Annual report of the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training (GIST)

<u>Prepared by United Nations Statistics Division</u>

Introduction

The Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training (GIST) was established in 2018 by the UN Statistical Commission with the objective of facilitating collaboration among members of the network in the delivery of trainings on statistics in a more harmonized and standardized manner as well as to improve effectiveness of these trainings through maximizing their outreach. The network is comprised of 21 founding members[1], which include 16 regional and international training institutes and 5 countries whose NSOs have statistical training centers that provide training beyond their own borders. The President of the International Statistical Institute (ISI) is the current Chair of GIST, elected during its first meeting in 2018.

The founding members are key providers of training in official statistics at the global, regional and national levels. They have expertise in various topical areas, including a good understanding of relevant issues and challenges in providing statistical training. As such, members of the network are well placed to contributed to the various work streams and activities of the GIST.

Structure of this report

As noted in its terms of reference, GIST reports on its activities to the UNSC every year. This background document provides an overview of the activities of the network in 2018 and a proposed list of activities for 2019[2].

GIST Work Streams in 2018

In order to manage its work programme more efficiently, four task teams were created comprised of 4-5 network members each. The teams held regular meetings/teleconferences to implement the activities of their respective group. The task teams focused on the following topics:

- Stock taking of existing training courses on official statistics and needs assessment
- Identifying exemplars and best practices
- Technology and innovation in statistical training
- Statistical literacy

Summary of work conducted by the task teams

This section provides a summary of the work conducted by the task teams in 2018. Some of the main outputs produced by the task teams can be downloaded from the GIST website at https://unstats.un.org/gist/resources/Outputs-from-Task-Teams/

Task team on stock taking of existing training courses on official statistics and needs assessment

The task team agreed on the dimensions on which to describe training courses, which served as the basis to gather information about training courses among GIST members. It worked closely with a consultant to produce an inventory of training course and conduct a needs assessment study. The inventory of existing training courses on official statistics and the summary of the needs assessment are available on the GIST website.

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[1] See Annex 1 for a list of the founding members.
[2] Based on the GIST Executive Board Meeting held on 12 February 2019.

Task team on identifying exemplars

The task team on identifying exemplars worked closely with the task team on stock taking of existing training courses on official statistics and needs assessment. It provided inputs on the needs assessment study and feedback on the template used for preparing the inventory. The task team will build upon the stock taking exercise and needs assessment to identify good examples of training courses.

Task team on technology and innovation

The team focused on understanding the needs and expectations of national statistical systems around e-learning/online learning platform. It drafted a report that identifies and prioritizes the following issues as key for statistical organizations to consider when developing e-learning/online platforms: how to better and more strategically leverage online learning; how to improve pedagogical approaches used in current e-learning; how to organize the process, quality assurance mechanisms and project management in online learning; and needs specific to e-learning platforms, such as cost and infrastructure. The report, which is available on the GIST website and is included as a background document to the UNSC, also highlights good practices on e-learning courses and platforms, innovation, and, key lessons learned.

Task team on statistical literacy

The task team on statistical literacy has focused its work on understanding issues around data literacy of policy makers and decision makers, and communication capabilities of national statistical offices. As part of its work, the team has conducted surveys of policy makers at various venues. A survey of SDG focal points in all UN member states was also conducted to better understand their statistical literacy needs; a report is being prepared based on answers from more than 100 respondents. A preliminary summary of key findings is also shared on the GIST website.

Way forward and areas of focus for 2019

Building upon the work completed in 2018, the GIST executive Board (consisted of the four task team leaders, the chair and the Secretariat) identified 4 areas of work as a priority for 2019 at its meeting on February 12, 2019. The following priority areas have been identified:

Online gateway for training

The work will focus on developing an online entry point for people seeking information on statistical training. The information from the current inventory that has been compiled by GIST will serve as a starting point for this exercise, either on GIST website or a new portal, and will be updated as new information becomes available.

E-learning community of practice

Based on the needs specified by the task team on technology and innovation, this work on e-learning community of practice will focus on providing practical information on various aspects of e-

learning including cost, technology platform, pedagogy etc. The scope of the community will be further defined by the task team on technology and innovation.

Statistical literacy

Building on the needs identified in the various surveys of policy makers, the task team on statistical literacy will focus on preparing a guide/handbook on statistical literacy. The aim of the guidance would be to provide advice and best practices on how national statistical offices can produce outputs that are useful for policy makers.

Continuing the work on assessing demand and supply

The work on assessing demand for statistical training will be continued. The current assessment includes inputs from only a small number of national statistical offices. There is a need for inputs from as many national statistical offices as possible. As such, national statistical offices are encouraged to participate in the various surveys that GIST will be conducting in 2019.

Annex 1: List of GIST founding members

1. African Development Bank (AfDB)
2. International Monetary Fund (IMF)
3. World Bank (WB)
4. International Labour Organization (ILO)
5. United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (UNSIAP)
6. Eurostat (Eurostat)
7. Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)
8. Eastern Africa Statistical Training Centre (EASTC)
9. Ecole Nationale Superieure de Statistique et d' Economie (ENSEA)
10. Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics (AITRS)
11. Statistical, Economic and Social research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC)
12. United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)
13. Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21)
14. UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)
15. International Statistical Institution (ISI)
16. United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)

17. Brazil (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics)
18. China (China International Statistical Training Center)
19. India (National Statistical Systems Training Academy)
20. United States (US Census Bureau)
21. Republic of Korea (Statistical Training Institute)

Note: The President of the International Statistical Institute (ISI) is the current Chair of GIST, elected during the first meeting of GIST.