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Conference of European Statisticians
**Road Map on Statistics
for Sustainable Development Goals**



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ROAD MAP ON STATISTICS FOR
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This Road Map is a resource for guiding the work of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) on statistics for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It outlines a strategy for CES members to follow in implementing the CES Declaration on the Role of National Statistical Offices in Measuring and Monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the Conference in 2015. The Road Map lays out the activities associated with producing statistics for SDGs; more particularly:

- what needs to be done;
- who is to do what and when;
- who are the stakeholders, and
- the opportunities for cooperation.

2. The Road Map is intended as a living document. It will be updated by the CES Steering Group on Statistics for SDGs to take into account the developments related to statistics for SDGs, including the work of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs), the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity Building for the 2030 Agenda (HLG-PCCB), and the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21).

3. In order to prepare the Road Map and follow up on its implementation, the CES Bureau set up a Steering Group on Statistics for SDGs in October 2015. The Steering Group is co-chaired by Switzerland and United States. Its members are Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom, Eurostat, OECD and UNECE. UNECE acts as secretariat of the Steering Group. The Road Map also includes case studies contributed by UNICEF and UNFPA.

4. The text of the Road Map has benefited from several rounds of updates and consultations to reflect the suggestions by CES and its Bureau and relevant developments at global and regional levels. This includes consideration of the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC) decisions; meeting outcomes of IAEG-SDGs, HLG-PCCB, the April 2017 UNECE Expert Meeting on Statistics for SDGs¹; and, in March 2017, electronic consultation with all countries and international organizations participating in the work of CES. The document was endorsed in June 2017 by the 65th CES plenary session as the First Edition of the Road Map, with the understanding that the text will be updated in the coming years as new decisions are taken by the relevant UN bodies, and new experience becomes available.

5. The Road Map includes six substantive sections, focusing on establishing mechanisms for national collaboration; assessing the readiness of countries to produce global SDG indicators; developing regional, national and sub-national indicators; mechanisms for providing data on SDG indicators; capacity building; and communicating statistics for SDGs. It includes recommendations for national statistical offices (NSOs) and concrete actions for the Steering Group to support countries in implementing a measurement system for SDGs. Annexes provide case studies relating to the Road Map's sections, the international context for the development of SDGs and a list of groups that are working on related issues at the global and regional levels.

¹ See <https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=45249>.

A. Establishing national mechanisms for collaboration (Section III)

6. The Road Map recommends that **NSOs serve as national focal points** for statistics for SDGs. This requires coordination of national communications and planning and preparation of detailed national road maps and/or plans of action to implement international standards in providing statistical SDG indicators. Close collaboration of NSOs with policy makers is essential for countries to meet the reporting requirements under the 2030 Agenda in accordance with national priorities.

7. The CES Steering group will support countries by: **(a) facilitating sharing of national road maps on statistics for SDGs**, and **(b) facilitating regional representation of NSOs at relevant SDG policy meetings**.

B. Assessing readiness to provide data on global SDG indicators (Section IV)

8. Section IV of the Road Map is devoted to the need to assess the readiness to provide data on the global SDG indicators, where **NSOs will play a key role**. To be effective in this role, NSOs should assess the availability of data for global indicators within their respective countries, namely to: (a) identify data providers and data sources for SDG indicators; (b) identify data and methodological gaps; and (c) consider data disaggregation requirements. The Steering Group recommends that these assessments be led by NSOs in close cooperation with relevant data producers and in consultation with civil society and international organisations. An essential outcome of the assessment is the identification and assignment of responsibilities among national institutions for each indicator. These activities should occur in close dialogue with national policy makers and the national body responsible for SDG implementation to ensure that national priorities and resource needs are considered.

9. The CES Steering Group will support countries' assessments of data availability by: **(a) providing a template for data assessment at the country level based on the experience of countries that have already carried out assessments**, and **(b) providing a platform to share and synthesize national experiences** (e.g. at the 2017 CES plenary session, at an Expert Meeting and through a public wiki). In the longer term, the CES Steering Group proposes to periodically summarize assessments within the UNECE region; and to establish a work plan for countries to test the new methodologies (e.g. for Tier III indicators²) and new data sources (e.g., "big data"). All of these actions are to be linked with other relevant work plans at the CES level.

C. Developing regional, national and sub-national indicators (Section V)

10. Agenda 2030 emphasises that the SDGs and targets should be implemented at the national and sub-national levels. Their integration into national policy and strategies will be crucial. The implementation of these national strategies needs to be supported by national data. In addition, countries with significant regional differences may require indicators at sub-national level.

11. Section V of the Road Map provides guidance on establishing SDG indicators at regional, national and sub-national levels. Countries are in different situations vis-à-vis measurement of sustainable development. Some countries have already sustainable development indicator (SDI) sets and may wish to adjust these to reflect SDGs. Some countries may take the global SDG indicators as a starting point and adapt these to their national policy priorities. Countries that collected data for the Millennium

² See Annex II for a description of the three "tiers" of SDG indicators.

Development Goals (MDGs) may build on that experience. The Road Map highlights the crucial need for dialogue between NSOs and policymakers on national follow-up and review, and the importance of reaching common understanding on roles and responsibilities.

12. Section V also highlights work done by the Task Force on Adjusting the CES Recommendations on Measuring Sustainable Development and the possibilities for using the adjusted CES framework to guide the criteria for identification of national/regional statistics and indicators.

13. The Steering Group proposes to **(a) identify the list of countries planning to establish national SDG indicators**, and **(b) exchange experiences on the selection of national indicators**. Based on these experiences, guiding principles for adjusting existing SDI sets to SDGs could be developed.

D. Providing data on global SDG indicators (Section VI)

14. Section VI of the Road Map discusses possible mechanisms for providing data on SDG indicators and the associated data flows. It highlights the importance of having NSOs act as coordinating organisations for data on SDGs.

15. NSOs in several countries are currently developing National Reporting Platforms (NRPs) as one of the possible mechanisms for disseminating SDG indicator data. The Road Map recommends that the data available through NRPs should be comparable, transparent, timely and publicly accessible. NRPs could include: (i) data collection or submission portals that allow different data providers in the country to submit/post data; (ii) indicator production databases and (iii) dissemination portals where users can find tables, documents and publications (this is also part of a communication strategy). The CES Bureau has established a **Task Force that is currently developing guidelines for national reporting mechanisms, including NRPs**.

16. Section VI also considers possible models of data flows at the national level and from the national to the regional/global levels. The entities responsible for the coordination of official statistics in countries (that is, NSOs) are well-positioned to plan and propose the data flow model(s) for use in their respective countries. NSOs should maintain and develop a clear system for managing SDG indicator statistics from all providers, so that investments in the system are of use to the country as a whole. The Steering Group recommends that **NSOs evaluate which data flow model(s) provide the most transparent and efficient transfer of the data from the national to the global level**, avoiding duplication and considering their national circumstances.

E. Building statistical capacity for statistics for SDGs (Section VII)

17. Section VII of the Road Map discusses strategies for capacity building at the national level, leveraging experience gained during the implementation of MDGs and using existing structures and mechanisms for statistical training and capacity building. An important part of creating capacity will be identifying and building partnerships, both at national and international levels.

18. The Road Map proposes as a first step the **assessment of capacity building needs at the country level**. An important prerequisite is the assessment of readiness of countries to provide data on SDG indicators considered in Section IV. The Road Map suggests that countries also assess the time required for the production of any missing indicators. This assessment should identify **indicators that can be produced in the short, medium and long term**. The next step is to **identify within the region the countries having similar needs** and how they can cooperate on planning, funding requests or partnerships.

19. Once priorities are identified, countries **can seek funding and begin** investing in people and systems to produce and assess the statistics. The Steering Group considers it important to **have a venue where countries could discuss and coordinate their actions on issues related to statistical capacity building for SDGs.**

F. Communication and dissemination of statistics for SDGs (Section VIII)

20. The final section (VIII) of the Road Map discusses principles that may be useful to NSOs when developing a communication strategy for statistics for SDGs. It proposes to use new dissemination means and tools to communicate with stakeholders in a transparent and open manner.

21. The section also highlights the importance of communicating with policy makers and engaging these actors in the process. This should begin with strengthening of the understanding of the NSO as an independent and trusted provider of quality statistics to the public. Additionally, communication related to the limitations in using indicators for measurement of the Goals is important, particularly with the recent proliferation of untested, non-traditional sources of data. The Steering Group recommends that NSOs define key stakeholder groups when preparing communication strategies, including both data providers (NSO, national statistical system, academia, etc.) and data users (policy makers, civil society, private companies, etc.). NSOs should then define the content and form of communications, taking advantage of existing and new dissemination methods. NSOs should also consider establishing customer management systems to deal effectively with user inquiries. NSOs must also develop criteria and principles for communication with policy makers to gain better understanding of their perspectives on the SDG process.

22. The CES Steering Group will liaise with the UNECE Expert Group on Communication to consider possible joint activities in this area, including developing guidance for NSOs containing key messages and recommendations. In the medium and long-term, the Steering Group and the UNECE Expert Group on Communication will collect and analyse best practices on communications and map the available communication tools with communication messages on SDGs.

23. The Road Map itself is a communication tool explaining the issues that must be considered in relation to statistics for SDGs, and the critical role of official statistics and NSOs. The Steering Group is preparing a **'generic' presentation of the Road Map** for this purpose.

II. INTRODUCTION

A. Mandate

1. The document *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*³ (for simplicity, this document and the associated global development agenda are referred to henceforth as “Agenda 2030”), which includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 associated targets, was agreed to in September 2015 by heads of state and high-level representatives.
2. Official statistics will play a key role in providing evidence for the follow-up and review of SDGs and the related targets. In addition, two of the targets focus specifically on improving official statistics; namely:
 - **Target 17.18:** “By 2020, enhance capacity building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.”
 - **Target 17.19:** “By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries.”
3. The 2015 plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) decided to “launch work on a Road Map for the development of official statistics for monitoring SDGs.”⁴ The Road Map (this document) aims to guide the CES work on statistics for the Sustainable Development Goals.
4. To prepare the Road Map and monitor its implementation, the CES Bureau set up a Steering Group on Statistics for SDGs in October 2015. The following countries and organizations are members of the Steering Group: Switzerland (co-chair), United States (co-chair), Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom, Eurostat and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) acts as its Secretariat.

B. Objectives and approach

5. The Road Map aims to guide the CES work on statistics for SDGs. It lays out the activities associated with producing statistics for SDGs:
 - what needs to be done;
 - who is to do what and when;
 - who are the other stakeholders, and
 - the opportunities for cooperation.

³ See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf>.

⁴ See the report of the CES 2015 plenary session ECE/CES/89, para 23 at http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/2015/Rep_1512361E.pdf.

6. The Road Map supports the implementation of the *Declaration on the Role of National Statistical Offices in Measuring and Monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals*⁵ that CES adopted in June 2015. The Declaration:

- (a) calls upon national governments to support national statistical offices in their key role in measuring and monitoring SDGs, and recognizes the importance of cooperation at local, national, regional and global levels in work related to statistics for SDGs, and
- (b) emphasizes the importance of efficient coordination of monitoring SDGs at regional level between relevant international organisations and between international organizations and national statistical offices.

7. The Road Map gives recommendations to national statistical offices (NSOs) as they prepare to provide data on global SDG indicators to support the review and follow-up of progress towards SDGs. The mechanisms for the review and follow-up of SDGs at the policy level and the measurement and data provision at the statistical level are currently taking shape. The Road Map frames these ongoing developments to help ensure that official statisticians are involved actively in these processes where relevant. The Road Map also identifies activities that can be undertaken by CES to support countries in this work.

8. The Road Map complements to the *Cape Town Global Action Plan on Sustainable Development Data*,⁶ prepared by the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity Building for the 2030 Agenda (HLG-PCCB) and adopted by the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC) in March 2017. It suggests concrete actions that will support countries in meeting the challenge of providing statistics for SDGs. In addition, by identifying the type of work and funding required, it will also provide information for all NSOs, international organizations and stakeholders (e.g., the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century – PARIS21) concerned with statistical capacity building.

9. The Road Map is meant to complement the ongoing work of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) and HLG-PCCB by providing suggestions related to the needs of CES member states. Other NSOs may also find this Road Map helpful.

10. The Road Map has benefitted from several rounds of updates and consultations. Since its first presentation at the CES plenary session in April 2016 (ECE/CES/2016/19), the text has been updated to reflect the outcomes of relevant meetings and suggestions from stakeholders. This includes consideration of UN Statistical Commission (UNSC) decisions; meeting outcomes of IAEG-SDGs, HLG-PCCB, the April 2017 UNECE Expert Meeting on Statistics for SDGs⁷; and, in March 2017, electronic consultation with all countries and international organizations participating in the work of CES. The Road Map is intended as a living document. The document was endorsed in June 2017 by the 65th CES plenary session as First Edition of the Road Map, with the understanding that the Steering Group will update the text in the coming years, as new decisions are taken by the relevant UN bodies and new experience becomes available.

⁵ See ECE/CES/89/Add.1 at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=38920>.

⁶ See http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/global-consultation-hlg-1/GAP_HLG-20161021.pdf.

⁷ See <https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=45249>.

11. Section III of the Road Map describes the importance of establishing collaboration mechanisms at the national level, with NSOs playing a key role. Section IV describes assessing the readiness of countries to provide data on global SDG indicators. Section V discusses regional, national and sub-national indicators. Section VI describes data flows of SDG indicators. Section VII addresses capacity building. Finally, Section VIII discusses strategy for communicating statistics for SDGs.

12. The substantive sections conclude with (1) recommendations for CES member state NSOs; and (2) short, medium, and long-term actions for the Steering Group to support the follow up and review of SDGs by CES members. Short-term actions are those that were completed by the CES 2017 plenary session (June 2017). Medium-term actions are to be completed by the CES 2018 plenary session. Long-term actions are anticipated to be completed after the CES 2018 plenary session (June 2018).

III. ESTABLISHING NATIONAL MECHANISMS FOR COLLABORATION

A. The role of National Statistical Offices

13. NSOs will play a key role in measuring the achievement of SDGs. According to Agenda 2030 the annual progress report on the SDGs prepared by the UN Secretary General (UNSG) in cooperation with the international statistical system will be based on global indicators and data produced by national statistical systems. The follow-up and review processes at all levels will be “rigorous and based on evidence, informed by country-led evaluations and data which is high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable and disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability and geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.”⁸

14. For the purposes of this document, it is important to differentiate between the terms “reporting” on SDGs and “providing data and statistics for measuring progress” towards SDGs and targets (the word sometimes used in this context is “monitoring”). “Reporting” on SDGs concerns tracking the progress towards SDGs and targets at **policy level**. It requires an evaluation of adequate progress given policy priorities. The global reporting by the UN Secretary General to the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development and the voluntary country reviews at HLPF are two such examples. In many countries, government policy offices (such as a national SDG implementation focal point, ministry, Prime Minister’s office, etc.) coordinate SDG reporting. There also can be national policy offices coordinating specific Goals. Often the development of national SDG indicators is led by national policy offices.

15. In contrast, the provision of statistics for SDGs to support the measurement and achievement of SDGs (or monitoring) is the task of statisticians. This pertains to identification of appropriate data sources and methodologies to produce the statistics corresponding to SDG indicators. NSOs, as the SDGs statistics focal point, should closely cooperate with the SDGs national policy focal point. The implementation of the key coordinating role of NSOs in practice depends on the setup of the statistical system (centralised or decentralised), national statistical legislation, and existing frameworks for cooperation between statisticians and policy makers.

