/CN.3/2021/21](#)). The report provided highlights of the terms of reference of the Expert Group, methods of work, governance and membership criteria.

4. The present report is aimed at informing the Commission of the progress made by the Expert Group towards the implementation of decision 50/116 to advance a common statistical framework on disaster-related statistics and a network across the expert communities, with the aim of meeting the objectives mentioned in paragraph 1 above. The report is structured around the sections outlined below, followed by an annex:

(a) Achievements during the period 2021–2022, covering the steps taken by the Group in advancing the common statistical framework and strengthening networks of expert communities;

(b) Planned work during the period 2023–2024, outlining the outputs and the activities to be conducted by the Group with the aim of submitting a draft common framework for disaster-related statistics for consideration by the Commission at its fifty-fifth session, in 2024;

(c) Action to be taken by the Statistical Commission.

## II. Achievements during the period 2021–2022

### A. Advancing a common statistical framework

5. With a view to developing a common statistical framework on disaster-related statistics, the Expert Group undertook the following actions:

(a) Developed three issue papers on priority research topics: (i) Economic losses attributed to disasters; (ii) Disaster risk reduction expenditure satellite accounting; (iii) Environmental and ecosystem-related disaster losses;

(b) Developed an annotated outline of a global framework for disaster-related statistics;

(c) Conducted a review of existing guidance, including but not limited to the following:

(i) Disaster-related Statistics Framework published by ESCAP in 2018, in a conference room paper;

(ii) *Recommendations on the Role of Official Statistics in Measuring Hazardous Events and Disasters*, published by ECE in 2019;

(iii) *Institutional and Methodological Recommendations for the Measurement of Indicators for the Disaster-related Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction*, prepared by the Working Group of the Statistical Conference of the Americas on Measuring and Recording Indicators related to Disaster Risk Reduction and published by ECLAC in 2022;

(iv) *Hazard Definition and Classification Review and Hazard Information Profiles* developed by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the International Science Council.

6. The review of existing guidance provided a basis for developing recommendations as to which elements should be included in the common framework and also identified existing gaps. The review therefore strengthened the research agenda and helped to develop issues related to guidelines and statistical standards for the topics under consideration.

### B. Strengthening networks of expert communities

7. In order to promote a network of experts in the area of disaster-related statistics, practitioners from the statistics and disaster risk reduction communities were invited to forums organized, in rotation, by the regional commissions since 2021. ECE hosted the first global expert forum for producers and users of disaster-related statistics in June 2021 and ESCWA organized the second forum in September 2022. The third expert forum will be hosted by ESCAP in Bangkok in 2023. In addition to these forums, two meetings of the Expert Group were held, in May 2021 and September 2022. Two side events were organized at the fifty-second and fifty-third sessions of the Commission, in 2021 and 2022. Details of those events are provided in the annex to the present report.

## III. Planned work during the period 2023–2024

8. The Expert Group aims to submit recommendations for a draft common framework for disaster-related statistics for consideration by the Commission at its fifty-fifth session in 2024.

9. The urgent need for such a framework is clear from the demand for national statistical systems to provide quality statistics for risk analysis and larger policymaking. The establishment of a loss and damage fund at the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; the operationalization of the Santiago network for averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change; and the launch of the Early Warnings for All initiative signify the increased urgency of the need to establish global measurements for disaster-related statistics that support the international community's efforts to avert, minimize and address loss and damage.

10. The need for comparable international reporting in the context of multilateral frameworks, such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, also underlines the need for a common framework. While the Expert Group aims to draft the common framework within the short time frame it has been given to do so, it is anticipated that further work would be required to make the framework more comprehensive after its approval by the Commission. This approach will provide the national statistical systems with guiding documentation to support them in meeting the expectations in terms of disaster-related statistics, but at the same time, give them an opportunity to improve that documentation based on their experience.

11. In order to ensure that a viable draft of the common framework is developed during the period leading up to the fifty-fifth session of the Commission, in 2024, the Expert Group will:

- (a) Develop recommendations for a common framework for disaster-related statistics and aim to draft the framework based on the annotated outline;
- (b) Organize the third expert forum for producers and users of disaster-related statistics, to be hosted by ESCAP in 2023;
- (c) Organize the third meeting of the Expert Group, in 2023;
- (d) Hold consultations that are specific to a range of topics among subject matter experts from the statistical and disaster risk reduction communities;
- (e) Engage with institutions that have expertise in post-disaster needs assessment and recovery so as to better inform the common framework;
- (f) Ensure a smooth transition in the governance of the Group through the assumption of the role of Co-Chairs by a Member State and an international organization in the core group. The current Co-Chairs will continue to play a supportive role as Vice-Chairs;
- (g) Submit a report for consideration by the Commission at its fifty-fifth session, in 2024.

