


**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**
**Seventy-first session**

Bangkok, 25-29 May 2015

Item 3 (h) of the provisional agenda\*

**Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of  
 the Commission, including the work of the regional  
 institutions: statistics**
**Report of the Committee on Statistics on its fourth session\*\***
*Summary*

The Committee on Statistics held its fourth session in Bangkok from 25 to 27 March 2015. The Committee deliberated on the challenges and opportunities arising from the development agenda beyond 2015, highlighting that it would increase the demand for statistics and of national statistical systems, and noting the continuing relevance of the strategic goals for statistics development in Asia and the Pacific. The Committee reviewed and decided on a number of regional initiatives and, in reference to the outcomes of the first Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, recommended that the Commission adopt the draft revised terms of reference of the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/CST(4)/5/Rev.1); decide on the composition of the Regional Steering Group (see annex II to the present report); and entrust the Regional Steering Group with overseeing a process to fill three vacant membership positions.

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\* E/ESCAP/71/L.1/Rev.1.

\*\* The present report was submitted late owing to the need to incorporate the views and comments of Bureau members and of session participants of the Committee on Statistics in finalizing the report.

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## **I. Matters calling for action by the Commission or brought to its attention**

### **A. Matters calling for action**

#### **Draft recommendation Recommendation 4/1**

1. The Committee recommends that the Commission adopt the draft terms of reference of the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, as contained in document E/ESCAP/CST(4)/5/Rev.1, and that the Commission decide on the composition of the Regional Steering Group by accepting the nominations contained in annex II to the present report. The Committee also recommends that the Commission entrust the Regional Steering Group, once established, with overseeing a process to fill the three vacant membership positions as soon as possible.

### **B. Matters brought to the attention of the Commission**

#### **Strategic direction of the Committee on Statistics Decision 4/1**

2. The Committee endorses the general direction and focus of the strategic approach outlined in the 19 proposals of the Bureau (E/ESCAP/CST(4)/CRP.2) for strengthening data and statistics for the development agenda beyond 2015 in Asia and the Pacific, and decides to entrust the Bureau with their further elaboration and prioritization.

**Economic statistics****Decision 4/2**

3. The Committee reaffirms its strong commitment to the implementation of the Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics in Asia and the Pacific and its core set of economic statistics.

**Population and social statistics****Decision 4/3**

4. The Committee endorses the regional strategy to improve population and social statistics in Asia and the Pacific as contained in the note by the Technical Advisory Group for Population and Social Statistics (E/ESCAP/CST(4)/CRP.1). In this regard the Committee requests the Bureau to establish a steering group on population and social statistics to oversee implementation of the regional strategy.

**Civil registration and vital statistics****Decision 4/4**

5. The Committee commits to contribute to implementing the outcomes of the Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, namely the Ministerial Declaration to “Get Every One in the Picture” in Asia and the Pacific, the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, and the decision to proclaim the years from 2015 to 2024 as the Asian and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade.

**Environment statistics****Decision 4/5**

6. The Committee endorses the modular and integration-focused approach to improving environment statistics in Asia and the Pacific as contained in document E/ESCAP/CST(4)/6.

**Modernization of statistical production and services****Decision 4/6**

7. The Committee reaffirms the importance of regional collaboration on modernization of statistical production and services, and fully supports the strategy, programme of work and priorities for the period 2014-2016 of the Strategic Advisory Body for the Modernization of Statistical Production and Services in Asia and the Pacific, as presented in document E/ESCAP/CST(4)/8.

8. The Committee endorses the proposed revision of the terms of reference of the Strategic Advisory Body as presented in annex I to the aforementioned document.

**Gender statistics****Decision 4/7**

9. The Committee approves the core set of gender indicators for Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/CST(4)/10) as a framework to focus regional efforts, coordinate training and mobilize donor support for capacity-building.

**Statistical training**  
**Decision 4/8**

10. The Committee endorses the proposed programme of work for the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific as contained in document E/ESCAP/CST(4)/12.

## **II. Proceedings**

### **A. Agenda item 2** **Strategic direction of the Committee on Statistics**

#### **Proposals of the Bureau**

1. The Committee had before it several documents issued under the agenda item (see annex I for the list of documents).

2. Representatives of the following countries made statements: Australia; Bangladesh; China; France; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Myanmar; New Zealand; Pakistan; and Russian Federation.

3. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the work of the Bureau in developing 19 proposals on the future direction of work of the Committee (E/ESCAP/CST(4)/CRP.2) and expressed support for its general focus and direction. The Committee further noted the continuing relevance of the two overarching strategic goals of the Committee.

4. In particular, the Committee expressed its support for: the breadth of the Bureau's proposals in terms of cross-cutting and institutional issues; better assessing constraints and priorities in statistical systems; improving integration across statistical domains and regional programmes; and improving coordination and collaboration.

5. The Committee stated that a decision on some of the proposals, such as those suggesting a mechanism for coordination, should be postponed until the newly elected Bureau had done a full review of the proposals. The Committee also noted that implementing all 19 proposals would require substantive resources and entrusted the Bureau with the coherent prioritization and implementation of the proposals.

6. The Committee stressed that to make informed decisions on how to prioritize and implement the proposals put forward by the Bureau, a full review of the functioning and positioning of the existing regional initiatives and groups (Bureau proposal 1), and of existing cross-cutting training tools (Bureau proposal 3) would be required. The Committee placed its confidence in the newly elected Bureau to guide the prioritization and implementation of those proposals going forward.