16. A good basis for identifying data providers in a country is an assessment of readiness to provide data on SDG indicators and identification of data gaps. The Steering Group recommends that, in carrying out these assessments, NSOs work in close collaboration with relevant data producers and international organisations. An essential outcome of these analyses is the identification and assignment of responsibilities among national institutions.

B. Essential dialogue with policymakers

17. National and sub-national monitoring of progress towards SDGs and targets should be the result of close collaboration between statisticians and policy-makers. In this sense, it is of primary importance that statisticians be involved from the beginning in work on a national action plan and, if undertaken by a country, the selection of national indicators. This collaboration ensures that the objectives are measurable (which facilitates the work of statisticians) and that the selected indicators are accepted and relevant for

⁸ See paragraphs 74(g) and 83 in http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1.

policy-makers. Furthermore, statisticians can ensure that the monitoring of SDGs at the national and sub-national levels is consistent with relevant existing conceptual frameworks such as the CES framework. A good example of efficient collaboration between statisticians and policy makers is presented in **Case Study 6** by **Switzerland**.

18. Close collaboration between statisticians and policy-makers benefits from the clear definition of the roles and responsibilities. These should be defined in advance and made public to ensure transparency of the SDG related processes. For example, the selection of national and sub-national objectives and measures falls under the responsibility of policy-makers with the support of statisticians. On the other hand, the selection of indicators and the determination of methodologies and data sources are the responsibility of statisticians in consultation with policy-makers.

19. Understanding these roles and responsibilities along with clear indicator selection criteria ensures both strong collaboration between all the stakeholders and respect for the requirements of official statistics.

C. Institutional arrangements for providing data on SDG indicators

20. The CES Steering Group recommends that national governments inform all involved ministries and agencies of Agenda 2030 and the SDG indicators and strengthen inter-agency cooperation to meet the related challenges.

21. National governments should consider designating a national body to coordinate the measurement system for SDGs to achieve consistency in the work of all stakeholders, information exchange and the discussion and implementation of internationally accepted methodologies.

22. Such a national coordinating body could:

- serve as a venue/forum for discussion of issues on data collection and analysis of SDG indicators between government agencies and international organizations;
- keep stakeholders abreast of and share knowledge on statistical activities in the field of data collection and analysis;
- organize and promote coordination and joint advocacy activities around data collection with a specific focus on SDGs;
- ensure coordination of information exchange on SDG indicators; and
- promote substantive discussion on statistical capacity building.

23. The CES Steering Group recommends that NSOs play the key coordinating role in providing statistics for monitoring SDGs in countries, working in close collaboration with a national coordinating body on SDGs. NSOs are well placed to coordinate provision of SDG data and indicators in the country for monitoring purposes; indeed, in many countries NSOs are responsible for coordinating the national statistical system (this is often stipulated in the Statistical Law). The support from government in this respect is very important. This is reflected in the CES 2015 Declaration that is “calling upon national governments to support national statistical offices in their key coordinating role in measuring and monitoring SDGs in countries.”⁹

⁹ ECE/CES/89/Add.1 at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=38920>.

24. The manner and extent to which this assignment of roles can be implemented depends on the setup of the statistical system, legislation determining the role of NSOs, and existence of any previous institutional arrangements for following up on policy implementation, for example, related to sustainable development or MDGs. Many countries already have a framework of cooperation between policy makers and statisticians that is based on an existing measurement system for assessing policy results. In such cases, it may be preferable to integrate SDG related processes within an established system.

25. There are many issues to be solved which can not always be done by the statistical office alone. A few examples include: the collaboration with data producers beyond the national statistical system with various agencies and civil society organizations; quality assurance for SDG indicators and data coming from other parts of the statistical system and from outside the system; dealing with “non-statistical” indicators, etc.

26. An important task for the body coordinating statistics for SDGs is preparation of a detailed road map or plan of action to implement the SDG indicators. This would include also identifying issues that need to be resolved in cooperation with partners from outside official statistics, as listed in the previous paragraph.

D. Recommendations for National Statistical Offices – Establishing collaboration

- (a) NSOs should inform all relevant national ministries and agencies of the SDG indicators and contribute to strengthening inter-agency cooperation to efficiently meet the challenges of SDGs. The establishment of a focal point in each ministry and agency can facilitate this process. Partnerships with academia and other partners can also be considered. NSOs should work in close collaboration with the national coordinating body on SDGs.
 - (b) NSOs should consider ways to coordinate national communication and planning related to providing data and indicators on SDGs to achieve consistency in the work of national stakeholders, information exchange and discussion and implementation of international statistical methodology.
 - (c) NSOs should serve as focal points at the national level to coordinate the provision of statistics for SDGs. NSOs can also provide a supporting (albeit technical) role to other government bodies charged with SDG policy-making.
 - (d) NSOs, as the national coordinating body (or in collaboration with another such body) should prepare detailed national road maps or plans of action to implement international standards in providing data on statistical SDG indicators.
 - (e) NSOs could organise meetings with main data users to improve understanding of their needs. These meetings could be a useful forum to engage business, civil society, and academia in the SDG process.
 - (f) Countries should consider establishing technical thematic working groups (for example, on human rights and gender equality, social inclusion, economic growth and environment protection or separately on each target) to discuss issues related to measuring SDGs in these areas.
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E. Actions for the Steering Group – Establishing collaboration

1. Medium-term (to be completed by the CES 2018 plenary session)

- (a) Develop an expanded outline of a national road map on statistics for SDGs and collect examples from countries on wiki.
 - (b) Facilitate a venue for sharing national road maps on statistics for SDGs among the countries participating in the CES work (the UNECE wiki on statistics for SDGs could be used for this purpose).
 - (c) Exchange information on regional and global political fora on SDGs to facilitate regional representation of national statistical offices at the relevant meetings.
 - (d) Identify good practices in integrating SDG measurement in existing collaboration frameworks between statisticians and policy makers.
 - (e) Identify areas where guidance is needed for NSOs to be able to carry out their key coordinating role related to statistics for SDGs, such as establishing/strengthening collaboration beyond the national statistical system, developing new forms of collaboration, clarifying the role of NSOs in the overall mechanism of coordinating SDGs, for example.
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IV. ASSESSING COUNTRIES' READINESS TO PROVIDE DATA ON GLOBAL SDG INDICATORS

27. According to Agenda 2030, follow-up and review processes should be built on existing platforms and processes, avoid duplication and respond to national circumstances, capacity needs and priorities.¹⁰ These processes will evolve over time taking into account emerging issues and methodological development and minimizing reporting burden on national administrations. To implement these decisions, some countries have already carried out or are in the process of assessing their readiness to provide data on SDGs for global, regional, sub-regional and national reporting. Some have also begun identifying data gaps where statistics and indicators will require development to inform the SDGs.

28. As a country-led process, the decision regarding which source to use for the provision of SDG statistics remains at the discretion of countries. Nonetheless, some data may originate outside of a country's national statistical system. In some cases, for instance, international organizations may produce model-based estimates in the absence of country data. There should be mechanisms in place so that countries can review and validate these data before they are made publicly available for users. Any data discrepancies between national and international sources should be addressed or explained and other concerns from countries be flagged and clarified. It may not always be possible for countries to validate the model-based estimates produced by international organizations, therefore such estimates should be clearly flagged.

A. Identifying data providers and data sources

29. NSOs can play an important role in coordinating their national readiness assessments by facilitating communication with other relevant data-producing institutions. The coordination role of the NSOs was discussed at a CES seminar in 2015 and outlined in the *CES Declaration on the Role of National Statistical Offices in Measuring and Monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals*. The exact nature of this coordination role, particularly vis à vis providing information for non-statistical SDG indicators, will vary according to national circumstances; however, some aspects of the coordination role can be generalized.

30. As a first task, non-statistical indicators should be distinguished from statistical indicators. Non-statistical are, for example, indicators that require a yes/no answer at country level and/or include an assessment of the quality of a law or policy strategy.¹¹ It would be helpful for the appropriate global body (such as the IAEG-SDGs) to identify these non-statistical indicators, as the distinction is not always clear. NSOs should focus their activities on statistical indicators. However, in some countries NSOs may still coordinate the data provision of all SDG indicators, including the non-statistical indicators.

¹⁰ See paragraph 74(f) in http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1.

¹¹ For example, 1.5.3 "Number of countries that adopt and implement national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030; 5.1.1 "Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex."

31. A successful readiness assessment also requires the existence of clear definitions and metadata for the global indicators. This is not always yet the case for the SDG indicators designated as tier III by IAEG-SDGs (and therefore require further conceptualization before robust measurement can occur). In these cases, the assessment of the availability of these indicators may need to be reconsidered when the final definition and methodology become available.¹²

32. NSOs should identify potential data providers for statistical indicators within their national statistical system, data sources and data availability. In some cases, NSOs may choose to rely on non-official data sources, while keeping in mind any quality, transparency or timeliness considerations. NSOs could also identify potential data providers for non-statistical indicators.

33. Additionally, NSOs may examine their existing reporting practices, taking into account their coordination role. To avoid duplicate reporting, international organizations might report statistics on behalf of a country if the NSO agrees. NSOs routinely provide national and sub-national statistics to UN agencies. These UN agencies then produce comparable, global statistics in specific regions according to their mandates. As interest in statistics has increased in magnitude and scope, the volume and complexity of these data flows have increased. The Steering Group recommends that these data flows and the roles and responsibilities of the relevant bodies be clarified in readiness assessments and, where appropriate, refined and coordinated. As noted in the decision taken by the UN Statistical Commission in March 2017 (48/101, OP (k)), information from international organizations about the data flows from countries related to SDG indicators (including their counterparts in countries) will be helpful in identifying the data providers. The metadata provided by international organizations on SDG indicators¹³ and the questionnaire sent by UNSD to UN agencies and other international organizations (whose replies were compiled in May 2016) and member states of the IAEG-SDGs could contribute to this work.

34. International organisations can assist in readiness assessments by reviewing their own databases¹⁴ and identifying statistics they generate with inputs from NSOs. For instance, Eurostat has created an inventory of indicators within the European Statistical System (ESS).^{15,16} UNSD issued such an inventory in July 2016 for a subset of indicators, as supplied by agencies. OECD has undertaken a pilot assessment measuring distances of OECD countries to SDG targets. This was based on a selection of indicators aligned to the extent possible with the UN global indicator framework, and used country-supplied data in OECD databases.¹⁷

35. The Steering Group has prepared a common template for conducting readiness assessments that may be useful to CES members.¹⁸ The template could help NSOs identify indicators already available, indicators that could be produced within the short term, and indicators that will require longer term development. Additionally, assessments could also investigate the nature and extent of current data flows from NSOs to UN agencies.

¹² For indicators classified as Tier I and Tier II, availability is linked with capacity building; the indicators in Tier III require methodological work and development of commonly agreed methodology. Further details are provided in Annex II.

¹³ <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/>.

¹⁴ See, for example, UNICEF's case on indicators related to children: <https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/SDGs-and-Data-publication.pdf>.

¹⁵ ESS members are all European Union and European Free Trade Association countries.

¹⁶ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/sdi/overview>.

¹⁷ See <http://www.oecd.org/std/measuring-distance-to-the-sdgs-targets.htm>.

¹⁸ Available on the UNECE wiki on statistics for SDGs at: <https://statswiki.unece.org/display/SFSDG>.

B. Identifying and addressing data and methodology gaps and conceptual issues

36. The Steering Group can assist CES countries in assessing data and methodology gaps and identifying conceptual issues. The UNECE Secretariat, together with other international organizations in the region, can compile national readiness assessments conducted by member NSOs to identify common areas where further work is needed, as well as areas where achievements of some members can be used by others.

37. Good governance, technical guidance and quality control are necessary to ensure comparability of data and help countries to develop new statistics when necessary. Meetings organised under CES should remain the primary venues to share experiences and explore potential solutions within the region.

C. Addressing data disaggregation requirements

38. The Agenda 2030 emphasises the need for disaggregated data to ensure that “no one is left behind.” Therefore, the assessment of data availability should consider also availability of the requested disaggregations.

39. According to IAEG-SDGs work stream on data disaggregation,¹⁹ the disaggregations necessary for each SDG indicator should be clarified. In some cases, the required disaggregations are explicitly mentioned in the name of the target or indicator. In other cases, disaggregations would depend on national contexts, such as in some indicators mentioning “vulnerable groups”. Statisticians must work with policy-makers to identify vulnerable groups. Any CES work in this area will be done in coherence with the IAEG-SDGs work stream on data disaggregation. The tasks at regional level will be to:

- identify disaggregated SDG statistics currently available at the regional level;
- investigate how the disaggregation of relevant indicators can be best performed; and
- review and disseminate national experiences and best practices for disaggregation.

40. The statistical principle of confidentiality is very important and should take into account the relevant national legislation. Any disaggregation of indicators should consider the risk of identifying an individual respondent when information was collected under a pledge of confidentiality.

41. In addition to confidentiality, there are other considerations to be taken into account when disaggregating data, such as legal provisions (NSOs may not be legally allowed to collect data on certain topics); political issues (data disaggregation may have risks for the protection of the rights of sub-populations); and relevance, data availability, access, cost and quality concerns (e.g., the survey sample may be too small to allow disaggregation into specific groups).

42. To be able to provide disaggregated data on vulnerable groups, NSOs may need to cooperate with data providers outside the national statistical system. These can be international organizations (e.g., see **Case study 1** that gives an example of **UNICEF** data on children with disabilities and Roma children), private producers, academia or civil society. Such cooperation requires agreeing on principles regarding when and how such data can be used, taking into account the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (FPOS), statistical quality requirements, and human rights norms and principles relevant to statistics.²⁰

¹⁹ The first meeting of the work stream took place during the IAEG-SDG meeting in Geneva, Switzerland in November 2016. In June 2016, UNSD organized an expert group meeting on data disaggregation.

²⁰ See OHCHR's guidance note on a human rights-based approach to data: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/HRIIndicators/GuidanceNoteonApproachtoData.pdf>.

43. Therefore, in collaborating with the IAEG-SDGs data disaggregation work stream, the CES Steering Group could assign a subgroup to:

- examine SDGs, targets and corresponding indicators to ensure that the concept of “leaving no one behind” is sufficiently addressed within the indicator framework by proposing relevant disaggregations;
- propose strategies to obtain data on population subgroups; assess the suitability of data for disaggregation purposes; and
- review best practices and country experiences on selected disaggregation issues, particularly with regard to protecting respondent confidentiality and other legal requirements.

D. Recommendations for National Statistical Offices – Readiness assessments

- (a) NSOs have an important coordinating role in conducting readiness assessments and reporting on global SDG indicators, although the exact nature of this role will vary with national circumstances.
- (b) A mapping of data providers of statistical (and non-statistical) indicators will be essential to assess data availability. Non-statistical indicators should be distinguished from statistical indicators. NSOs should focus efforts on statistical indicators. Other national data providers (in some cases, outside of the national statistical system) should be identified, taking into account the quality requirements of data.
- (c) A mapping of existing data flows from national data providers to international organizations should also be conducted, to the extent feasible. A list from SDG indicators custodian agencies of their national contacts would be very helpful for this purpose.
- (d) NSOs should identify circumstances in which they choose to rely on data producers outside the national statistical system, including international organizations, to provide national statistics for SDG global indicators. This will reduce duplication of effort. NSOs could consider adding quality assessments when using data from outside the statistical system.
- (e) NSOs should evaluate feasibility for disaggregation for each SDG indicator at the country level, if necessary in consultation with policy makers. These evaluations could include an estimate of the timeline by when each disaggregation could be made available.

E. Actions for the Steering Group – Readiness assessments

1. Short-term (completed by the CES 2017 plenary session)

- (a) The Steering Group developed a template to assess availability of SDG indicators and data flows between NSOs and international organizations [available on UNECE statistics for SDGs Wiki²¹].
- (b) Sharing initial national readiness assessment results (e.g. at an expert meeting, or website). [The initial national readiness assessment results have been shared at the Expert Meeting on statistics for SDGs (April 2017) and are available on the Wiki.]