#### **IV. Action to be taken by the Statistical Commission**

12. **The Commission is invited to take note of the present report.**

## Annex

### **Meetings and events organized during 2021–2022 by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics**

#### **First meeting of the Expert Group (25 and 26 May 2021)<sup>1</sup>**

The meeting was focused on the development of the common statistical framework on disaster-related statistics. The agreed primary purpose of the framework is to strengthen the evidence base for risk-informed development through guidance on the production, dissemination and use of disaster-related statistics to inform national policies and plans related to disaster risk reduction. It will also help in enhancing the statistical rigour of reported data and in the international comparability required for the global indicator system underlying the Sendai Framework. Special presentations were made on potential topics for the research agenda of the common statistical framework and included: (a) disaster risk-related expenditures and classifications; (b) accounting for economic losses from disasters; and (c) coverage of conflict in disaster-related statistics within the context of national statistical systems. The meeting concluded with agreement on the next steps towards the development of the common statistical framework in conjunction with a set of issue papers on topics that were prioritized in the meeting and the first expert forum.

#### **Second meeting of the Expert Group (13 and 14 September 2022)<sup>2</sup>**

The Expert Group deliberated on a draft of the global framework on disaster-related statistics, which is the main objective and expected outcome of the Expert Group. In addition to this framework, the Group discussed three issue papers that had been developed to address priority research issues: (a) economic losses attributed to disasters; (b) disaster risk reduction expenditure satellite accounting; and (c) environmental and ecosystem-related disaster losses. The meeting also delved into the governance of the Group in accordance with the required norms in the terms of reference of the Group.

#### **First expert forum for producers and users of disaster-related statistics (hosted by the Economic Commission for Europe, 7–10 June 2021)<sup>3</sup>**

The expert forum concluded that work needed to continue at the national and international levels to better match the demand for disaster risk management information with the available official statistics, in order to produce comparable information for all phases of disaster risk management. Disaster risk management experts are often not aware of the benefits of using official statistics and these statistics are sometimes not fit for purpose. The most important areas of work are to: (a) establish and maintain a community of practice, including statisticians, disaster risk management experts, researchers and non-governmental organizations; (b) improve the quality and timeliness of key statistics and data (demographic, social and business, etc.); (c) develop methods to fill data gaps; and (d) review existing statistical classifications. Possible research topics identified by participants of the forum revolved around six themes: data standards and classifications; clearer

<sup>1</sup> See [www.undrr.org/event/first-meeting-inter-agency-and-expert-group-disaster-related-statistics-iaeg-drs](http://www.undrr.org/event/first-meeting-inter-agency-and-expert-group-disaster-related-statistics-iaeg-drs).

<sup>2</sup> See [www.undrr.org/event/second-meeting-inter-agency-and-expert-group-iaeg-disaster-related-statistics](http://www.undrr.org/event/second-meeting-inter-agency-and-expert-group-iaeg-disaster-related-statistics).

<sup>3</sup> See <https://unece.org/statistics/events/first-expert-forum-producers-and-users-disaster-related-statistics-online>.

understanding of wider impacts; stronger leadership and governance; communication among different entities; generalizability; and partnerships.

### **Second expert forum for producers and users of disaster-related statistics (hosted by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 6-8 September 2022)<sup>4</sup>**

The second expert forum highlighted the role the United Nations plays in bringing together stakeholders at the global, regional and national levels, and participants reiterated the responsibility of the global statistical community to manage and monitor information so as to ensure timely, high quality and fit-for-purpose data. The forum highlighted that the statistical community is a key player in ensuring the rigour and quality of disaster-related statistics and data and in sharing information among regions and countries to provide concrete evidence to turn data into effective policies for disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and sustainable development. Disaster risk reduction is at the core of sustainable development and is essential in addressing the many challenges of leaving no one behind. There is a need for more multisectoral data that can be disaggregated and integrated to fill the data gaps. The forum emphasized the importance of sharing good practices, relevant examples and repositories of data and applications to facilitate the creation, use and dissemination of disaster-related statistics. These statistics need to be harnessed and made accessible to policymakers and practitioners to support environmental, social and economic decision-making and action at all levels, from national to global.

### **Side events at the fifty-second and fifty-third sessions of the Statistical Commission, in 2021 and 2022**

The side event at the fifty-second session, on the topic “Towards a global standard for disaster-related statistics”,<sup>5</sup> held on 23 February 2021, was organized to increase awareness of the Expert Group, including its mandate, membership and proposed plan of work in pursuit of advancing a common statistical framework on disaster-related statistics, and of the planned expert forum being organized for the first time in June 2021. In addition, one country from each of the five regions presented an overview of the work on disaster-related statistics in their country.

The side event at the fifty-third session, on the topic “Disaster-related statistics for risk-informed development”,<sup>6</sup> held on 14 February 2022, involved the sharing of experiences by national statistics offices and national disaster risk reduction organizations from different countries. The Health Security Agency of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland provided an update on the *Hazard Definition and Classification Review*. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) made a presentation on the importance of disaster data disaggregation, which is at the foundation of disaster-related statistics. The side event also included updates on the progress of the development of the common framework on disaster-related statistics and the status of the reporting on international agreements through Sustainable Development Goals and Sendai Framework monitoring.

<sup>4</sup> See [www.unescwa.org/events/producers-and-users-disaster-related-statistics](http://www.unescwa.org/events/producers-and-users-disaster-related-statistics).

<sup>5</sup> See <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/52nd-session/side-events/23Feb-Towards-a-Global-Standard-for-Disaster-related-Statistics.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> See [www.undrr.org/event/disaster-related-statistics-risk-informed-development](http://www.undrr.org/event/disaster-related-statistics-risk-informed-development).