7. In that regard, the Committee provided the following guidance to the Bureau on the proposals:

(a) As regards proposals 1 to 3 on the strategic goals of the Committee and the coordination of regional capacity-building programmes developed under its guidance, the need for a review under proposals 1 and 3 was re-emphasized. The Committee also requested that the Bureau identify an effective mechanism for enhancing coordination and provide guidance to relevant counterparts in taking those proposals forward. The Committee

noted that there were multiple modalities to support coordination that could be considered;

(b) As regards proposals 4 to 11 on leveraging the data revolution to support national statistical systems, the Committee emphasized the importance of leveraging the data revolution in order to meet the increasing demands on statistical systems, including in the context of sustainable development goals. The Committee emphasized the need to ensure that all capacity developments for monitoring of sustainable development goals, big data and the data revolution should be firmly anchored in national priorities;

(c) As regards proposals 12 to 15 on monitoring statistical development in Asia and the Pacific, the Committee noted the importance of an overall monitoring framework for the Committee's goals, including both performance-related indicators and institutional and capacity measures. The Committee emphasized that monitoring should, to the extent possible, use existing tools and reporting mechanisms and be aligned with monitoring of indicators on sustainable development goals. There was support expressed for the Bureau to form a task force to design the monitoring framework, with support from the secretariat (proposal 13). The Committee noted a suggestion that a statistical capacity monitoring indicator that ranks national statistical systems could be used to increase national commitment for improvement;

(d) As regards proposals 16 to 19 on strengthening the Committee on Statistics, the Committee noted the importance of coordination and communication between and within international, regional and subregional organizations and statistics-related expert groups. The Committee encouraged its members, the Bureau and the secretariat to seek to raise the Asian-Pacific perspective in international dialogues and to foster coordination among the United Nations and other organizations involved in supporting the development of the post-2015 indicators. The Committee took note of the importance of regular meetings to monitor progress towards the goals and targets of the development agenda beyond 2015 and towards achieving the two overarching strategic goals of the Committee. However, there was no support for proposal 19 on annual sessions of the Committee. Rather the Committee noted a suggestion to maintain the current arrangement to meet every other year, with the possibility of adding ad hoc meetings when necessary.

8. The Committee noted that in advancing the proposals of the Bureau, it was important to keep in mind that national capacity development was at the heart of all the work of the Committee.

9. The Committee reflected on the importance of national statistical development planning and the preparation of national strategies for the development of statistics. In that regard, the Committee requested that the Bureau coordinate with the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21).

10. The Committee also noted the importance of training including: e-learning; advocacy tools that could foster capacity-building and other tools; and coordination across national statistical systems. The Committee took note of the experiences shared by some delegations in terms of their developments in national strategic planning and addressing cross-cutting issues. The Committee noted the value of a regional platform for sharing experiences and best practices in building institutions and capacity to address cross-cutting issues, including issues related to coordination.

11. The Committee highlighted that the development agenda beyond 2015 would increase the demand for statistics and of national statistical systems. The Committee emphasized that the indicator framework for sustainable development goals should take into account different national priorities and situations and allow for phased implementation. In that regard, the Committee emphasized the importance of the involvement of countries with different statistical capacity and national circumstances in the global process to ensure that the indicator framework was relevant for all countries in the region. The Committee encouraged ESCAP members and associate members to fully participate in the global processes and associated surveys aimed at developing and monitoring indicators on sustainable development goals.

12. The Committee adopted decision 4/1.

**B. Agenda item 3  
Regional initiatives**

**(a) Economic statistics**

13. The Committee had before it a note by the Steering Group for the Regional Programme on Economic Statistics issued under the agenda item (see annex I for the list of documents).

14. Representatives of the following countries made statements: Australia; Cambodia; India; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Malaysia; New Zealand; Russian Federation; Samoa; Sri Lanka; and Timor-Leste.

15. Representatives of the following organizations also made statements: United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Department for International Development.

16. The Committee expressed strong appreciation for the progress made in the implementation of the Regional Programme on Economic Statistics and the work of the Steering Group. The Committee reconfirmed its commitment to the continued implementation of the Regional Programme, including its emphasis on integrated economic statistics and improved coordination, as expressed in the outcome of the high-level meeting held in Vladivostok, Russian Federation, in 2014. In that regard, the Committee noted the important role that national focal points played in facilitating national coordination and development partner support toward the implementation of the Regional Programme.

17. The Committee recognized with appreciation the continued support of the Russian Federation in efforts to implement the System of National Accounts 2008. The Committee welcomed with gratitude the support that the Department for International Development had pledged for the implementation of the Regional Programme.

18. The Committee stressed that for the Regional Programme to lead to enduring improvement it must be owned by the whole national statistical system and underpinned by a strong national planning framework for statistics. In that regard, the Committee recommended the incorporation of the Regional Programme outputs and the core set in national statistical development plans.

19. The Committee highlighted that an assessment of statistical infrastructure, legislation and human capacity needed for economic statistics development could also be used to identify opportunities across all aspects of

statistics. The Committee acknowledged the outcomes of the successful, recent global assessment in Mongolia and recommended that that modality be adopted for the implementation of the Regional Programme.

20. The Committee noted that the development agenda beyond 2015 gave relatively greater emphasis to economic development and therefore heightened the requirement to build capacity in production of core economic statistics. That might need to be reflected in future priorities for capacity-building in the region.

21. The Committee highlighted the importance of the advocacy component of the Regional Programme. It was important to develop national capacity for advocacy and for supporting national statistical systems in advocating for increased resources for economic statistics as well as improved communication with users.