²¹ <https://statswiki.unece.org/display/SFSDG>

2. Medium-term (to be completed by the CES 2018 plenary session)

- (a) Summarize national readiness assessments conducted by CES members, taking into account the assessments conducted by other UN Regional Commissions.
- (b) Based on the regional summary of CES member national readiness assessment, identify common successes and challenges.
- (c) Provide a venue to share national experiences with initiating and maintaining dialogue with relevant national stakeholders, such as data producers, data users, policy makers, civil society and non-governmental organizations (e.g. at an expert meeting or the UNECE wiki on statistics for SDGs at <https://statswiki.unece.org/display/SFSDG>).
- (d) Provide a platform to share national experiences with reporting disaggregated national statistics for SDG global indicators.
- (e) Identify common areas among CES member countries where national statistics for Tier 1 and 2 indicators exist but should be strengthened.
- (f) Expand the production of harmonised Tier 1 and Tier 2 statistics among CES member countries.
- (g) Propose strategies to address common data gaps for Tier 1 and 2 indicators among CES member countries, including gaps in disaggregated statistics.
- (h) Propose plans to contribute to international metadata standards for Tier 3 indicators.

3. Long-term (to be completed after CES 2018 plenary session)

- (a) Prepare periodic updates of the regional summary of national readiness assessments conducted by CES member countries, taking into account the results of other similar initiatives.
 - (b) Propose plans for testing new methodologies using new and/or unreviewed data sources among CES members in coordination and collaboration with IAEG-SDG and HLG-PCCB.
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V. DEVELOPING REGIONAL, NATIONAL AND SUB-NATIONAL INDICATORS

44. The section provides guidance on establishing a measurement system for SDGs at national and sub-national levels to monitor the implementation of national strategies related to sustainable development. The regional perspective and regional indicators are also considered, based on the activities of CIS Statistics Committee, Eurostat and OECD related to SDG indicators for their member countries.

45. Agenda 2030 emphasises that follow-up and review of the Agenda's implementation "will be voluntary and country-led, will take into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and will respect policy space and priorities."²² Furthermore, the global SDG indicators "will be complemented by indicators at the regional and national levels which will be developed by Member States."²³ At its 47th session, UNSC further underlined that "national ownership is key to achieving sustainable development and that national reviews [...] will take into account different national realities."²⁴ UNSC also agreed that the compilation of global indicators will be based to the greatest extent possible on comparable and standardized national official statistics provided by countries to the international statistical systems and that when other sources and methodologies are used, these will be reviewed and agreed by national statistical authorities and presented in a transparent manner.²⁵

A. Deciding upon national indicators

46. Transformation of SDGs and targets into action and measures at the national and sub-national level and their integration with national strategies and other policy interventions will be a crucial step for the successful implementation of SDGs. National indicators may be added to complement global indicators to support measurement of national strategies. The decision whether to have national SDG indicators lies with countries. It depends on national priorities in SDG implementation and the existence of a national sustainable development strategy.

47. The global SDG indicator list is designed to measure progress with SDGs at the global level. National indicators may be justified: (i) where there are specific national priorities not addressed by the global indicators; (ii) when policy is in need of additional indicators to measure a country specific part of an SDG in more detail; or (iii) when global targets may not be ambitious enough (or too ambitious) to be relevant in specific countries. The demand for national indicators is expected to come from policy side, but selection and measurement should be developed in consultation with the national statistical system. Furthermore, Agenda 2030 emphasises the need to use existing mechanisms and processes. Therefore when establishing national SDGs indicators, it is wise to build on existing policies and indicators in areas related to sustainable development. A good example is Eurostat's strategy of developing the EU SDG indicator set based on existing statistics and the EU's policy priorities, while also reflecting all 17 SDGs.

²² See paragraph 74(a) in http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1.

²³ See paragraph 75 in http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1.

²⁴ See Decision 47/101 (j) from the 47th UN Statistical Commission (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/47th-session/documents/Report-on-the-47th-session-of-the-statistical-commission-E.pdf>).

²⁵ See Decision 47/101 (l) from the rapport of 47th UN Statistical Commission <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/47th-session/documents/Report-on-the-47th-session-of-the-statistical-commission-E.pdf>.

48. There may be also some statistical considerations justifying national indicators. For example, the level of statistical development in a given country may make it possible to use more sophisticated indicators than at the global level. As another example, a proxy (national) indicator may be used in the absence of the official (global) indicator. National indicators may also be justified where global indicators would benefit from further development. Some global indicators (those in Tier III) require further conceptualization before broad data collection and statistical reporting is recommended. Additionally, some global indicators address only part of their associated target and additional indicators are needed to fully cover the intended scope. In still other cases, the inclusion of subjective indicators (lacking from the global indicator set) could be considered. Countries may choose to supplement global indicators with a parsimonious set of national indicators to address these deficiencies.

49. National indicators may also be justified to address national communication needs. Establishing headline indicators for goals could be considered. These indicators could be selected from among the global SDG indicators or from among national indicators. A possible advantage of identifying a set of headline indicators is easier communication with policy makers and other members of the public. A possible disadvantage is that, by their nature, headline indicators may prioritize certain targets and therefore could send a message that some goals/targets are more important than others, which would be contrary to the intent of the global framework. It is important to emphasise that headline indicators do not imply a hierarchy between targets or a status summary for a particular Goal. The use of a conceptual framework could help choosing and justifying a selection of headline indicators.²⁶

50. CES member countries vary in their national circumstances vis-à-vis sustainable development indicators. Some countries have had national sustainable development strategies and SDI sets for years. These countries may now consider how to adjust the national SDI sets to take into account SDGs. The thematic structure of the CES framework for measuring sustainable development is a helpful guide for this. Following the CES decision, it can also be recommended to use this framework in measuring sustainable development. As the production processes of national SDI are already well established, it would be efficient to make maximum use of them.

51. Further, national SDI sets may go beyond SDGs (sustainable development is a wider concept than SDGs). For example, human well-being may be important in a national context for measuring sustainable development, but is not reflected in global SDGs.

52. Some countries, or regions within a country, may also decide to establish indicators and collect information at the sub-national level. This is relevant especially for countries with large regional differences or for countries governed through federal systems. It may be decided to establish indicators at the local municipal level, especially to monitor Goal 11 'Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.'

53. The **case studies no 2 (Poland), 3 (Russian Federation), 4 (Switzerland) and 6 (Turkey)** present examples of how these countries are approaching national SDG indicators.

²⁶ See, for example the "Recommendations on measuring sustainable development" (2013) by UNECE/Eurostat/OECD.

1. CES framework for measuring sustainable development as a guidance tool

54. The CES framework for measuring sustainable development²⁷ is helpful in exploring how to develop regional or national indicators to complement the set of global indicators. A Task Force set up by the CES Bureau in 2015 adjusted the CES framework to align it with the SDGs and mapped the SDGs, targets and indicators to the themes in the CES framework.²⁸ The mapping groups indicators according to themes that are linked to the traditional areas of official statistics, such as health, education, labour, water, energy, etc., and to the themes often used in the sustainable development indicator sets of countries. The mapping systematically identifies regional indicators and areas where the regularly produced data can be helpful in providing statistics for SDGs.

55. Several countries already have national sustainable development indicator sets with clear links to the CES framework. The adjusted CES framework can be useful for analysing how these indicator sets could be revised to consider SDGs while maintaining continuity with the system used to measure sustainable development up to now.

56. Furthermore, the CES framework includes a list of 95 indicators for measuring sustainable development. One of the criteria for identifying indicators was data availability. Thus, the CES framework could help identify regional or national indicators where data would be available for a large number of countries.

2. Criteria for national and sub-national indicators

57. When developing national indicators, careful consideration should be given to how they comply with the criteria set for the global indicators; namely that “This [indicator] framework will 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.”²⁹ A balanced, integrated and holistic approach to the selection of national indicators will be needed to guard against ‘cherry picking’ across the SDGs. Outcome indicators are preferred, except where the target in question specifically addresses inputs.

58. In selecting national indicators, the right balance must be found between the benefit of additional indicators relevant for the national context and the additional reporting burden imposed by these indicators and complexity in communication. National indicators should consider other sustainable development indicators currently in use for a given region (such as Eurostat’s SDG indicator set). Relevant, nonduplicative indicators for which statistics are produced by official statistical systems following established standards and agreed methodologies should be prioritized.

²⁷ The CES framework for measuring sustainable development is presented in the *CES Recommendations for Measuring Sustainable Development* prepared by a joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Task Force and endorsed by the CES member countries and international organisations in June 2013. The CES recommendations provide a universal approach to measuring sustainable development drawing on three conceptual dimensions of wellbeing. It also takes into account the temporal dimension, considering the needs of the present (‘here and now’) and future generations (‘later’) and of people living in other countries (‘elsewhere’). These dimensions are linked to policy themes that cover the environmental, social and economic aspects of sustainable development. The themes, dimensions and the structure that binds them together constitute what is referred to in this document as the ‘CES framework.’

²⁸ An overview of this work is provided in an interim report by the Task Force (see https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/2016/mtg/NewCES_18-Interim_report_on_SDGs_Revised.pdf). In the first stage of work, the Task Force adjusted the themes in the CES framework and mapped the SDGs and targets with the CES themes and dimensions. The work was planned to continue focusing on the SDG indicators.

²⁹ See paragraph 75 in http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1.

59. The global SDG indicator list predominantly comprises objective indicators. At the national level, subjective indicators could be considered. Subjective indicators of wellbeing, for example, have shown to be valid constructs and can be measured reliably. There is growing interest in understanding sustainable development by using both objective and subjective measures³⁰.

60. The following criteria for selecting national indicators are advised to be taken into account:

- maintain a balance between social, economic and environmental indicators to remain faithful to the intent and ambition of Agenda 2030;
- prioritize outcome indicators except where SDG targets specifically addresses inputs or outputs;
- prioritize indicators that are produced by the official statistical system following established standards and agreed methodologies;
- take into account existing sustainable development indicator lists by the relevant organizations in the region (such as Eurostat and CIS-Stat) and national indicator sets in related policy areas (e.g. well-being indicators);
- select multipurpose indicators whenever possible to minimize the number of indicators;³¹ and
- minimize reporting burden, taking into account that a number of the global indicators may be produced by international organizations (especially qualitative indicators) and thus do not put a burden on national statistical systems.

B. Considerations on regional indicators in the UNECE region

61. Agenda 2030 states “The goals and targets will be followed up and reviewed using a set of global indicators. These will be complemented by indicators at the regional and national levels which will be developed by Member States.”³²

62. In its 2016 session, UNSC emphasized that the “global indicators proposed are intended for global follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and are not necessarily applicable to all national contexts. Indicators for regional, national and sub-national levels of monitoring will be developed at the regional and national levels.”³³

63. It is important to clarify what is meant by regional indicators. Global indicators adjusted for a given region for comparison and publication are *regional estimates* of global indicators. In contrast, *regional indicators* are intended to uniquely reflect regional information priorities.

64. The selection of regional indicators depends on decisions at the policy level about the scope and focus of regional review and follow-up. What to measure depends on political considerations while how to measure it depends on statistical considerations.

65. The UNECE region is heterogeneous. Different groups of countries and international and supranational organizations in the region may have their own priorities and indicator lists. For example,

³⁰ See the Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress (<http://www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr/en/>).

³¹ Though multipurpose indicators help reduce the number of indicators, they may be less useful for informing policy decisions, since they reflect multiple dimensions of outcomes by design.

³² See paragraph 75 in http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1.

³³ See E/CN.3/2016/34, decision 47/101 (i) E/CN.3/2016/34, decision 47/101 (i) (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/47th-session/documents/Report-on-the-47th-session-of-the-statistical-commission-E.pdf>).

following up the European Commission Communication “Next steps for a sustainable European future”³⁴, Eurostat has developed an EU SDG indicator set³⁵ for regular monitoring of the SDGs in the EU context from 2017 onwards. OECD has carried out a pilot study on measuring distance to SDG targets based on data available in OECD databases (not necessarily confirming to global SDG indicators). CIS-Stat has established SDG indicators for CIS countries based on a recent survey on relevance and availability of global SDG indicators in these countries.

66. As with national indicators, the demand for regional indicators should come from the policy side. Should such a demand emerge for the UNECE region, a bottom-up approach should be used, taking into account the indicators selected by Eurostat, OECD and CIS Statistics Committee and the decisions of countries on their national indicators. Regional indicators for UNECE should align with the indicator sets of the other international and supra-national organisations in the region to achieve synergies and reduce burden on countries. The UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, held on 25 April 2017, discussed data and monitoring at a special Round Table. However, the need for regional indicators was not raised.

67. Interest in regional indicators may also originate from international agencies with mandates from their member countries to work in particular areas (See **Case Study 7** from UNFPA on regional indicators).

C. Dissemination and publication

68. National and sub-national statistical indicators for monitoring SDGs (as well as global and regional indicators) should be provided by the NSO in a transparent manner. The same system used to provide national statistics for the global SDG indicators should be the reference system for reporting on national and sub-national SDG indicators. The NSO also could publish data on non-statistical national indicators, or include references to those.

69. For information purposes, it is desirable for NSOs to post summary information about SDGs on their websites in their national language(s) and/or English.³⁶

D. Recommendations for National Statistical Offices – National and sub-national indicators

- (a) If there is policy demand for national SDG indicators, NSOs should be proactive and identify indicators to measure the achievement of SDGs and targets in their countries, especially in priority policy areas, and in close cooperation with policymakers. If national sustainable development indicator set does not exist, the global set can be used as a starting point.
- (b) National and sub-national statistical indicators for monitoring of SDGs (as well as global and regional indicators) should be provided in a transparent manner by NSOs.

³⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/communication-next-steps-sustainable-europe-20161122_en.pdf (COM(2016) 739 adopted on 22 November 2016; section 3.3).

³⁵ The list of EU SDG indicators is available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/sdi/overview>. The full online implementation of the indicator set, including figures, is foreseen in November 2017 together with the release of the first EU SDG monitoring report.

³⁶ See, for example, the approach of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany (<https://www.destatis.de/EN/FactsFigures/Indicators/SDG/SDG.html>).

E. Actions for the Steering Group – National and sub-national indicators

1. Short-term (completed before 2017 CES plenary session)

- (a) Identifying those CES member countries that intend to or are establishing national SDG indicators [information available on wiki].
- (b) Exchanging experiences on the selection of national SDG indicators and/or adjustment of existing SDI sets to align with the SDGs at the Expert Meeting on statistics for SDGs (April 2017).

2. Medium-term (to be completed before 2018 CES plenary session)

- (a) Identify guiding principles for selecting national SDG indicators and/or adjusting existing SDI sets to align with SDG indicators.
- (b) Present guiding principles on selection of national SDG indicators and/or adjusting existing SDI sets to SDGs.

3. Long-term actions (to be completed after 2018 CES plenary session)

- (a) In consultation with the UNECE High-level Group on the Modernization of Statistics, consider broadening data sources, expanding surveys and using administrative data to facilitate reporting for national SDG indicators.
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VI. PROVIDING DATA ON GLOBAL SDG INDICATORS

70. The section considers how data flows are (or may be optimally) organised between national, regional and global levels to efficiently and robustly yield globally harmonized SDG statistics. Systematic provision of data for global SDG indicators is needed for effective follow-up and review of Agenda 2030. To ensure consistency and avoid duplication, it is important to have a coordinated approach between the different levels, taking account of existing reporting mechanisms.