22. The Committee recognized that economic and other sectoral statistics should be clearly delineated in national statistical plans, keeping in mind the links between those statistics and the emerging sustainable development goals.

23. The Committee appreciated that capacity-building under the Regional Programme was closely aligned with the implementation of internationally agreed standards such as the System of National Accounts 2008. The Committee recommended that capacity-building within the Regional Programme focus on specific elements of the core set and strengthening standardization and harmonization.

24. The Committee emphasized that business registers formed part of the backbone of economic statistics and were essential for modernizing statistical systems. Noting the great potential for sharing best practices, the Committee recommended that the secretariat identify ways to foster information sharing and training development related to the improvement of business registers. One delegation suggested that there should be an informal group on business registers. In addition to business statistics, another delegation indicated that trade statistics was an important area where capacity development efforts could be strengthened.

25. The Committee noted the importance of skills development for economic statistics and the current lack of training opportunities. In particular, e-learning, including on business registers, was noted as an important way to reach a wider audience and drive improvements in economic statistics. In that regard, the Committee recognized the important role of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific as the regional coordinator of statistical training.

26. The Committee recognized the special concerns and financial needs of small island developing States and other small national statistical offices in producing high-quality economic statistics. Specifically, in some countries, the small numbers of staff working on economic statistics made specialization in particular aspects of the core set difficult.

27. The Committee adopted decision 4/2.

**(b) Population and social statistics**

28. The Committee had before it two documents issued under the agenda item (see annex I for the list of documents).

29. Representatives of the following countries made statements: Afghanistan; Australia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; China; Fiji; Indonesia; Mongolia; New Zealand; and Philippines.
30. A representative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization made a statement.
31. The Committee congratulated the Technical Advisory Group on Population and Social Statistics for its commendable work in developing both a core set of population and social statistics for the Asia and Pacific region and a regional strategy.
32. The Committee acknowledged the national experiences related to population and social statistics shared by countries, including using social indicator systems to meet information needs for policymaking and data collection in such key domains as crime, justice and governance.
33. The Committee noted that the use of statistical themes rather than indicators in the core set provided flexibility for countries in determining their priorities for statistical development and mobilizing support from development partners.
34. The Committee emphasized that implementation of the regional strategy should address issues such as inequality and inclusiveness that cut across the 11 domains and, in that regard, emphasized the importance of disaggregated data.
35. The Committee noted that many elements of the regional strategy were relevant to other regional initiatives and emphasized the need for effective coordination and collaboration when addressing those issues. In that regard, the Committee encouraged all regional initiatives to explore the re-use of existing tools and information.
36. The Committee emphasized the benefits of regional collaboration in providing technical assistance and implementing global standards.
37. The Committee noted that implementation of the regional strategy would require strong partnerships across the government departments and agencies using and producing the core set. Furthermore, the Committee noted that the strategy would need to be embedded within national statistical capacity-building plans and have strong political support. The Committee took note of a suggestion that a ministerial conference, or similar event, be convened to build support for social and population statistics.
38. The Committee emphasized the need to strengthen the skills of staff within the national statistical system providing population and social statistics in a broad range of areas, including leadership, management, communication skills and the use of big data, in order to maximize the opportunities arising from the data revolution and to monitor the development agenda beyond 2015. In that regard, the Committee highlighted the importance of targeted training, including the use of e-learning, across the 11 domains of the regional strategy.
39. The Committee took note of a proposal to set up a forum for stakeholders to explore options for addressing discrepancies in disaggregated population data from different sources and improve cross-national comparability of indicators on internationally agreed development goals.

40. The Committee adopted decision 4/3.

**(c) Civil registration and vital statistics**

41. The Committee had before it several documents issued under the agenda item (see annex I for the list of documents).

42. Representatives of the following countries made statements: Afghanistan; Australia; Cambodia; China; Fiji; India; Malaysia; Myanmar; New Zealand; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Sri Lanka; and Thailand.

43. A representative of the following fund made a statement: United Nations Children's Fund.

44. The Committee strongly endorsed the outcomes of the Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific. The Committee congratulated the previous Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Registration in Asia and the Pacific for its leadership role in achieving those outcomes, and expressed appreciation for the work of the secretariat and the co-organizers in convening the intergovernmental Ministerial Conference.

45. The Committee endorsed the draft revised terms of reference of the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, as contained in document E/ESCAP/CST(4)/5/Rev.1, with the caveat that the membership limit be expanded from 25 to 30 members. The Committee also endorsed all three proposals on the composition of the Regional Steering Group, as contained in document E/ESCAP/CST(4)/CRP.3. The Committee specifically supported the proposal that the Regional Steering Group should report on its work to the Commission, since that would facilitate the multisectoral engagement that was necessary for the Regional Steering Group to effectively fulfil its mandate.

46. The Committee recognized with satisfaction that the outcomes of the Conference had already generated high-level political support by raising the profile of civil registration and vital statistics at the national and international levels.

47. The Committee welcomed national and international efforts to improve civil registration and vital statistics, including the support provided to Pacific island countries and territories of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Several delegations shared their national experiences of initiating the implementation steps of the Regional Action Framework and raising awareness about civil registration and vital statistics, such as by staging a national launch of the Asian and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade.

48. The Committee recognized that universal civil registration was the preferred source of data for producing vital statistics. The Committee noted, however, that even with well-functioning civil registration and vital statistics systems, there was still a need to use data from other sources, such as other administrative data sources, population and housing censuses, and surveys to produce a broad range of statistics and fill gaps in vital statistics. The Committee added that all measures must be undertaken to ensure the protection of personal information.

49. The Committee stressed that national statistical offices had a key role to play in national and international initiatives to improve civil registration and vital statistics and thus agreed to continue prioritizing the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics.

50. The Committee recommended that national statistical offices should act as technical advisers to the civil registration and national identity authorities, the health sector and any other government departments that were responsible for civil registration or the production of vital statistics. The Committee emphasized that national statistical offices also had a significant stake in improving civil registration coverage and quality since they used civil registration data to produce a wide range of statistics, such as population, demographic and health statistics.

51. The Committee acknowledged that it would have a role to play in promoting civil registration as a crucial source of data and means of implementation to support the development agenda beyond 2015, and as a source of data for producing statistics that could be disaggregated to highlight the situation facing particular population groups.

52. For countries to realize the goal of the Regional Action Framework on registration records becoming the primary source of data for vital statistics, the Committee recognized that capacity needed to be built in national statistical systems to use civil registration data for producing vital statistics. The Committee highlighted the need for technical assistance on linking civil registration data with household survey and other data such as migration records. The Committee noted that the Regional Steering Group could help to develop guidelines and technical tools to support countries.

53. The Committee adopted recommendation 4/1 and decision 4/4.

**(d) Environment statistics**

54. The Committee had before it a note by the secretariat issued under the agenda item (see annex I for the list of documents).

55. Representatives of the following countries made statements: Bangladesh; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); and Malaysia.

56. A representative of the following organization made a statement: UNIDO.

57. The Committee recognized the importance of the environment for sustainable development. In that regard, it noted the broad spectrum of statistics needed to support environmental policy, such as statistics related to climate change, natural disasters, energy, waste, waste management, environmental management and governance, and environmental degradation.

58. The Committee underscored the need for the national statistics offices to take a leadership role in strengthening environment statistics as they pertained to socioeconomic development and as a key part of sustainable development measurement. The Committee recognized the varied collection and measurement challenges related to environment statistics and the resulting need for flexible approaches to address them at the national level.

59. The Committee supported the proposal outlined in the paper, including the adoption of a multidimensional, modular approach to strengthening environment statistics.

60. The Committee encouraged implementation of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting and other guidelines on environment statistics. In that regard, the Committee noted the complementary nature of that System and the Framework for the Development of Environmental Statistics.

61. The Committee appreciated the experiences shared by countries on their efforts to strengthen environment statistics. The Committee also noted the benefits of regional knowledge-sharing on environment statistics. One delegation suggested the formation of a methodological advisory group as a mechanism for facilitating regional progress in the production of environment statistics.

62. The Committee adopted decision 4/5.

**(e) Disaster risk reduction statistics**

63. The Committee had before it a note by the secretariat issued under the agenda item (see annex I for the list of documents).

64. Representatives of the following countries made statements: Afghanistan; Japan; Mongolia; Philippines; and Samoa.

65. The Committee noted with appreciation the work of the Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics and emphasized the value of a regional mechanism for bringing together disaster experts and statisticians.

66. The Committee reconfirmed the importance of improving disaster-related statistics, including through developing common methods, standards and frameworks. The Committee recognized the need to build capacity in measuring the geographical aspects of disasters, using geographic information systems, as well as in the measurement of disasters more generally.

67. The Committee noted the need to measure the immediate as well as longer-term social, economic and environmental impacts of disasters.

68. The Committee recognized the value of administrative data for producing disaster-related statistics. The Committee also noted the potential of harnessing the data collected by national disaster management authorities during the occurrence of a disaster.

69. The Committee was informed of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which was adopted at the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, and acknowledged with appreciation that the outcome affirmed Commission resolution 70/2 on disaster-related statistics and thus the work of the Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics.

70. The Committee welcomed the recent establishment of the Global Centre for Disaster Statistics, hosted by Tohoku University, Japan.

**(f) Modernization of statistical production and services**

71. The Committee had before it a note by the Strategic Advisory Body for the Modernization of Statistical Production and Services in Asia and the Pacific issued under the agenda item (see annex I for the list of documents).

72. Representatives of the following countries made statements: Australia; Azerbaijan; China; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Malaysia; New Zealand; Pakistan; Papua New Guinea; Republic of Korea; Samoa; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Timor-Leste; and Viet Nam.

73. A representative of the following division made a statement: the United Nations Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat.

74. The Committee expressed strong appreciation for the work of the Strategic Advisory Body and the network of experts, including the Modernization Working Group.

75. The Committee encouraged members to actively engage in the work of the Strategic Advisory Body and to nominate technical experts to participate in the work of the Modernization Working Group. Additionally, the Committee encouraged members to consider engaging in other regional and global initiatives on modernization.

76. The Committee emphasized that the Strategic Advisory Body could play a key role in advocacy for: (a) transformation of statistical systems; (b) the urgent requirement to undertake modernization to cope with the increasing demand for statistics, including for the development agenda beyond 2015; (c) the need for a paradigm and cultural shift for transformation of statistical systems; and (d) the need for development partners to support modernization and improve coordination in existing and new initiatives.

77. The Committee also noted the need for dedicated financial and human resources for the regional work on modernization, including by supporting the Strategic Advisory Body and the Modernization Working Group. In that regard, the Committee noted the need for the Strategic Advisory Body to act as a strong regional voice in the context of mobilizing resources for modernization.