71. The section considers the organization of data flows from the country viewpoint. Accordingly, it focuses on minimizing the data provision burden of countries (including duplication of effort), ensuring country ownership of the data, and avoiding inconsistencies between the data produced by countries and by international organizations. The section describes an understanding of the situation as of Spring 2017, aiming to familiarize countries with different possibilities, and to identify issues where further clarification and/or discussion is needed. The section will be developed further in the next Edition of the Road Map.

72. In the past several months, discussions on data flows have emerged at different fora at global and regional level (at UNSC (decision 48/101) and its High-level Forum in March 2017; IAEG-SDGs in March 2017, the Coordinating Committee of Statistical Activities (CCSA) in March 2017³⁷, and the UNECE Expert Meeting on statistics for SDGs 10-12 April 2017). There is agreement on general principles, but the procedures and mechanisms of implementation, and the underlying assumptions and needs of the actors involved remain to be explored.

73. The aim of the global SDG indicator framework is to provide the basis for the UN Secretary General's report for the annual High-level Political Forum (HLPF). The SG report uses global and regional aggregates and, in principle, does not present national data. However, the globally harmonized national data (provided by UN agencies) and regional and global aggregates are available in the global SDG indicator database maintained by UNSD. In addition to the SG report, HLPF considers voluntary national reviews by countries. These reviews should also make use of national data (the recommended template for the voluntary country reports includes a statistical annex). It is not yet clear how national data (provided by NSOs) would be received and harmonized by UN custodian agencies in order to produce the regional and global aggregates. Nonetheless, in practice, the process of data collection on SDG indicators and preparation of the reports to HLPF is already ongoing.³⁸

74. That does not mean, however, that the processes for providing data to support the follow-up and review are already fixed and cannot be improved. The international organizations responsible for different parts of the SG report have done their best to begin their task within the current constraints of time, data availability, and the scope and complexity of the 2030 Agenda. Many aspects of providing statistics for global SDG indicators are under revision as best practices are established and the overall process matures.

³⁷ CCSA "Draft Principles and practices of global data reporting and data sharing for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" at http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/ge.32/2017/mtg1/Annex_2_-_CCSA_reporting_principles_for_SDGs_28_03_2017.pdf.

³⁸ The first Secretary General's report on progress towards SDGs was issued in June 2016 and the second one in July 2017, using data that are currently available. Forty-four countries have volunteered for the national review in 2017.

75. For example, in parallel, statistical community is engaged in the systematic refinement and revision the global indicators, methodologies and data flows. There are many opportunities for improving data availability and quality but also establishing efficient mechanisms for providing data and metadata, and ensuring coherence between the data available from countries and from international organizations. Clarifying the international processes as soon as possible is very important for the national statistical systems to be able to plan their actions and resources, and for international organizations to perform their tasks efficiently. Perhaps as important, clarifying roles supports the very good working relationships between NSOs and international organizations. Therefore, more guidance for countries on how the SDG indicators are used for the SG report and the voluntary national reviews is warranted.

76. Different countries may choose different options for providing data on SDG indicators depending on statistical capabilities and national context (see **Case Studies 8 for the United Kingdom and 9 for Mexico**). To facilitate the process, general guidelines on the data provision framework would be needed.

A. National mechanisms for providing data on SDGs

77. Several countries are developing “national reporting platforms” (NRPs) for SDG indicators (see **Case Studies 10 for the United States, 11 for Poland and 12 for United Kingdom**). Additionally it is likely that such platforms will be developed at regional and global levels by international organisations such as UNSD (the SDG indicators global database already exists³⁹) and other UN organisations. Therefore, coordination is necessary.

78. An SDG indicator platform can have three components: (i) a data collection or submission portal that allows different data providers to submit/post data; (ii) a production database and (iii) a dissemination portal where users can find tables, texts and publications. The platform is wider than just a dissemination database as it may include a submission mechanism for data providers outside NSO and a production database. The implementation of a dissemination portal may also be part of a communication strategy (see Section VIII).

79. The CES Steering Group proposes that SDG indicator databases and dissemination platforms used by countries meet the following specifications, which align with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics⁴⁰ and Agenda 2030:

- **Comparability:** NRPs should present data that are produced according to internationally agreed methods so that they can be used for compiling regional and global indicators (based on the FPOS 8, 9, 10);
- **Transparency:** NRPs should permit posting of relevant metadata and other background documentation regarding limitations of the underlying statistics. This should include descriptions of any revisions of the data (why they were made and by whom) (based on the FPOS 3);
- **Timeliness:** NRPs should permit reporting of statistics as they become available by member countries (that is, on a continuous basis). Where statistics reported by a country have not yet been standardized for international comparability, this should be clearly indicated by the platform (based on the FPOS 5); and
- **Public accessibility:** NRPs should permit public access to the compiled indicators (based on the FPOS 1, 7).

³⁹ <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>.

⁴⁰ <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/dnss/gp/fundprinciples.aspx>.

80. NRP would be the authoritative source of data on SDG indicators provided or agreed by the country. NRPs should facilitate the posting of data required for calculation of global trends and indicators, and, coordinated with NSOs, data produced by other organizations on a country's behalf. NSOs may limit the provision of country data to the global and regional indicators only.

81. Approaches to NRPs could differ among countries. Nevertheless, to assure their usefulness for SDG data provision purposes, the CES Steering Group suggests the following minimum requirements:

- data for compiling the indicators should be taken from official statistics whenever possible;
- time series ideally from 2000 onwards; and
- inclusion of basic metadata (e.g., definitions of indicators and data sources).

82. To facilitate international comparability and ease of access, NRPs should be designed to promote interoperability of statistics and metadata. This will significantly facilitate the work of international agencies who will need to collect, aggregate and analyse the data for SDGs reporting at global and regional levels. It will also facilitate sharing of statistics, metadata and data science contributions across countries more generally.

83. In the case of countries that do not already have NRPs for SDGs, the minimum requirements could be accomplished by including SDG indicators in existing databases or by publishing a table with the SDG indicators (e.g., in Excel format).

84. Countries should aim to present all SDG indicators available at the national level in their NRPs, regardless of data sources (official statistics as well as data from other providers should be included). Metadata on data sources should be presented together with data.

85. If proxy indicators are used in a country (see Part D in this section), they should be labelled as such in NRPs to distinguish them easily from official global indicators.

86. Ensuring appropriate mechanisms for data validation and quality control is essential. NSOs are responsible for coordinating data from official statistics and their quality. For data from other sources, NSOs do not have the authority to apply quality assurance mechanisms directly (such as during the collection of the data). In these cases, it is essential that NSOs ask the data provider to document the data quality and the methods used to produce the data.

B. Data flow models

87. Provision of data on SDG indicators and the related data flow models need to be considered at different levels: global, regional, national, sub-national and thematic levels.

1. Data flows at the national level

88. At the national level, different scenarios for data flows are possible. These depend on the structure and level of development of the statistical system in the country: centralised, decentralised or a combination of these. The data flows for SDGs indicators probably will be based on the already existing mechanisms.

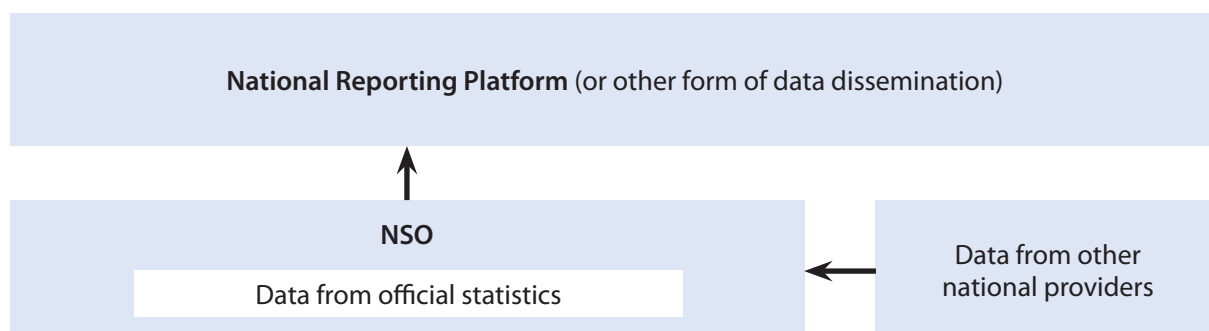
a. Data Flow Model 1: NSO is a coordinator of all SDG indicators

89. A recommended model is that NSO coordinates all SDG data provision in the country (i.e., statistical and non-statistical indicators are gathered by NSO from all country data providers and disseminated together). If there is an NRP, the agency maintaining the platform could naturally become the coordinator

of SDG data provision. The NSO's coordinating role is also linked with assessments of data availability in the country (see Section IV). If the NSO leads such assessments, it will need to clarify the data sources in the country and establish links with all the agencies providing data. Additionally, NSOs can attend national policy discussions regarding reporting priorities and sensitivities.

90. According to this data flow model (see Figure 1.) NSOs publish all SDG national statistics via NRP or in some other form (table or database). Any agency interested can 'pull' the data from NSOs. In this case, there are no 'push' data flows from national to regional or global level. Such a solution will reduce reporting burden for the country.

Figure 1. Data Flow Model 1

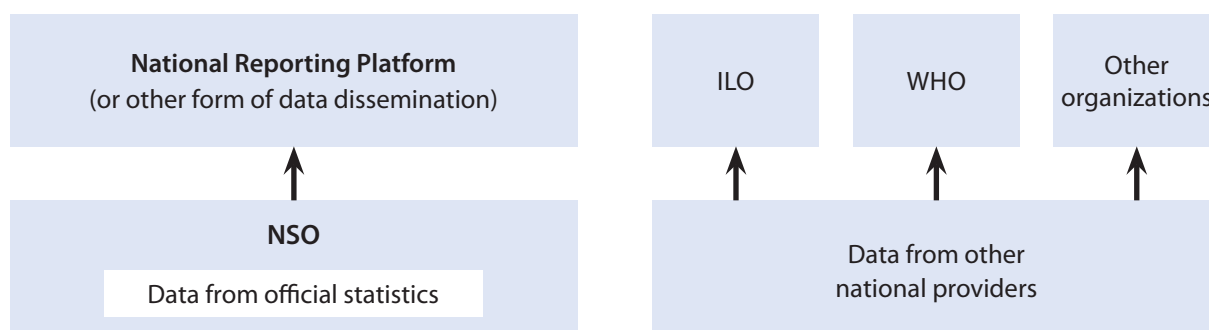


b. Data Flow Model 2: NSO and other agencies in the country both provide SDG statistics

91. In practice, other agencies producing data in the country often send them directly to the international organizations responsible for specific indicators, possibly bypassing the NSO. For example, the Ministry of Health may send data directly to the World Health Organisation and the Ministry of Labour to the International Labour Organization (ILO).

92. It is possible that NSO will take responsibility for only those SDG indicators for which NSO produces the underlying statistics and leave the rest to other agencies. Another possible model is that NSO will coordinate all statistical indicators and that non-statistical indicators will be provided by some other agency (e.g. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a special agency/unit set up for this purpose) or by international organizations (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Data Flow Model 2



93. Countries may also decide to rely on already existing mechanisms for submitting data to the international organizations rather than establishing extensive national systems for SDG indicators. However, in this case, a solution has to be found for submitting these data that are not covered by an existing data submission mechanism. Coordination is also needed to ensure that all available data for SDGs are provided.

94. The quality assurance process is a fundamental aspect of data flow models. Agencies responsible for data flows at the national level could have different roles in quality assurance: (i) acting as a “post-office” and simply making data available on NRPs (or sending it to international level); or (ii) undertaking various degrees of quality control, from basic validation to full quality control. The CES Steering Group recommends that NSOs consider their role in this process and clarify it with other producers who submit data through NSO.

95. In the case of the second data flow model, NSOs need to be informed about the other data flows to ensure coherence between these data and official statistics. There may be legitimate reasons why data differ but these differences should be determined and explained. Data should be accompanied by adequate metadata that will explain the differences. As already mentioned in Section IV, NSOs consider it important to verify the data submitted on the country’s behalf by other national or international agencies. This will require close cooperation with other national data providers. The international agencies may send the data for verification to their counterpart in the country (that is, not NSO, but perhaps the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and NSO may not be aware of the request. Or, there may be different opinions between the statistical office and another national data provider regarding which statistics are most appropriate to provide on behalf of the country. Such differences have to be addressed at the national level.

96. Based on the Declaration endorsed at CES 2015, the CES Steering Group recommends NSOs to have a key coordinating role at the national level for the global SDG indicators. Several data flow models can achieve this, so chosen model should be the one that best accounts for national circumstances. For example, the implementation of the first model supports reporting transparency and enables international comparability of data. Moreover, the model emphasizes the central role of NSOs and contributes towards coherence of data. On the other hand, such a solution requires significant resources at NSOs. For some indicators, NSOs may lack the required expertise and non-statistical indicators may require national policy input rather than provision of statistics.

2. Data flows from national to regional and/or global level

97. To clarify the data flows at regional and global level, the issue has been discussed at various fora involving the relevant actors, including IAEG-SDGs, UNSC and the UNECE Expert Meeting on statistics for SDGs (April 2017). Some general principles/recommendations have been developed concerning the roles of different players in this process.

98. In accordance with Agenda 2030⁴¹, national statistical systems collect and provide data and metadata for the global review and follow-up of progress towards SDGs. International statistical systems compile these data and provide internationally comparable data in their respective domains. The agencies responsible for specific SDG indicators are called “custodian agencies” (their role is explained further below). Regional organizations sometimes facilitate the transmission of data and metadata from the national to the global level. IAEG-SDGs⁴² recommends that:

⁴¹ http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E, para 83.

⁴² IAEG-SDG report to 48th UNSC E/CN.3/2017/2, available at: <http://undocs.org/E/CN.3/2017/2>.

- (a) International and regional entities harmonise their data collection to reduce the reporting burden on countries.
- (b) Data relating to a particular indicator be collected by only one international agency.
- (c) Compilation of global indicators be based to the greatest extent possible on comparable and standardized national official statistics provided by countries to the international statistical systems.
- (d) When other sources and methodologies are used, these will be reviewed and agreed by national statistical authorities and presented in a transparent manner.
- (e) A process should be established for countries to review data from international agencies so that data discrepancies between national and international sources can be addressed or explained and other concerns from countries can be flagged and clarified.
- (f) Quality assurance procedures at the national and international levels be followed.

99. IAE-SDG has identified possible custodian agencies and other partner agencies for each SDG indicator for global reporting and indicator development. The main responsibilities of these agencies are to collect data from countries under existing mandates and through reporting mechanisms, to compile internationally comparable data, to support increased adoption and compliance with internationally agreed standards, and to strengthen national statistical capacity. The custodian agencies should also communicate and coordinate with national statistical systems in a transparent manner (including on the validation of estimates and necessary data adjustments); compile the international data series, calculate global and regional aggregates and provide them, along with the metadata, to UNSD; prepare the storyline for the annual global progress report; and coordinate the methodological development of indicators.⁴³

100. IAE-SDGs has established a drafting group to develop guidelines on how countries and custodian agencies can work together to contribute to the data flows necessary to have harmonised statistics for global reporting (co-led by Germany and Cameroon)⁴⁴. The guidelines are planned to be submitted to the 49th session of UNSC taking place in March 2018.

101. To facilitate the process, international agencies are invited to share their data collection calendars, provide information about already established data flows from countries and a list of national agencies providing data to the international system. This request has been also acknowledged in the decisions by 48th session of the UN Statistical Commission.