78. The Committee stressed that modernization of statistical production and services was relevant to all national statistical systems. The Committee highlighted potential benefits, including improved coverage, timeliness and quality of statistical products and resource-efficiency of statistical systems. This would also increase the readiness of national statistical systems to respond to the monitoring challenges presented by the development agenda beyond 2015.

79. The Committee stressed the need to focus on advocacy for modernization, which must be anchored at the national level and, as such, should generate national ownership for the modernization of the national statistical system. In that regard, the Committee stressed that heads of national statistical offices had a role to play in advocating for the modernization of statistical production and services at the national and regional levels and in integrating modernization into their national statistics development plans.

80. The Committee noted the importance of regional cooperation in developing capacity and sharing experiences on modernization. In particular, it noted the importance of sharing national experiences in that rapidly evolving area. The Committee further noted with enthusiasm the great potential for developing common regional solutions that were compliant with global standards and could be used across the region.

81. The Committee stated that modernization was a gradual process and that it would be a very difficult undertaking for some members, notably Pacific small island States. With that in mind, the Committee stressed that efforts to develop national statistical systems should aim to be consistent with existing international standards and recommendations, including the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM), the Generic Statistical Information Model (GSIM), the standard for statistical data and metadata exchange (SDMX), the Common Statistical Production Architecture (CSPA) and the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI).

82. The Committee noted the value of the High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Statistical Production and Services and the Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics, and expressed appreciation for the emerging work related to a transformative agenda for official statistics by the United Nations Statistics Division. The Committee further welcomed that the 2015 SDMX Global Conference would be held Bangkok in September 2015.

83. The Committee members shared information about their modernization initiatives, expressed gratitude to development partners involved in that work and highlighted the benefits accruing from modernization work. The Committee noted that statistical offices could use modernization to elevate the offices from being primarily a data collector to becoming an information provider.

84. The Committee stressed the need for technical assistance for modernization of statistical production and services, recognizing that it required new skills, new techniques and a change in management.

85. The Committee noted with gratitude that many organizations were already supporting modernization in the region. The Committee appealed to international organizations working on statistical capacity-building in various subject domains, and more broadly, to include modernization issues in their activities. The Committee also encouraged development partners to coordinate efforts.

86. The Committee recognized that modernization of statistical production and services was a cross-cutting initiative and hence it recommended that modernization be considered as an integral part of all regional initiatives. Furthermore, the Committee noted that modernization work provided an opportunity to improve coordination between regional programmes and reduce duplication.

87. The Committee noted the value of private sector involvement and cooperation for improving modernization. Specifically noted were the benefits of bringing together experts in information technology with experts from private sector organizations and other agencies.

88. The Committee adopted decision 4/6.

**(g) Gender statistics**

89. The Committee had before it two documents issued under the agenda item (see annex I for the list of documents).

90. Representatives of the following countries made statements: Afghanistan; Bangladesh; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Mongolia; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Samoa; and Thailand.

91. Recognizing that gender statistics provided a basis for strengthening the production and dissemination of the information required to inform gender equality policies and the empowerment of women, the Committee strongly endorsed the core set as a guide for setting national priorities and focusing regional support for improving the production and dissemination of gender-responsive statistics. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the sharing of good national practices in prioritizing gender-responsive statistics through high-level policy channels and in national statistical master plans, as well as in carrying out data collection to address such high-priority national policy issues as child and women trafficking.

92. Recognizing the importance of strengthening user-producer dialogue, the Committee noted that building capacity in gender-responsive statistics required coordination with stakeholders, including the national statistical offices, ministries, civil society, international organizations and other users of gender statistics.

93. While noting a range of initiatives related to gender statistics underway in member States, the Committee stressed the need to go beyond simple sex-disaggregated data to integrate a gender perspective throughout the whole process of statistical activities, including the planning, design and implementation of data collection, storage, dissemination and analysis. Recognizing the broad range of domains and technical skills required to produce the core set, the Committee noted the need for technical guidelines and sharing of best practices. In particular, guidelines should address methodological and conceptual issues that were not well defined and difficult to measure.

94. In response to the concern expressed by one delegation over the cultural appropriateness of some indicators, the Committee took note of the clarification provided by the secretariat that the core set did not represent a mandated collection of gender statistics, but rather a set of statistics to which members might aspire to produce. The Committee further noted that the indicators in question were also part of a global minimum set endorsed at the United Nations Statistics Commission. One delegation raised the potential of including additional indicators on such thematic issues as education to address existing and emerging information needs.

95. The Committee took note of a suggestion to set up a technical working group to develop a strategy for national capacity-building and an implementation plan to carry out regional and national activities relating to gender statistics. It also noted the recommendations that the membership of such a working group should include stakeholders from national statistical systems, relevant policy departments, subregional entities and United Nations agencies involved in gender-related statistical work.

96. The Committee recognized the submission made by the Pacific islands to host the first meeting of the technical working group.

97. The Committee adopted decision 4/7.

### **C. Agenda item 4**

#### **Global initiatives: agricultural and rural statistics**

98. The Committee had before it a note by the Regional Office of the Asia-Pacific Regional Action Plan to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics, under the guidance of the Regional Steering Committee on

Agricultural Statistics, issued under the agenda item (see annex I for the list of documents).

99. Representatives of the following countries made statements: Afghanistan; Bangladesh; Cambodia; Japan; Kyrgyzstan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Maldives; Mongolia; Philippines; Republic of Korea; and Samoa.

100. The Committee expressed its strong support for the Asia-Pacific Regional Action Plan to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics and noted the progress made towards the implementation of it. The Committee emphasized the vital importance of agricultural and rural statistics in the broader national statistical system, owing to the importance of agriculture to Asia-Pacific economies, the large population in the region that lived in rural communities, and the high importance of agricultural and rural statistics for monitoring the proposed sustainable development goals.

101. The Committee emphasized the regional importance of the topic of food security, and noted the need for development of international statistical guidelines, technical assistance and training pertaining to measurement of food security.

102. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the technical assistance extended in implementing the Regional Action Plan and shared experiences with the ways in which technical assistance had been effective; for example, improvements to data quality, methodological development for conducting agricultural censuses and better coordination among the national statistics offices, ministries of agriculture and other relevant ministries.

103. In that regard, the Committee expressed its appreciation for the coordinated approach in supporting the Regional Action Plan by the regional office of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, ESCAP and the Asian Development Bank.

104. The Committee also emphasized the important role of training for the implementation of the Regional Action Plan and encouraged coordination with development partners.

105. The Committee welcomed the proposal to expand the number of countries participating in the Regional Action Plan from the initial nine pilot countries and recommended including countries that represented various types of agriculture, climate and geographic regions.

**D. Agenda item 5  
Coordination for statistics development**

**(a) Statistical training**

106. The Committee had before it a note by the secretariat issued under the agenda item (see annex I for the list of documents).

107. Representatives of the following countries made statements: Bangladesh; Japan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Maldives, New Zealand; Pakistan; Russian Federation; and Thailand.

108. The representative of the United Nations Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs made a statement.

109. The Committee expressed support for the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific and for the role of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific as secretariat. The Committee also noted with appreciation the commitments of financial and other support for the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific, including continued and new commitments from Japan and the Russian Federation, and the collaboration of national statistical institutes involved with the network.

110. The Committee stressed the importance of using the information-sharing function of the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific for prioritization of statistical training activities. The Committee welcomed information from members on upcoming activities of national statistical institutes in the region. The Committee also noted the requests for training in areas of advocacy and data analysis.

111. The Committee welcomed the offer to coordinate and host regional trainings from new and upgraded national training institutions in Bangladesh and Pakistan.

112. The Committee urged member States to provide strong support to the delivery of the programme of work of the Network.

113. The Committee noted the interest in establishing a global network and training model based on the example in Asia and the Pacific.

114. The Committee adopted decision 4/8.

**(b) Partners for Statistic Development in Asia-Pacific**

115. The Committee had before it a note by the secretariat issued under the agenda item (see annex I for the list of documents).

116. Representatives of the following countries made statements: Australia; China; Philippines; Russian Federation; and Timor-Leste.

117. The representative of the International Organization for Migration made a statement.

118. The Committee expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Partners for Statistics Development in Asia-Pacific and noted with gratitude the active participation of partners in various regional initiatives of the Committee.

119. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the support provided by a large number of partners, including: Australia; China; Indonesia; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia; ESCAP, including the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; International Labour Organization; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; United Nations Children's Fund; United Nations Population Fund; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; World Health Organization; Asian Development Bank, World Bank; International Organization for Migration; PARIS21; and Statistics Indonesia. Emphasizing the continued need for statistics capacity development support, the Committee noted the importance of leadership training to facilitate successful development of national statistical systems.

120. The Committee encouraged partners to continue to work together and to further align their work and available resources for greater combined

impact. In that regard, the Committee reaffirmed that capacity-building should occur primarily at the country level and be a primary consideration in the funding discussions of partners.

121. The Committee took note of the suggestion to create a regional platform with information on activities by national statistical offices and development partners to foster improved alignment, avoidance of overlap and sharing of best practices.

**E. Agenda item 6  
Items for information**

122. The Committee had before it a note by the secretariat issued under the agenda item (see annex I for the list of documents).

123. Representatives of the following countries made statements: Australia; Bangladesh; China; and Indonesia.

124. Representatives of the following organization and division made statements: UNIDO; and United Nations Statistics Division.

125. The Committee emphasized its support of the second World Statistics Day, to occur in October 2015, and welcomed updates on preparations for it. The Committee recognized that observance of the second World Statistics Day presented an opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of statistics for decision-making, and in that regard, the Committee took note of appeals to support the adoption of a General Assembly resolution on World Statistics Day.

126. The Committee commended ongoing national initiatives to promote the use of geospatial information and noted that the integration of statistics and geospatial information provided a tractable and useful example of modernization. The Committee, therefore, encouraged delegates to support the use of geospatial information and attend the Committee side event on geospatial information.

127. The Committee took note of the relevance to the region of the activities of the Ulaanbaatar City Group on statistics for economies based on natural resources, and that Australia and Mongolia were currently serving as co-chairs of the group.

**F. Agenda item 7  
Reports brought to the attention of the Committee**

**(a) Bureau**

128. The Committee had before it a document issued under the agenda item (see annex I for the list of documents).

129. No representatives made statements.

**(b) Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific**

130. The Committee had before it a note by the secretariat issued under the agenda item (see annex I for the list of documents).

131. Representatives of the following countries made statements: Australia; Japan; and Mongolia.

132. The representative of the International Labour Organization made a statement.

133. The Committee supported the programme of work and training strategies of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific and commended the Institute for its contribution to statistical capacity-building of national statistical systems in the region. The Committee also supported the 2015 workplan of the Institute and recognized that its objectives, content and modalities of training were consistent with the proposed strategic direction of the Committee. The Committee urged countries to express their support for the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific/Japan International Cooperation Agency residential courses by prioritizing those trainings in the annual training needs survey conducted by the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

134. Noting the importance of cooperation among the Institute, statistical offices, training institutions of member States and development partners in delivery of training, the Committee urged member States to continue to support that modality, including through the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific.