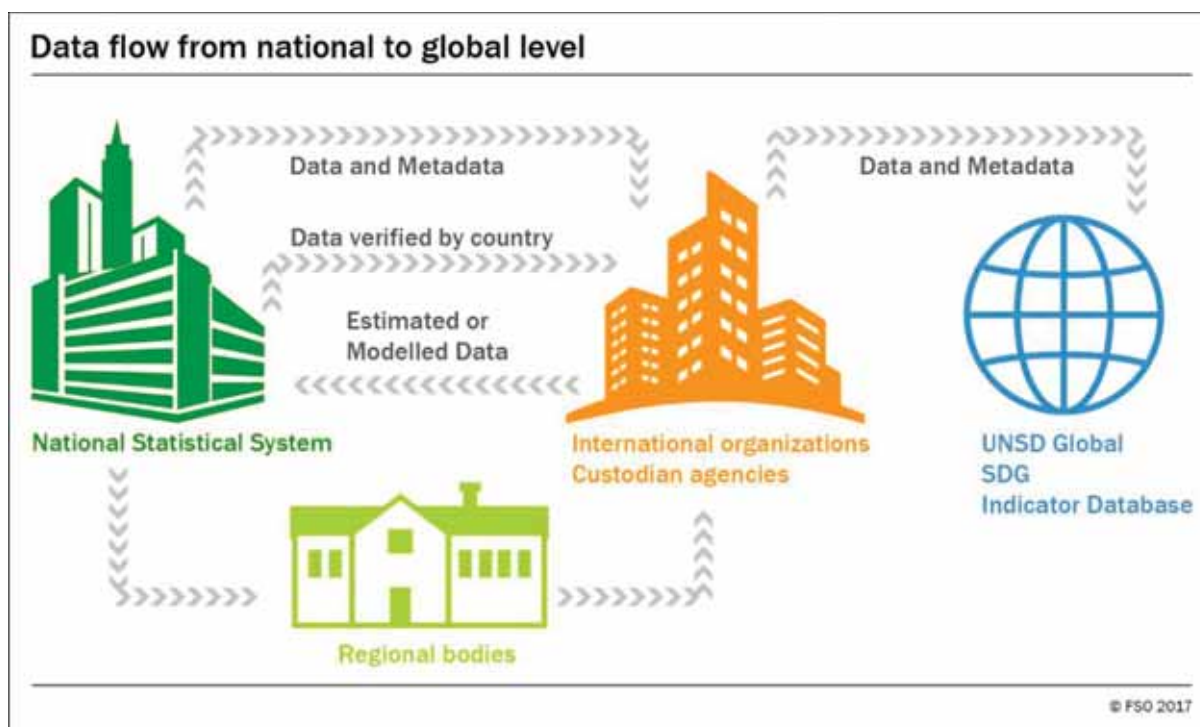
102. Between national, regional and global levels, several data flows scenarios are possible. Establishing clear responsibilities for the national statistical systems and custodian agencies while maintaining flexibility to address national circumstances and non-traditional data sources is essential. A fundamental principle should be to avoid duplication or the creation of parallel reporting streams, if established flows already exist. It is likely that there will not be one “standard” data model used for all indicators, but different models will be used for different indicators and maybe also for (groups of) different countries, depending on the availability and suitability of NRPs. A generic scheme for the data flows is provided in Figure 3. The following data flow is one example of an approach that could be used for providing SDG data:

⁴³ Report of IAE-SDGs to 48th session of UNSC, E/CN.3/2017/2.

⁴⁴ Report of UNSC 48th session, Decision 48/101 (I).

- (a) Data can be sent from countries to the international organizations (custodian agencies) either through the established data submission channels, or through new channels set up for SDG indicators. The regional organizations sometimes facilitate the transmission of data and metadata from the national to the global level (such a model is used successfully, for example, in the case of national accounts data submission⁴⁵).
- (b) Countries make available their data on SDG indicators on National Reporting Platforms. International organizations/custodian agencies (as well as any other users) can pull the data from NRPs.
- (c) The custodian agencies compile the data and forward it to the global level (UNSD). Countries should have an opportunity to verify their (harmonized) data prior to the release by the custodian agency (for example, when the data are modelled or adjusted to ensure international comparability).
- (d) A central SDG database (maintained by UNSD) is compiled using data pulled from international organizations responsible for different subject matter areas (the database was released in summer 2016 and data are added as they become available⁴⁶).

Figure 3. Data Flows from national to global level



⁴⁵ Through a joint questionnaire, Eurostat collects the data from EU countries, OECD from OECD countries, UNECE from the remaining countries of the region and UNSD from other countries.

⁴⁶ See <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>.

103. It is important to learn from the experience with MDGs where international organizations were responsible for provision of all data. Sometimes the organizations (or their country offices) conducted their own surveys in countries of which NSOs were not always aware. In other cases, national agencies (such as Ministries of Health or Education) sent the data directly to international organizations, without going through NSO. This resulted in data in international databases differing from country data in some cases by as much as 30-40%. The model also did not build statistical capacity of NSOs, or make full use of statistics that could be generated by the country. The resulting statistics also did not adequately support country-led accountability for progress in achieving MDGs. Even if it were desirable to do so, this approach could not be simply expanded to include SDGs, as they cover a wider range of subject areas and all countries. It would require countries to send data to as many as about 40 different organizations (there are over 40 custodian agencies, many indicators have several custodian agencies), possibly using different questionnaires and following different data collection mechanisms. Standardization and harmonization of data and metadata contents and formats will be needed to make it work in practice (e.g., templates for metadata, standardised questionnaires, common data formats, etc.).

104. Quality assurance at an international level will require a process for harmonizing data provided by different countries. Any adjustments made to data to improve comparability should be reported to the country's NSO and be recorded in the metadata. Metadata for most of the SDG indicators submitted to date by international organizations are available at the website dedicated to SDGs⁴⁷ but their descriptions are incomplete and need improvement.

105. Countries, in agreement with their NSOs,⁴⁸ may choose to rely on reporting by other entities. Existing data flows to international organizations/custodian agencies should be used to avoid double reporting. It would not be necessary (but entirely at countries' discretion) to re-post national data on a dedicated NRP.

106. The Resolution agreed by UNSC in March 2017 (proposed to ECOSOC and later to General Assembly for adoption) urges international organizations to base the global review on data produced by national statistical systems. If specific country data are not available, the international organisation should consult with concerned countries to produce and validate modelled estimates before publication. International organizations should communicate and coordinate among themselves to avoid duplicate reports, ensure consistency of data and reduce response burden on countries. For transparency, international organisations should all provide the methodologies used to harmonize country data for international comparability.⁴⁹

107. Custodian agencies may use the online databases of other organisations such as UNECE, Eurostat and OECD to retrieve data posted there. At the same time, Eurostat and OECD do not plan to establish themselves as data hubs for the global SDG indicators for the countries of the European Statistical System or other countries. Eurostat does not plan to start new data collections with respect to the global indicators. However, Eurostat's online database can be used as a source for the global indicators, from which the custodian agencies can "pull" available data for the countries of the ESS.⁵⁰ In such cases, country verification of the data prior to release is necessary.

⁴⁷ See <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/metadata-compilation>.

⁴⁸ See the *CES Declaration on the Role of NSOs in SDG Monitoring* (ECE/CES/89/Add.1). (http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/2015/CES_89_Add.1-E.pdf).

⁴⁹ https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/48th-session/documents/Resolution_on_Indicators_Clean_Version-E.pdf.

⁵⁰ http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/ge.32/2017/mtg1/PDF/EN_EM_4A2-Eurostat-IOs.pdf; https://circabc.europa.eu/sd/a/d41cc0f3-db10-482c-87a1-bad14a13042a/SDI_WG_17_04_Setting%20the%20scene.pdf.

108. From the country viewpoint, it is important that regional and global data flows meet the following criteria:

- reporting lines are clear and duplication is avoided;
- NSOs have an opportunity to validate the data that are published about their country by international organisations, particularly if there are discrepancies. Ideally the data should be the same, or difference clearly justified and explained;
- quality control procedures are in place for published data;
- the data are produced and disseminated according to the FPOS; and
- metadata are available to document the methods and classifications.

109. UNSC in March 2017 expressed support for a country data lab project currently underway by UNSD where national and international data are presented side by side to facilitate a dialogue between countries and custodian agencies, explain discrepancies and improve coordination.

110. The CES Steering Group on statistics for SDGs undertook a pilot study of data flows on selected SDG indicators to examine the practical implications, steps involved and the needs of countries, custodian agencies and UNSD in producing global statistics on SDGs for follow-up and review by HLPF. The pilot described the experiences, needs and resources of the main actors involved. It was carried out over summer of 2017 aiming to provide input to the guidelines on data flows developed under IAEG-SDGs.

111. The CES Steering Group recommends that NSOs choose the data flow model which would provide the most efficient transfer of the data from the national to the global level considering their national circumstances.

C. Collaboration with international organizations

112. According to Agenda 2030, regional organisations should contribute to regional follow-up and review of the SDGs but also support the process of the global follow-up and review⁵¹. To accomplish these tasks, horizontal cooperation between actors at the regional level as well as vertical cooperation between actors at national, regional and global levels is required.

1. Ensuring comparability of statistics and metadata

113. Clear responsibilities should be defined to ensure comparability of data and to avoid inconsistencies between data produced by NSOs and by different international, regional and supranational organisations. Data flows to global organisations should concern only global indicators. Likewise, data flows for regional indicators should be organised at the regional level.

114. The fact that many of the data and metadata relevant to the SDG indicators have already been collected and stored in a database by Eurostat for ESS countries should be borne in mind for the sake of efficiency, consistency and control of reporting burden on NSOs. The same applies to data collected and stored in OECD databases.

⁵¹ See paragraphs 80 and 83 in http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1.

2. Standardization of data transmission

115. The Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) may be a useful resource in ensuring standardization of data and metadata provision to regional or global SDG databases. SDMX is a set of technical standards and content-oriented guidelines, together with an IT architecture and tools, used for the efficient exchange and sharing of statistical data and metadata. This has worked well across multiple country reporting platforms.

116. A working group on SDMX for the SDG indicators has been established under the auspices of the IAEG-SDGs. It is tasked with developing an SDMX solution for SDGs. In autumn 2016 the group was set up and a chair appointed (Colombia). The first meeting took place in Aguascalientes, Mexico in October 2016. The group plans to build on the experiences gained in working with SDMX for the Millennium Development Goal indicators and will focus on scoping current and future data availability for global indicators and developing initial data structure definitions by the fourth quarter of 2017.

117. To support reporting for MDGs, SDMX was expanded to include a Data Structure Definition (DSD), facilitating data exchange between UNSD, UNESCO and the World Bank. Another MDG-related initiative, CountryData, was developed to support data exchange with NSOs.⁵² Indicators and metadata from NSOs are delivered to the CountryData platform, where they are then compared to international statistics and metadata to identify and address discrepancies. These tools can be used and adjusted for SDGs.

3. Collaboration on regional statistical products

118. To put in place an effective SDG reporting system within the UNECE region, collaboration is needed in different areas to ensure that member state priorities are taken into consideration and duplication of reporting effort is avoided.

119. UNECE currently maintains a small database providing macroeconomic, gender, transport, timber and MDG data. This database could be extended to include SDG indicators.

120. OECD maintains a wealth of data relevant to SDGs in its various statistical databases. It has supplied data and metadata for the UN's global indicator framework, both directly and in collaboration with other agencies. It recently published a pilot study, "Measuring Distance to the SDGs Targets"⁵³ using 86 indicators included in its databases (although not necessarily the global indicators) to assess the distance OECD countries have to travel to reach the SDG targets. Further work on SDGs may be considered in the context of decisions on the OECD's future Programmes of Work and Budget.

121. From 2017 onwards, the European Commission (Eurostat) will carry out a regular monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals in an EU context. This is a separate exercise from the UN global and regional monitoring. Eurostat has developed a reference indicator framework for the EU SDG monitoring,⁵⁴ as announced in section 3.3 of the EU Commission Communication "Next steps for a sustainable European future."⁵⁵

⁵² See <https://data.un.org/>.

⁵³ See <http://www.oecd.org/std/measuring-distance-to-the-sdgs-targets.htm>.

⁵⁴ See also Section V.B.

⁵⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/communication-next-steps-sustainable-europe-20161122_en.pdf. (COM(2016) 739 adopted on 22 November 2016).

122. As much as possible, the EU SDG indicator framework uses indicators based on European statistics but also includes indicators from other sources provided they satisfy agreed minimum requirements (e.g., being regularly published by its producer, having a documented methodology, using methods that satisfy statistical quality requirements etc.). The EU SDG indicator framework creates no additional burden to the EU Member States. It focuses on indicators that are already available or on which work is already ongoing for other purposes and that have a good chance to be available in time to be included in the 2017 EU SDG monitoring. Therefore, EU Member States do not have to establish new data flows to Eurostat, nor to set up national reporting platforms for the purpose of EU SDG monitoring.

123. To avoid inconsistencies in data analysis and aggregation for the reports of the international and supra-national organisations in the UNECE region, maintaining good cooperation among Eurostat, OECD and UNECE is important. The regional offices of the thematic UN agencies (UNESCO, ILO, WHO, etc.) should be involved in data collection (see **Case Studies 12 by UNICEF and 13 by UNFPA**). Academia and data analysts in general may provide methodological support.

D. Special situations for data provision

1. Data providers from outside official statistics

124. In several cases, NSOs routinely complement statistics calculated from official surveys or registers with data collected by third parties, such as other levels of government, businesses, research institutes, media outlets, NGOs, etc. These approaches may also be used when reporting national statistics for SDG indicators, if they do not compromise statistical data quality.

2. Providing non-statistical indicators

125. Some SDG targets are to be monitored by non-statistical indicators (e.g., YES/NO response indicators). The approach to providing data on such indicators will differ among countries depending on the chosen data flow model. When NSO coordinates all SDG indicators in the country, non-statistical indicators should be included and presented together with the statistical ones.

3. Using proxy indicators

126. In some cases, data providers for a particular country may have statistics or other forms of information that are similar to, but not exactly the same as, a specific global SDG indicator. These are called “proxy” indicators and countries may wish to report them when reporting the global indicator is not possible. Proxy indicators should be clearly noted as such when reported. If reporting of both the proxy and global indicator is possible, the decision to do so will be affected by timing and funding considerations. Other considerations will include the frequency of use of the “proxy” indicator in policy making and breaks in time series, among others. It would be useful to share experiences with using the proxy indicators and to harmonise the definition of proxy indicator as used by different countries.

E. Recommendations for National Statistical Offices – providing data on global SDG indicators

- (a) Countries should determine the approach and data flow models at the national level for providing data on SDG indicators (whether centralised in one focal point or decentralised);
 - (b) NSOs should consider the development of NRPs for SDG indicators;
-

- (c) NSOs should meet the following minimum requirements when providing data on SDG indicators:
 - data for compiling the indicators should be taken from official statistics whenever possible;
 - time series from ideally 2000 onwards; and
 - inclusion of basic metadata (e.g., definitions of indicators and data sources);
- (d) NSOs should direct users to their websites to find national statistics and national metadata prepared for global SDG indicators. NSOs also should direct users to UNSD's website to find country-specific statistics and metadata that have been adjusted for international comparison;
- (e) NSOs should maintain networks so that the development of the system for SDG indicators from all country providers can be understood and so that investments can be of use to the country as a whole; and
- (f) Special attention should be paid to ensure coherence of data reported at all levels and to provide the required metadata.