135. The Committee noted with appreciation the contributions of Japan as the host-country for the Institute and major financial donor. The Committee also noted with appreciation the support, through cash contributions, provided by other member States, and urged member States to further extend financial support to the Institute.

136. The Committee reiterated its support for continuing the current reporting arrangements between the Governing Council and the Commission, while noting the role it could play in providing technical guidance to the Institute.

**G. Agenda item 8  
Consideration of the future focus of the statistics subprogramme of the secretariat**

137. Representatives of the following countries made statements: China; India; Indonesia; Maldives; New Zealand; Philippines; and Samoa.

138. The Committee requested that the secretariat provide written documentation in advance on that agenda item in order for it to be able to provide good guidance to the secretariat.

139. The Committee noted the importance of aligning the subprogramme on statistics to the international development agenda beyond 2015 given the Committee's deliberations on the proposals by the Bureau (as described above under agenda item 2). The Committee also suggested that the secretariat mainstream modernization of statistics across its work.

140. The Committee appreciated that the future work of the secretariat included the scope of issues discussed during its fourth session. Specifically, an increased emphasis on collaborative activities, integration of statistics, and monitoring of the sustainable development goals were cited. The Committee encouraged the secretariat to consider ways in which its future work would support the transformational agendas of national statistical offices.

141. The Committee stressed that the technical cooperation portion of the future focus of the statistics subprogramme should be aligned with

institutional strengthening efforts that extended beyond data collection, such as skills related to communication and coordination.

142. In response to a query on the process for developing and approving the programme of work of the statistics subprogramme, the Committee was informed that a programme of work would be submitted for review and endorsement by the Commission at its seventy-first session, to be held in May 2015.

**H. Agenda item 9**  
**Consideration of draft resolutions and decisions for submission to the Commission at its seventy-first session**

143. The Committee was invited to discuss and review ideas to be considered in draft resolutions that could be proposed to the Commission for further deliberation and endorsement at its seventy-first session.

144. The Committee welcomed the commitment from the Philippines to sponsor a resolution on implementing the outcomes of the Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific. The Philippines urged other members and associate members to consider jointly sponsoring or co-sponsoring the resolution.

**I. Agenda item 10**  
**Other matters**

145. No representatives made statements.

**J. Agenda item 11**  
**Adoption of the report of the Committee**

146. The Committee adopted the present report on 27 March 2015.

**III. Organization**

**A. Opening, duration and organization of the session**

147. The Committee on Statistics held its fourth session in Bangkok from 25 to 27 March 2015. The session was opened by the Vice-Minister of Information and Communications Technology of Thailand. During the opening, the Director of the ESCAP Statistics Division gave a statement on behalf of the Executive Secretary of ESCAP, and the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division made a statement.

**B. Attendance**

148. The Committee session was attended by representatives of the following member countries of ESCAP: Afghanistan; Australia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; China; Fiji; France; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Maldives; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nepal; New Zealand; Pakistan; Papua New Guinea; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Samoa; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Timor-Leste; and Viet Nam. The session was also attended by representatives of the following associate member: Hong Kong, China.

149. Representatives of the following programmes and funds of the United Nations attended: United Nations Children's Fund; United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Environment Programme; and United Nations Population Fund.

150. A representative of the following secretariat unit attended: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division.

151. Representatives of the following specialized agencies and related organizations attended: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; International Monetary Fund; International Labour Organization; International Telecommunication Union; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; United Nations Industrial Development Organization; and World Bank.

152. The following intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organization were represented: Asian Development Bank; Department for International Development; International Organization for Migration; Secretariat of the Pacific Community; and Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries.

### **C. Election of officers**

153. The Committee elected the following officers:

Chair:	Ms. Aishath Shahuda (Maldives)
Vice-Chairs:	Mr. Suryamin (Indonesia) Mr. Hyungsoo Park (Republic of Korea) Mr. Alexander Surinov (Russian Federation)
Member:	Mr. Simil Johnson (Vanuatu)
Rapporteur:	Ms. Teresa Dickinson (New Zealand)

### **D. Agenda**

154. The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session:
  - (a) Opening statements;
  - (b) Election of the Bureau;
  - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Strategic direction of the Committee on Statistics.
3. Regional initiatives:
  - (a) Economic statistics;
  - (b) Population and social statistics;
  - (c) Civil registration and vital statistics;
  - (d) Environment statistics;
  - (e) Disaster risk reduction statistics;
  - (f) Modernization of statistical production and services;
  - (g) Gender statistics.

4. Global initiatives: agricultural and rural statistics.
5. Coordination for statistics development:
  - (a) Statistical training;
  - (b) Partners for Statistical Development in Asia-Pacific.
6. Items for information:
  - (a) Improving the quality and availability of crime statistics;
  - (b) Information and communications technology;
  - (c) Global geospatial information management;
  - (d) Economies based on natural resources;
  - (e) Importance of increased investments in national statistical systems;
  - (f) World Statistics Day 2015.
7. Reports brought to the attention of the Committee:
  - (a) Bureau;
  - (b) Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific.
8. Consideration of the future focus of the statistics subprogramme of the secretariat.
9. Consideration of draft resolutions and decisions for submission to the Commission at its seventy-first session.
10. Other matters.
11. Adoption of the report of the Committee.