F. Actions for the Steering Group – providing data on global SDG indicators

1. Short-term (completed by 2017 CES meeting)

- (a) The Steering Group established a task force on reporting SDG indicators using NRPs;
- (b) Through the task force on NRPs, provide countries with best practices on NRPs; enable exchange of experience regarding NRPs; and define guidelines for countries to facilitate decisions about reporting approach and the development of NRPs. [Ongoing]

2. Medium-term (to be completed by the 2018 CES meeting)

- (a) Contact IAEG-SDGs and UNSD on the concerns expressed at the Expert Meeting on statistics for SDGs (April 2017) on contact lists and schedule for data provision for SDG indicators;
- (b) Carry out a pilot study to map specific data flow processes for selected SDG indicators thereby better understanding the practical needs of NSOs, custodian agencies and UNSD;
- (c) Provide results from the pilot study to IAEG-SDGs for consideration in Fall 2017;
- (d) Consider the need for regional reporting platforms;
- (e) Invite custodian agencies to discuss their plans and intended use of National Reporting Platforms and development of processes to facilitate "machine pulling" from NRPs;
- (f) Work on strengthening the international coordination and transparency, to ensure the country ownership of data on SDG indicators and coordination with NSOs; and
- (g) Work to clarify the data flows to avoid double reporting from countries.

3. Long-term (to be completed after the 2018 CES meeting)

Coordinate the CES reporting framework in order to ensure consistency of data and metadata at regional level.

VII. BUILDING CAPACITY FOR SDG STATISTICS

127. This section aims to provide CES countries with a common approach to facilitate increased and better coordinated capacity building for statistical data production on SDGs. Coordination of efforts on capacity building must consider CES countries' common capacity building needs and their assessments of the feasibility of indicators. The goal is to enhance coordination, exchange experience and provide technical guidance to CES countries while addressing prioritisation of common needs.

128. All countries need improvement of their statistical capacities to be able to produce the required global list of SDG indicators. However, when discussing capacity building, the terminology and consideration of this topic is usually focused on providing statistical training and technical assistance from developed to less developed statistical systems. This approach is not fitting for assessing and analysing how to improve statistical capacities in all countries. It would be helpful to have a common understanding of which are the capacities to be built. These go beyond producing selected products or indicators, dealing with institutional, legal, financial, human resources and technical issues. The Expert Meeting on statistics for SDGs (10-12 April 2017) concluded that there is a need to clarify the conceptual issues and terminology around capacity building. It was proposed to set up a small task team to develop a concept note on what statistical capacity building means in the context of SDGs.

129. Based on the work of this task team, the Steering Group will discuss this at the next physical meeting and report back to the CES Bureau and the CES. The task team will be in close contact with the PARIS21 Task Team on "New Approaches to Capacity Development – CD 4.0". The current Section will be further developed in the next editions of the Road Map to give a more balanced approach to capacity building to cover the needs of all countries regardless of the level of their statistical development.

130. The term "capacity building" can refer to activities at different levels. First, there are activities within a country. These include how the NSO defines the strategies for building capacities in the national statistical system and how the NSO creates partnerships with relevant stakeholders. This aspect is important for all countries, both developed and less developed. Secondly, there are activities of a country or an international organization to support other countries in the production of new statistics, including organizing workshops and training. These activities can be viewed from both the donor perspective and from the point of view of the country that receives capacity building support; they can be called bilateral activities. Third, there are regional activities, including the sharing of experiences in general and discussing new approaches (such as use of new data sources); they can be called multilateral activities. The recommendations and suggested actions presented at the end of this section take into account these three aspects of capacity building activities.

131. The development of Agenda 2030 has renewed interest in the quality and availability of statistics for management, program design and monitoring performance. Most of the necessary statistics are produced by national statistical systems. These data are crucial inputs to good governance. Improving statistics requires investment in national statistical capacity, the sharing of experiences and discussion of new approaches.

132. Agenda 2030 calls "for increased support for strengthening data collection and capacity-building in Member States, to develop national and global baselines where they do not yet exist". In addition, member states commit to address "this gap in data collection so as to better inform the measurement of progress, in particular for those targets below which do not have clear numerical targets."⁵⁶ The Goal 17 is

⁵⁶ See paragraph 57 in http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1.

about strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development. This is valid also in statistics and a responsibility of all NSOs regardless of the development level. SDG targets 17.18⁵⁷ and 17.19⁵⁸ refer directly to the need for statistical capacity building. The first target expresses the need to enhance capacity building to increase the availability of high quality data by 2020. The second target calls for capacity building in support of development of a system to measure progress that complements the measurement of GDP.

133. All countries will need to improve their statistical capacity to provide data for the follow-up and review of SDGs. The results of initial assessments show that even the most developed countries can produce only about half of the global SDG indicators. The SDGs cover areas that are new for official statistics (such as governance in goal 16) and where new capacities need to be developed. They also require new data in traditional statistical areas, integration of data from across the economic, social and environmental domains, exploration of the potential of geospatial information and development of new kinds of disaggregations. This introduces new training needs, including the training of users to improve statistical literacy. Therefore, improving capacities should be considered in a wider sense than organising training and providing technical assistance to developing countries.

134. The means of developing the required capacities include:

- (a) use of internal resources; for example, through efficiencies created by the modernisation of official statistics (see Section C.1);
- (b) establishment of partnerships to make up for the capacity that is lacking in NSOs (see Section D); and
- (c) use of external resources and donors.

A. Experience from the Millennium Development Goals

135. Developing countries agreed to report progress against eight MDGs over the course of a fifteen year period that ended in 2015. Extensive capacity building efforts were undertaken to support MDG monitoring. In spite of this, at the end of 2015, just 26% of the data reported for the MDGs were provided by countries themselves through various UN agencies. An additional 2% of the data reported by countries required adjustment by UN agencies, while 23% was modelled by UN agencies and 3% was estimated by other entities. The remaining 46% of the data needed for MDGs were not available for reporting at the end of 2015.⁵⁹

136. In 2013, the Task Team on Lessons Learned from MDG Monitoring published a report reflecting on the MDG experience. The report indicates that the “MDG framework fostered the strengthening of statistical systems and the compilation and use of quality data to improve policy design and monitoring by national governments and international organizations.”⁶⁰ However, MDGs were often seen by countries as an international agency-driven “top-down” initiative. There were discrepancies between national and

⁵⁷ By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.

⁵⁸ By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries.

⁵⁹ See *A World that Counts*, p.12 (<http://www.undatarevolution.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/A-World-That-Counts2.pdf>).

⁶⁰ See *Lessons Learned from MDG Monitoring From a Statistical Perspective* p. 3. ([http://unstats.un.org/unsd/broader-progress/pdf/Lesson%20Learned%20from%20MDG%20Monitoring_2013-03-22%20\(IAEG\).pdf](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/broader-progress/pdf/Lesson%20Learned%20from%20MDG%20Monitoring_2013-03-22%20(IAEG).pdf)).

international data due to, among others, different methodologies, data sources and time lags between releases. And although there was improvement over the MDG period, the report notes that the “statistical capacity in many countries is still limited.”⁶¹ It recommended that national statistical capacity, data quality and data availability be considered explicitly in Agenda 2030 (which, as noted, is the case).

B. Strategy for capacity building at the national level

137. Monitoring SDGs requires many different types of data, in line with the so-called “data revolution” called for by the former UN Secretary-General.⁶² Official statistics will play a critical role but they will have to be complemented by data from other sources, including the private sector, academia and civil society.

138. The Steering Group recognises that a capacity building strategy is crucial for Agenda 2030, given the multitude of indicators called for (some of which require considerable development). The first step for a strategy is an assessment of where countries stand not only with respect to data availability for SDG indicators, but on capacity to produce data across all statistical domains. Secondly, NSOs should assess the level of capacity in different areas. Third, countries should develop, if necessary in consultation with donor countries and international organisations, concrete actions for statistical training and capacity building taking into account existing structures and mechanisms. Such capacity building should take a long term view beyond countries current needs. As forth step, partnerships should be defined.

139. These four steps could be covered under the long-term statistical programmes or strategies, or in case of developing countries, in a national strategy for the development of statistics (NSDS).⁶³ If such a strategy has been already prepared, the four steps could be integrated in the existing strategy. The four steps are described in more detail below.

140. As capacity building is a middle- and long-term process, countries should make their own needs assessments and set their own priorities. Section IV above established a readiness assessment framework that can be used for country-led assessments, including of statistical training and capacity building needs. A readiness assessment is a good opportunity to inform policy makers of the statistics that are already available. It is also a useful means of communicating the areas in which resources are lacking. In addition to identifying data gaps, an analysis of the organizational obstacles and opportunities, actors involved (other data producers), policy needs, resource requirements and cost trade-offs, etc. is needed. Capacity can be increased either by building it in-house or by obtaining it from outside through outsourcing or partnerships.

141. After assessment of capacity building needs, it is key to establish priorities, as it can be expected that the available resources will not be sufficient to cover all needs. Development of a national road map (referring to Section III.C) or implementation plan that addresses these priorities will help to keep the capacity building focused and take into account the national circumstances.

142. Securing funding and building key partnerships are important components of successful capacity building projects. It is essential that the NSO and the broader statistical community have a dialogue with policy makers to ensure they are aware of current reporting limitations and understand the coordinating role the NSO should have in the process.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁶² See <http://www.undatarevolution.org/>.

⁶³ The term national strategy for the development of statistics is used specifically in the case of developing countries. In other countries its equivalent can be a strategic programme for developing statistics that has a longer-term horizon (it may be called a master plan, work programme, or any other long term development programme).

143. Capacity building efforts should focus on capacity to produce statistics rather than only on SDG indicators. Generally, countries have more statistics on the economy and demographics than on the environment. The Agenda 2030 constitutes an integrated approach where economy, social and environmental issues are considered together. Therefore countries will require capacity across all these domains. Capacity building should be holistic, addressing the different types of capacities together. It is more than training to produce individual statistical products. The capacities that have to be built also deal with issues of governance (statistical law and other relevant laws, institutional setup, the role of NSO, etc.), strategies and management of NSOs (planning and follow-up, dissemination, user relations, institutional learning), statistical methodology and IT architecture, quality assurance, metadata, etc.

144. A possible list of capacities could be as discussed at a seminar “Institutional cooperation for capacity development. The Nordic model” held during the UN Statistical Commission 48th session⁶⁴: (a) technical human resources (the practical skills needed to produce, analyse and disseminate statistics); (b) technical infrastructure (the equipment needed to do the work: buildings, computers, network, etc.); (c) organisational human resources (the skills needed to make the organization work efficiently together to fulfil the mandate); (d) organisational infrastructure (the systems needed to do the work (financial flows, legal framework, employment contracts, project management tools, quality framework, etc.); (e) finances (public and other funds to cover the cost of running the organization and producing the statistics); (f) strategic choices (priority of which statistics to produce, user orientation, dissemination strategies, national statistics development strategies); and (g) networks: functional cooperation between NSS partners, government and other user groups, international organisations, other statistics producers, academics, etc.

145. National strategies or long-term programmes for the development of statistics should consider several points relevant for improving capacities related to SDGs:

- (a) The focus of improving capacities in the first stage is expected to be on Tier 2 indicators, as the Tier 3 indicators will first require development of internationally agreed methodologies;
- (b) Developing coherent underlying statistics based on standard concepts and methods to enable the production of SDG indicators;
- (c) Involving many stakeholders and setting up partnerships; and
- (d) Need to define a clear division of labour and cooperation mechanisms to avoid duplication of effort.

146. Capacity building for the countries with less developed statistical systems should in addition consider:

- (a) Participation of a broad range of stakeholders in capacity building: donor countries, recipient countries, international organizations and funds, private funds, etc.;
- (b) Need for a national focal point to coordinate capacity building;
- (c) The capacity of recipients to absorb new capacity and capability of donors to manage the funds and projects; and
- (d) The sustainability of capacity after the capacity building projects have ended. Advocacy is important to explain to governments that adequate resources for statistics are required to meet the increased data needs for SDGs.

⁶⁴ <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/48th-session/side-events/20170307-1M-institutional-cooperation-for-capacity-development/>.

147. It would be useful to have a venue under CES where countries and international organizations could coordinate their actions and share their experiences on issues related to capacity building.

C. Existing structures and mechanisms

148. The Agenda 2030 is a huge opportunity for the statistical community to modernize and improve the capacity of national statistical systems. A lot of work has been done in this area in recent years. All new activities should be based on the existing structures and mechanisms. Competition between international organisations should be avoided. The burden on national statistical systems will be reduced if global, regional and national statistical activities were to use the same mechanisms and terms. Special role in building capacity for producing the SDG indicators have the custodian agencies who are responsible for specific SDG indicators and their compliance with internationally agreed standards. These organizations often have long-standing experience in the subject areas related to the SDG indicators that they are custodians of, and have been involved in developing the methodology for the indicators.

1. Modernization of official statistics and SDGs

149. Providing SDG data and indicators should consider the lessons and the experience of MDGs. At the global level, many countries will need to rely on data, statistics, and modelling completed on their behalf by other entities. Further, adjustments to statistics and related information reported by countries may be necessary to ensure international comparability. And it is likely that not all required statistics will be available from the official statistical community.

150. However, a number of differences exist between MDGs and SDGs that may affect reporting capacity of countries. Since 2000 when MDGs were instituted, information technology, data collection and statistical production capabilities have expanded substantially. NSOs in both developing and developed countries have modernized their processes to improve the timeliness, accuracy, accessibility and transparency of statistics. The global statistical community has recognised the need to modernise official statistics. SDGs further strengthen the case for this. No country is currently able to produce the statistics required for all of the SDG indicators and, although funding may be available in some cases, the pressure to meet SDG indicator needs through efficiency improvements is growing. All statistical organisations, from the most to the least developed, face the same challenges, so working together as a “Statistical Modernisation Community” and avoiding duplication of effort has clear attractions.

151. The greatest potential for savings from efficiency improvements comes from the standardisation of production processes across different statistical domains. The UNECE High-level Group for Modernisation of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS)⁶⁵ has developed various standards and models to facilitate this, including the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) and the Generic Statistical Information Model (GSIM). Applying these models greatly increases the potential benefits of using common software, both within and across statistical organisations, so HLG-MOS has also created a blueprint for developing software designed for sharing, known as the Common Statistical Production Architecture.

152. There has also been a call for increased use of data collected initially for non-statistical purposes (such as “big data” and administrative records) as a way to improve the efficiency of statistical production. Calls for increased use of data from private organizations for the calculation of official statistics are also gaining considerable support.

⁶⁵ For more information, see <http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/hlgbas/High-Level+Group+for+the+Modernisation+of+Official+Statistics>.

153. Different initiatives and groups are working on the modernisation of official statistics. In addition to HLG-MOS, these include Eurostat (Vision 2020 and the “transformative agenda”) and UNSD. The Cape Town Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data (CTGAP) calls to strengthening the national statistical systems.⁶⁶ All future steps should be based on the experiences of these initiatives and groups.

2. IAEG-SDGs and HLG-PCCB’s work on establishing priorities

154. IAEG-SDGs and HLG-PCCB will collaborate to assess unmet needs in statistical capacity building necessary for reporting the SDG indicators. Different regions will need to cooperate in order to meet this new and varied demand for statistics.

155. IAEG-SDGs will regularly review and communicate methodological developments relevant to SDGs. The aim of HLG-PCCB is to provide strategic leadership for the SDG implementation process concerning statistical monitoring and reporting.

156. An important component of any strategy to support capacity building is prioritization of needs. HLG-PCCB may consider the inter-linkages between proposed indicators as one way of prioritizing. For example, indicators for which there are unmet needs may be clustered together by goal, which may encourage greater support from entities whose mission most closely aligns with that particular goal. Or, some unmet needs may point to infrastructure requirements that, if met, would improve reporting capacity for all countries.

157. HLG-PCCB has prepared a Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data, launched at the UN World Data Forum in January 2017. It covers six strategic areas⁶⁷ including a longer list with objectives and actions. UNSC adopted the Cape Town Global Action Plan in March 2017, and stressed the importance of its implementation, including through regional and national plans⁶⁸. Based on that, the HLG-PCCB will set priorities for actions in the next years.

158. A joint sub-group of IAEG-SDGs and HLG on capacity building has been set up. The group has decided to conduct a mapping exercise on capacity building needs in each country or region. Latin America has already completed a similar exercise. The group proposed to use their example as a possible template, and will develop criteria for all regions. In UNECE region it is important in this exercise to coordinate between UNECE, Eurostat, OECD and CIS-Stat.

159. Against this background, a statistical capacity building programme under CES should consider the plans and programmes agreed upon at global level and the specific needs of CES members.

160. Capacity building for the development of statistics is an on-going effort and there are several institutions that can help with establishing plans (e.g. NSDS) and identifying funding sources in the longer term. It is necessary to analyse financial and resource requirements to assess countries’ readiness and willingness to improve their national statistical systems in line with requirements of SDGs. Generally, the needs are larger than the available funding and technically competent staff. This constraint needs to be kept in mind.

⁶⁶ See <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/hlg/Cape-Town-Global-Action-Plan/>.

⁶⁷ 1) Coordination and strategic leadership on data for sustainable development; 2) Innovation and modernization of national statistical systems; 3) Strengthening of basic statistical activities and programmes, with particular focus on addressing the monitoring needs of the 2030 Agenda; 4) Dissemination and use of sustainable development data; 5) Multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development data; and 6) Mobilize resources and coordinate efforts for statistical capacity building.

⁶⁸ UNSC decision 48/102.

161. For areas where established statistical practices exist, capacity building is more straightforward. For the many indicators that are at a conceptual stage and where data collection has not been tested, the process is likely to take more time. It is important to identify means by which data production, analysis and communication can be modernized taking into account emerging information technologies. Where international and supra-national organisations have already established definitions and data collections for indicators that are not yet fully developed at global or regional level, this experience should be taken into account to avoid extra burden on countries.

D. Identifying partnerships

162. Agenda 2030 will require annual reporting of high-quality data from all countries. This, in turn, will require greater investments in building independent, impartial national statistical capacities and strengthening data quality and standards. NSOs must be actively involved in the development of global and national indicator frameworks through IAEG-SDGs. For the SDG indicators for which official statistics are not available, input from businesses, scientists, academia and civil society should be sought in the development of the reporting architecture. The UN World Data Forum provided a good opportunity to share experiences and new approaches on the global level.

163. The benefit of strategic partnerships was discussed at the 2016 CES plenary session. CES recognized the range of issues around partnerships with the information industry and considered it useful to undertake further work to develop strategic partnerships in official statistics.

164. Different kinds of partnerships regarding capacity building can be established: a) with actors within the official statistical community; b) with data producers outside of the official statistics community; c) with political ministries; and d) with funding organizations (see Table 1 for additional details).

165. Partnerships within official statistical systems are easier to create because there exist common bodies (e.g., UNSC, CES) that can assist in the discussion and formulation of partnerships. Partnerships with actors outside the official statistical system are also necessary (SDG targets 17.16⁶⁹ and 17.17⁷⁰ define the need). These can support capacity building pertaining to skills, training, new methodologies and other needs. Partnerships with other ministries and funding organizations are also crucial, as without further funding, it will not be possible to create a SDG reporting and monitoring system.

166. The question of funding will be the focus of any discussion about capacity building. Obtaining additional funding will require actively and effectively communicating the value of statistics.⁷¹ Statistics are the basis of the democratic process. With measurement of the SDGs and targets, development discussions can be very fruitful and lead to better policies. It is, however, crucial to ensure that external funding would not compromise the independence of official statistics and following the Fundamental Principles.

167. Financial support for statistical capacity building worldwide amounted to \$325 million in 2013, compared with \$379 million in 2010. However, assistance to the least developed countries tripled during the period, reaching \$265 million. Despite an increasing awareness of the importance of statistics for

⁶⁹ Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries.

⁷⁰ Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.

⁷¹ The report by the CES Task Force on value of official statistics endorsed by the CES 2017 June plenary session for endorsement will be helpful for this purpose.

evidence-based policymaking, the share of official development assistance dedicated to statistics hovered around 0.25% between 2010 and 2013.⁷²

168. A strategy for funding capacity building efforts in the countries with less developed statistical systems must be defined. Based on an assessment of statistical capacity building needs, the total cost to international donors of closing all remaining survey gaps is less than US\$300 million per annum. If register and administrative data are to be enhanced, additional or reprioritized funding will be needed.⁷³ To inform funding decisions, priority areas must be established and anticipated costs and benefits estimated.

169. A more structured set of partnerships could help identify a common approach to providing statistics for the review of progress towards SDGs. Existing bodies and forums should be used to reinforce existing partnerships and, more importantly, establish new partnerships involving data producers and academia.

170. A central question is who directs establishing partnerships. For the official statistical community, it is crucial to be involved in all relevant bodies and conferences (e.g., UN World Data Forum, HLPF, etc.) and show leadership. The official statistical community has to show it is open to working with all stakeholders. Otherwise, the risk is that the funding will not be directed to statistics.

Table 1. Overview of partnership types for improving statistical capacities

| Type | Actors | Goal | Advantage | Disadvantage |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| Partnerships with actors within the official statistical community | NSOs together with international organisations (UN bodies, OECD, Eurostat, etc.) and other data producers inside the government | Define next steps, priorities, division of work, common communication strategies, and concrete capacity building activities | Legal common bodies exist. Sub-bodies like the HLG-PCCB and the CES Steering Group have mandates to be active | Possible competition between NSOs and agencies over, for example, who gets funding |
| Partnerships with data producers outside of the official statistical community | NSOs together with private companies, polling firms, academia | Find new ways to measure progress; produce data for the monitoring of the SDGs to a guaranteed quality standard | Different forums exist already: UN World Data Forum, World Statistics Congress | Unclear to what extent unofficial data producers can be part of the official SDG reporting and monitoring system |
| Partnerships with political ministries and other government-based funding organizations (such as national development agencies) | NSOs together with development agencies, foreign affairs departments, economic departments. | Emphasize the value of official statistics; guarantee flows of official development assistance | All actors are part of the government | Statistics not always viewed with interest by development agencies; budget cuts make it difficult to start new statistics projects |
| Partnerships with private funding organizations | NSOs together with funding organizations (e.g., philanthropic foundations) | Emphasize the value of official statistics; guarantee funding for projects and strengthen NSOs | Potential funding is limited | The value of official statistics is not well known; funders may not distinguish between official and non-official statistics. |

⁷² See Partner Report on Support for Statistics, PARIS21 (<https://www.paris21.org/node/2371>) and *Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals*, United Nations Economic and Social Council, E/2016/75 (<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/report/2016/secretary-general-sdg-report-2016--EN.pdf>).

⁷³ *Data for Development - A Needs Assessment for SDG Monitoring and Statistical Capacity Development*, Sustainable Development Solution Network <http://unsdsn.org/resources/publications/a-needs-assessment-for-sdg-monitoring-and-statistical-capacity-development/>.

E. Recommendations for National Statistical Offices – Capacity building

- (a) First set of activities (country view): countries should create, implement and maintain a long-term programme for statistical development (e.g., NSDS), with four steps:
 - (i) Assessment of current data availability;
 - (ii) Assessment of the level of capacity in different areas;
 - (iii) Development, if necessary in consultation with potential donors and resource organizations (including SDG indicator custodian agencies), of concrete actions for statistical training and capacity building taking into account existing structures and mechanisms; and
 - (iv) Establishment of partnerships.
- (b) Second set of activities (bilateral): Donors must know the NSDS for recipient countries to be able to ensure a coordinated support;
- (c) Third set of activities (multilateral): Countries could share their experiences and new approaches at the regional level (in training sessions, workshops or conferences; for example, at the CES);
- (d) In all activities: build upon existing tools and mechanisms and share the already existing tools. Strive towards a long-term cooperation (such as twinning projects, institutional cooperation) which is more effective than short-term meetings and trainings.

F. Actions for the Steering Group – Capacity building

1. Medium-term (to be completed by the 2018 CES plenary session)

171. Establish a task team to develop a concept note on statistical capacity building in the context of SDGs. The task team will work closely with the PARIS21 Task Team on “New Approaches to Capacity Development – CD 4.0.”

172. Consider how to facilitate sharing experience and already existing tools in capacity building: identifying good practices, how to build partnerships with funders, how to help countries identify their needs (e.g. through Global Assessments of statistical systems), etc.

173. Use the second physical meeting of the CES Steering Group (in autumn 2017) to further pursue the following actions:

- (a) Develop tools to support countries in the creation, implementation and maintenance of a NSDS. Some international organizations (e.g. PARIS21) are already working on this and it may be useful to work closely together with those institutions;
 - (b) Assess capacity building needs in the CES region that can serve as a reference point for assessing improvement (e.g. by carrying out a survey);
 - (c) Within the region, assess which countries have similar needs and how they can cooperate on plans and funding requests;
 - (d) Develop a strategy to organize and support the kinds of partnerships described here as a follow-up to the CES seminar on strategic partnerships held in April 2016;
 - (e) Define which partnerships should be formed and focus effort on strengthening key partnerships;
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- (f) As part of readiness assessments (see Section IV), NSOs are to assess the availability of data and statistics for the SDG indicators and the timeframe by which they could be made available. They are also to take a common approach to determining indicators that can be produced in short, medium, and long term. This exercise would provide a basis for capacity building to:
- specify a common list of indicators that could be produced in short term with minimum resource mobilisation for CES countries
 - allow countries to focus on the needs and requirements for indicators that can be made available in medium and long term and help them prioritize their needs
 - identify common capacity building needs of countries that can be facilitated through cooperation and communication, and prepare a work plan for the indicators that can be produced in the short, medium and long term; and
- (g) Develop a common approach to user outreach and to exploration of funding options. Focus on the highest priorities.

2. Long-term (to be completed after the 2018 CES plenary session)

174. Actions to be determined in the course of work.

VIII. COMMUNICATION OF STATISTICS FOR SDGs

175. This section provides principles and guidance for the communication of statistics for SDGs. It highlights the issues that statistical offices should consider when developing communication strategies on SDGs.

176. Communication on statistics for SDGs will take place at different levels (global, regional, national and sub-national). Ideally, communication efforts at the sub-national, national, regional and global levels should be coordinated and the differences between the different levels of reporting should be clearly communicated to users. However, this will not be easily achieved with so many actors and stakeholders involved.

177. Communication will target different audiences: data users (policy makers, civil society, general public, media, academia, private companies, international organizations, specialised agencies, etc.) and data providers (within NSOs, within the statistical system, outside the statistical system). Appropriate means of communication for different audiences should be identified.

178. Communication covers both data themselves and data-related issues such as quality, resource requirements, availability and the value of official statistics. A particular emphasis should be put on communication between statisticians and policy makers (see section C below). Communication of statistics for SDGs should ideally be part of a general national SDG communication strategy. This requires significant planning, coordination and cooperation between statisticians and policy makers.

179. The official statistical community needs to communicate the most important elements of its work related to statistics for SDGs. In this context, the Road Map is itself a communication tool that provides a summary of issues to be considered and steps to be taken in developing statistics for SDGs.

180. The information required for stakeholders to get an overview of statistical work in the area of SDGs should be defined in advance. Statisticians should identify what information is necessary and appropriate because users may not necessarily know what information to ask for. Statisticians should anticipate information needs and proactively offer it to explain SDGs and statistics. Sharing good practices and experience acquired by countries and international organizations already publishing sustainable development indicator sets can provide useful examples and lessons learned.

181. Communication with other data providers, including within the statistical system is an important part of communication. Communication within the official statistical community is also needed to ensure exchange of experience and transfer of knowledge about statistics for the SDG indicators. All countries are encouraged to implement the SDG indicators and, in order to understand how and why specific indicators were chosen, all can benefit from the knowledge of experts who actively participated in indicator development.

A. Developing a communication strategy

182. The purpose of communication is to coordinate actions towards common objectives, to raise awareness, to exchange information and to promote learning and knowledge.

183. Communication regarding SDGs should be guided by certain principles: (a) openness, objectivity and transparency; (b) coordination to avoid duplication; (c) standardization and consistency; (d) establishment of a culture of information sharing, exchange of experience and best practices; and (e) integrating communications at national level with global communication on SDGs.

184. The basis for a communication strategy is identification of what should be communicated, to whom and how. The strategy should consider communication of both indicators and data and communication of the issues surrounding data, such as the role of official statistics, statistical quality and metadata, etc.

185. **Communicating data and indicators** deals with questions such as the technical platforms and means of communication (see Section VI of the Road Map), provision of metadata, indicator-based assessments, etc. There are materials developed through international work on statistical dissemination and communication⁷⁴ that can provide helpful guidance in this area.

186. With respect to SDGs, a large flow of new information can be anticipated, including a wide variety of reports from various sources. It will be difficult for stakeholders to filter and determine the relevant and reliable information. The communication strategy should consider how to guide users through all this new information as well as making existing information more transparent. Providing guidance should have a higher priority than developing new information tools.

187. Extensive information about SDGs will be offered at different levels (national, regional, global). To date, this information has not been adequately differentiated. Ideally, the information tools at different reporting levels should be aligned to avoid providing different answers to the same question (or different data for the same issue). The different levels should be made clear to the user.

188. Indicators for the monitoring of SDGs should be published by the NSO in a transparent manner. Evidence-based analyses are the responsibility of the NSO whereas political analyses based on this evidence rest with policy-makers. In order to facilitate communication and to track the country's trends, the use of indicator based assessment methods⁷⁵ is advisable.

189. For information purposes, it is desirable for NSOs to post summary information about SDGs on their websites in their national language(s) and/or English.⁷⁶

190. Country data will be available both on national platforms and in the databases of international organizations and specialised agencies. Ideally, these data should be consistent. However, in practice there may be differences due to different methodologies, adjustments by international organizations to make data internationally comparable, different timing of updates, etc. Metadata should allow to explain

⁷⁴ See, for example, UNECE workshops, wiki platform and publications (e.g. *Making Data Meaningful* series) on statistical dissemination and communication (<http://www.unece.org/stats/mos/diss.html>); Eurostat publication *Getting Messages Across Using Indicators - A Handbook Based on Experiences from Assessing Sustainable Development Indicators* (2014) (<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/5936409/KS-GQ-12-001-EN.PDF/c47039bd-c026-4d99-a819-135b5e4c1da4?version=1.0>).

⁷⁵ Eurostat, *Getting Messages Across Using Indicators - A Handbook Based on Experiences from Assessing Sustainable Development Indicators*, 2014 (<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/5936409/KS-GQ-12-001-EN.PDF/c47039bd-c026-4d99-a819-135b5e4c1da4?version=1.0>).

⁷⁶ See, for example, the approach of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany (<https://www.destatis.de/EN/FactsFigures/Indicators/SDG/2030Agenda.html>).

those differences (e.g., by indicating the sources and methods used, divergence from international standards, use of modelled estimates by international organizations, etc.).

191. In addition, the communication strategy should explain the limitations of statistics. Various stakeholders will likely be interested in supporting the monitoring process. Therefore, it will be useful to outline those indicators that have effective monitoring already and those for which monitoring is inadequate.

192. **Communicating issues surrounding data** deals with questions such as the role and value of official statistics compared to other data sources; FPOS; the importance of statistical quality; resource requirements and capacity building needs. In this context, the materials on FPOS, the European Statistics Code of Practice and various statistical quality frameworks⁷⁷ are the basic reference materials. The outcomes of the Conference of European Statisticians' Task Force on the Value of Official Statistics give guidance on the measurement and communication of the value of official statistics⁷⁸ (the report was endorsed by the CES plenary session in June 2017).