**Annex I****List of documents**

<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Agenda item</b>
<i>General series</i>		
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/2	Progress in implementing the Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics in Asia and the Pacific	3 (a)
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/3	Developing a regional strategy to improve population and social statistics in Asia and the Pacific	3 (b)
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/4	“Get Every One in the Picture”: Progress in strengthening civil registration and vital statistics in Asia and the Pacific	3 (c)
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/5/Rev.1	Draft revised terms of reference for the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific	3 (c)
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/6	A strategic approach to improving environment statistics in Asia and the Pacific	3 (d)
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/7	Outcomes of the First Meeting of the Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics	3 (e)
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/8	Modernization of statistical production and services in Asia and the Pacific	3 (f)
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/9	Developing a core set of gender indicators for Asia and the Pacific	3 (g)
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/10	Core set of gender indicators for Asia and the Pacific	3 (g)
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/11	Progress in implementing the Asia-Pacific Regional Action Plan to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics	4
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/12	Report of the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific	5 (a)
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/13	Report of the activities of the Partners for Statistics Development in Asia-Pacific	5 (b)
<i>Limited series</i>		
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/L.1	Annotated provisional agenda	
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/L.2	Draft report	
<i>Information series (English only)</i>		
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/INF/1	Information for participants	
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/INF/2	List of participants	
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/INF/3	Tentative programme	

Symbol	Title	Agenda item
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/INF/4	Statistics and data for the development agenda beyond 2015 — implications for regional collaboration in Asia and the Pacific: outcomes of the ESCAP expert group meeting	2
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/INF/5	The road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet — synthesis report of the Secretary-General on the post-2015 agenda	2
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/INF/6	A world that counts: mobilizing the data revolution for sustainable development — report of the Secretary-General's Independent Expert Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development	2
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/INF/7	The inaugural meeting of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development: chair's summary	2
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/INF/8	Regional Consultation on Accountability for the Post-2015 Development Agenda	2
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/INF/9	Notable decisions made by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the United Nations Statistical Commission	2
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/INF/10/Rev.1	Subregional developments in official statistics	2
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/INF/11	Report of the Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific	3 (c)
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/INF/12	Documents for the information of the Committee on Statistics on item 6 of the provisional agenda	6
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/INF/13/Rev.1	Report on the activities of the Bureau since the third session of the Committee	7 (a)
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/INF/14	Report of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific	7 (b)
<i>Conference room papers (English only)</i>		
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/CRP.1	Regional strategy to improve population and social statistics in Asia and the Pacific	3 (b)
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/CRP.2	Strengthening data and statistics for the development agenda beyond 2015 in Asia and the Pacific	2
E/ESCAP/CST(4)/CRP.3	Composition of the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, 2015-2019	3 (c)

**Annex II****Proposed membership of the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, 2015-2019**

	<b>Country/organization</b>	<b>Representative</b>
1	Armenia	Mr. Argam Stepanyan, Head, Civil Acts Registration Agency, Ministry of Justice
2	Australia	Ms. A.J. Lanyon, Program Manager, Health and Vital Statistics Unit, Australian Bureau of Statistics
3	Bangladesh	Dr. Abul Kalam Azad, Additional Director-General, Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
4	Cook Islands	Ms. Claudine Henry-Anguna, Registrar of the High Court, Ministry of Justice
5	Fiji	Mr. Jone Usamate, Minister of Health
6	India	Mr. Deepak Rastogi, Additional Registrar-General, Office of the Registrar-General and Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs
7	Indonesia	Ms. Suharti, Director, Population, Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, Ministry of National Development Planning (BAPPENAS)
8	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Mr. Ali Akbar Mahzoon, Director-General, Bureau of Demographic and Migration Statistics, National Organization for Civil Registration, Ministry of Interior
9	Kazakhstan	Ms. Gulmira Karaulova, Director, Social and Demographic Statistics Division, Ministry of National Economy
10	Malaysia	Mr. Zakaria bin Awi, Deputy Director-General, National Registration Department, Ministry of Home Affairs
11	Mongolia	Mr. Battsaij Tsenden-Ochir, Head, Civil Registration Department, General Authority for State Registration, Ministry of Justice
12	New Zealand	Mr. Jeff Montgomery, Registrar-General and General Manager, Births, Deaths, Marriages, Citizenship, Authentications and Translations, Department of Internal Affairs
13	Pakistan	Mr. Naeem Uz Zafar, Member (Social Sector and Devolution), Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform
14	Philippines	Ms. Lisa Grace Bersales, National Statistician and Civil Registrar General, Philippine Statistics Authority
15	Republic of Korea	Ms. Yearnok Yoon, Director, Vital Statistics Division, Statistics Korea
16	Thailand	Dr. Boonchai Kijsanayotin, Health Informatics Expert, Thai Health Information Standards Development Centre, Ministry of Public Health
17	Turkey	Mr. Ahmet Sarican, Director-General, General Directorate of Civil Registration and Nationality, Ministry of Interior

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	<b>Country/organization</b>	<b>Representative</b>
18	United States of America	Dr. Francis (Sam) Notzon, Director, International Statistics Program, National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
19	Vanuatu	Mr. Simil Johnson, National Statistician, Vanuatu National Statistical Office
20	<i>Vacant position</i>	
21	<i>Vacant position</i>	
22	<i>Vacant position</i>	
23	United Nations Children's Fund	
24	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	
25	World Health Organization	
26	World Bank Group	
27	Brisbane Accord Group (represented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community)	
28	Data2x	
29	Plan International	
30	World Vision International	

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