193. In addition to the issues that are common to the dissemination of official statistics in general, some issues are specific to communicating statistics on the SDGs:

- High interest and expectations from policy makers;
- Areas that are methodologically new and/or that were previously considered to be outside official statistics;
- Non-statistical indicators and data that are not available within the statistical system;
- Competition with data providers from outside the statistical system;
- Wide coverage and integrated nature of the statistics related to SDGs.

194. It would be useful to exchange experience and identify good practices in communicating statistics for SDGs. This should be undertaken in cooperation with the UNECE Expert Group on Statistical Dissemination and Communication.

B. Identifying available and required resources

195. As part of the development of a communication strategy, the human, financial and technical resources for communications should be analysed, considering the resources already available, the need for their development and the need for any additional resources. Communication of sustainable development indicators in a comprehensive and overarching manner will require significant planning and coordination. In countries where the statistical office so far has not been involved in communicating issues related to sustainable development, building up the required capacities in the statistical office will require additional resources.

196. Concerning the dissemination of data, the analysis could begin with an assessment of existing dissemination platforms at the national and international levels. Section VI described the development of national reporting platforms for statistics on SDGs. It is anticipated that online platforms will be set up as well at subregional and regional levels. For example, the CIS Statistics Committee has established a list of indicators for the CIS region and a website for data on the SDGs.⁷⁹ Inclusion of data on selected SDG

⁷⁷ For example, Eurostat, UNECE, OECD and IMF have statistical quality frameworks.

⁷⁸ <http://www.unece.org/statistics/statstos/task-force-on-the-value-of-official-statistics.html>.

⁷⁹ <http://www.cisstat.com/sdgs/>.

indicators in the UNECE Statistical Database is also planned. A key information source for stakeholders could be the SDG monitoring reports produced by regional, sub-regional and supranational bodies. It is essential to provide access to these reports.

197. Following the assessment, the scope of communication activities should be determined and useful communication channels identified.

198. Modern means of communicating with stakeholders in a transparent and open manner should be used. An appropriate tool to manage inquiries regarding SDGs could be a customer management system. Such a system would offer tailored responses to requests, explain the requested information to users and guide them through the range of information available. A first step could be to launch a dedicated website linked to relevant databases. An information package that includes a database, publications in the form of reports, dedicated web pages and visualization tools could be useful as well. Further, best practices in reporting statistics should be made available.

C. Communication with policy makers

199. Throughout the process of establishing SDGs, there has been unprecedented attention to data, statistics and measurement from policy makers. This has brought statistics and policy closer together and, in particular, brought more policy attention to statistics. This is, in some countries and for some international organizations, a new situation. Though statistics enable policy makers to make evidence-based decisions, in many instances statisticians and policy makers have not worked together. Accordingly, mutual understanding needs to be strengthened. There are lessons to be learned on both sides:

- The independence of NSOs from political and other external interference in developing, producing and disseminating statistics is specified by the UN FPOS and by law. It is an important guiding principle for statistical authorities. As a result of this independence, NSOs are generally not directly involved in policy making processes;
- Statisticians are not yet in the position to provide all statistics required for SDGs. It is important to manage expectations and ensure that policy makers are aware of these limitations because quick and pragmatic solutions are not always possible. At the same time, data producers should be receptive to discussions, questions and views from policy makers.

200. With regard to evidence-based policy decisions, it will be crucial to ensure there is adequate communication about the differences between data from official statistics and data from other sources. Policy makers need to understand that data produced by official statistics have undergone a rigorous quality review and fulfil specified quality standards. In general, data from NSOs are independent and objective and aim to be comparable over time and between countries. These advantages need to be promoted, as other data sources may not necessarily meet the same quality standards. Official statistics need to be portrayed as the gold standard. Although there is a role for other data sources in SDGs, it will be important to be transparent about the provenance of the data and the methodology behind them and to ensure the data have undergone adequate quality review. However, it is important to recognize that policy makers are also asking for indicators that are usually not produced by the statistical system.

201. The new policy focus on statistics, as mentioned above, implies challenges to the professional independence of NSOs. Therefore, it is important to raise policy makers' awareness of the unique features of statistics, especially the importance of professional independence. Data used for SDGs should follow the nine basic principles for the "data revolution" for sustainable development: quality and integrity; disaggregation; timeliness; transparency and openness; usability and review; protection and privacy;

governance and independence; and finally resources and capacity.⁸⁰ In short, any statistical data being used for evidence-based policy-making should be statistically robust, methodologically sound and open.

202. Further, statisticians should try to better understand policy processes, networks and partnerships at national and international levels. Statisticians also need to be more active by contributing their expertise to setting up the mechanisms for follow-up and review of SDGs than has been the case with previous policy frameworks.

203. The implementation of SDGs will involve many different stakeholders both from statistics and policy-making. As statisticians may not be accustomed to communicating outside of traditional statistical domains and policy makers may not be aware of the specifics of statistics, both sides need to develop and agree upon communication principles for their collaboration. Possible principles could be an open exchange on priorities, ideas and interests; mutual acknowledgement of interests; and ensuring communication strategies that respect both political interests and the FPOS (see **Case Study 5** on selecting national SDG indicators in **Switzerland** and **Case Study 14** for **Germany's** experience on communication strategies for statistics).

D. Recommendations for National Statistical Offices - Communication

- (a) NSOs should develop communication strategies for statistics on SDGs, as part of or as a complement to general communication strategies and define the groups that should be targeted by communication, both data providers (NSOs, academia, etc.) and data users (policy makers, civil society, private companies, etc.). Communication of statistics for SDGs should be ideally linked to a general communication strategy of SDGs in the country.
- (b) NSOs should define what will be communicated, create information packages for different stakeholders and provide guidance to users;
- (c) NSOs should define how information will be communicated and assess available resources (financial, human and technical);
- (d) NSOs should assess existing dissemination platforms; and
- (e) NSOs should set up a customer management system approach for inquiries and launch dedicated websites linked to relevant databases.

E. Actions for the Steering Group - Communication

1. Short-term actions (completed before the 2017 CES plenary session)

- (a) The Steering Group organised an expert meeting to exchange experience within the statistical community on developing statistics for SDGs on 10-12 April 2017 in Geneva. The next meeting is planned for April 2018;
- (b) Liaised with the UNECE Expert Group on Communication to identify joint actions related to communication of statistics for SDGs. A Virtual Hackathon on Telling Stories with SDG data took place on 5-7 September 2017;
- (c) Developed a generic presentation to promote the CES Road Map on statistics for SDGs that can be adapted to different audiences.

⁸⁰ See *A World that Counts* (<http://www.undatarevolution.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/A-World-That-Counts2.pdf>).

2. Medium-term actions (to be completed by the 2018 CES plenary session)

204. Actions to be undertaken, some of them possibly in collaboration with the UNECE Expert Group on Communication:

- (a) Consider how to facilitate preparation of communication strategies on statistics for SDGs (e.g., developing guidance and collecting best practices);
- (b) develop a narrative with key messages and recommendations as guidance for NSO communication on SDGs;
- (c) develop an Open Data definition to be included in this narrative;
- (d) discuss experiences and develop criteria and principles for communication on statistics for SDGs with policy makers;
- (e) share experiences on implementation of statistics for SDGs within the statistical community – contributing to the alignment of outcomes at national, regional and global level;
- (f) explore organizing a joint workshop with the UNECE expert group on statistical communication; and
- (g) analyse best practices and tools from the Business Case on Digital Communication, user analytics and innovative products (i.e., DIGICOM).

3. Long-term actions (to be completed after the 2018 CES plenary session)

205. In collaboration with the UNECE Expert Group on Communication, map the available communication tools with communication messages on SDGs.

ANNEX I

Case studies

Case study 1. : UNICEF: Addressing data disaggregation needs - examples of children with disabilities and Roma children

Some of the most marginalized children in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region include children with disabilities, children of minority groups, and children deprived of parental care and living in institutions. Yet these are some of the most difficult children to identify and gather reliable data on. Producing disaggregated statistics on these groups requires new standards, measurement tools and approaches, and, in some cases, changes in national laws.

The Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) represents an important paradigm shift towards a more functional definition of disability. The Washington Group on Disability Statistics, in collaboration with UNICEF, has developed a survey module that addresses child functioning and disability.

New tools and methods were developed for identifying children and adults with functional disabilities.⁸¹ The NSO in Serbia has been involved in piloting the disability questionnaires. The new questions have also recently been tested as Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) modules, as well as optional modules in the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS). A number of countries have expressed interest in adding the disability module to upcoming national surveys.

The Roma people are Europe's largest ethnic minority (10-12 million people). The 2011 EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies⁸² focuses on four key areas: education, employment, healthcare and housing, all of which are issues of direct relevance to children's well-being. Monitoring progress in the implementation of the EU Framework will directly contribute to monitoring equity gaps associated with ethnicity under the SDGs.

UNICEF has been working closely with the NSOs and other national stakeholders in the Western Balkan countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo⁸³, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) to improve the availability of disaggregated survey data by ethnic group. In this context, these five countries have conducted separate MICS surveys in Roma settlements in addition to national surveys. Serbia now has three data series that provide powerful information and allow for trend analysis with respect to tracking the protection of the rights of Roma children. The findings of this data have been used to inform programming and policymaking for the Roma in Serbia, including the recently adopted new Roma Strategy.⁸⁴

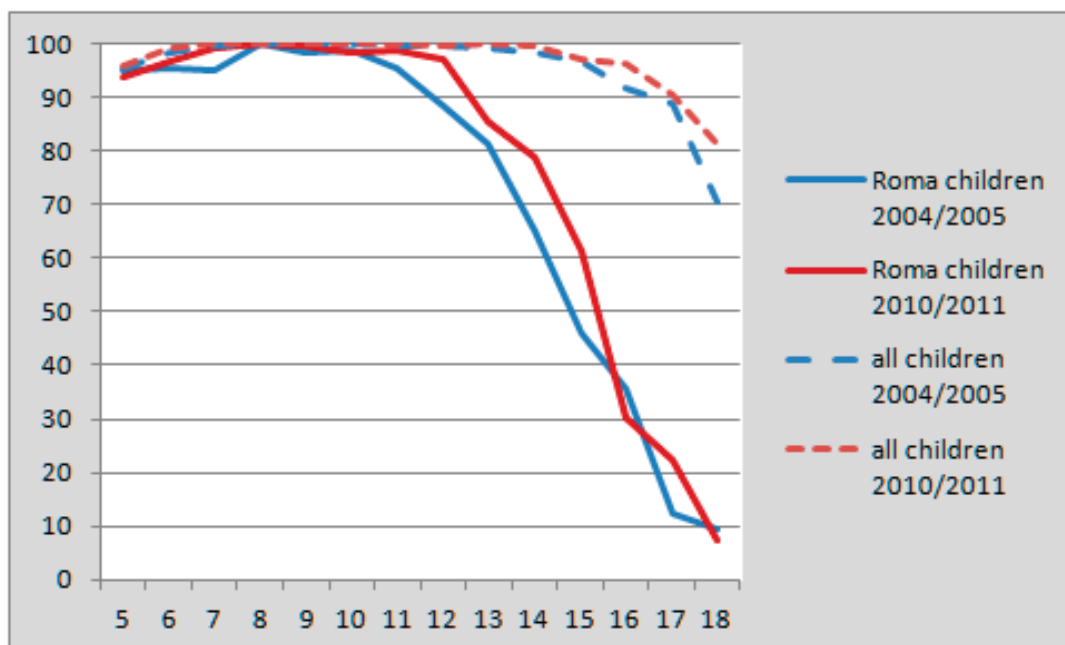
⁸¹ See <http://www.transmonee.org/meetings.php>.

⁸² See http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/eu-framework/index_en.htm.

⁸³ All references to Kosovo in this publication should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

⁸⁴ http://www.unicef.org/serbia/Realizing_the_rights_of_Roma_Children_and_women.pdf.

Figure 4. School attendance rate by age, Serbia



Source: MICS Survey Data

Case study 2. Poland: National Sustainable Development Indicators

In Poland sustainable development is monitored by sets of indicators proposed by the Central Statistical Office (CSO). As Poland does not have a specific strategy dedicated to sustainable development, the indicators were proposed based on priorities related to sustainable development in official national strategies. Due to the needs of policymakers acting at different levels and heterogeneous data availability, three separate modules of sustainable development indicators were elaborated:

- national (about 100 indicators)
- sub-national for regions within the country (more than 70 indicators)
- local (over 50 indicators)

In each module, the indicators are grouped into four domains: social, economic, environmental and institutional-political.

All sets of indicators are publicly available at CSO website on the platform for monitoring sustainable development (available at: <http://wskaznikizrp.stat.gov.pl/>).

Following the adoption of Agenda 2030, CSO decided to adjust the national indicators to align them with the SDGs. First, work to augment the platform will be undertaken. The aim is to include global SDG indicators in the platform and to create a separate module dedicated to Agenda 2030. As a next step, the mapping of national and sub-national indicators to the SDGs is planned.

CSO coordinates sustainable development indicators and SDG monitoring. At the policy level, the coordinator of sustainable development is the Ministry of Economic Development. The Ministry has prepared a Strategy for Responsible Development (SOR), which makes a reference to 2030

Agenda. It has been adopted on 14 February 2017. Other ministries are also included in this process. They are responsible for implementation of the thematic priorities and provide some of the indicators monitoring sustainable development. Ministries mapped the goals of SOR with SDGs. The indicators of this Strategy will be the basis for national set of SDGs indicators in Poland.

Case study 3. Russian Federation: SDG implementation process

In the Russian Federation the issue of sustainable development has been raised since the 1990s. Since that time a lot of national strategies, concepts and state programs have been developed both for the whole country and for the Russian Federation regions as well as for certain sectors of the economy.

In 2016 the Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation carried out assessments among federal executive bodies on availability of legal framework and statistical data concerning the global SDGs indicators. The assessments revealed that data are available for at least 100 indicators, including proxy indicators. At the same time the first challenge in SDGs monitoring has emerged. As the SDGs indicators are distributed among 25 federal executive bodies SDGs monitoring process should be coordinated at the political level.

Due to recommendations of the UN governing bodies to national statistical offices to take a leading role in coordinating data flows for SDG reporting at national level, Government of the Russian Federation authorized Rosstat to coordinate the activities of the Russian government bodies on collection and submission of official statistical information on SDG indicators of the Russian Federation to international organizations in accordance with the international standards.

SDGs statistics will be compiled in accordance with the Federal Plan of Statistical Works approved by the government. The Federal Plan of Statistical Works lists the topics of official statistical accounting and works performed thereby on compiling official statistics with a periodicity of each work, aggregation level of official statistics on the Russian Federation (as a whole, on the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, on municipalities), grouping this information according to the classification parameters and timetables for dissemination.

Furthermore, the issues of SDGs indicators implementations are discussed within the Interagency Working Group on climate change issues and sustainable development (IWG) under the Presidential Administration of the Russian Federation. Discussions are organized at the expert level with the participation of representatives from the scientific society. Rosstat is a member of the IWG. Under the auspices of the IWG in 2017 the Road map for the improvement of Russian official statistics aimed to provide guidance on work with statistical data for sustainable development will be prepared.

The data on SDGs indicators of the Russian Federation will be transmitted by SDMX system. The pilot SDMX data transmission message to the OECD was successfully tested in 2016. Russia will participate in the UNECE data flow pilot on SDG indicators to custodian agencies. Moreover, the National Reporting Platform for downloading statistical information in order to monitor the implementation of sustainable development will be introduced in October 2017. For this purpose there could be used the national Unified Statistical Information System (UniSIS) as the base platform which is currently used for collection statistical information within implementation of the Federal Plan of Statistical Works and contains more than 5230 statistical indicators provided by 63 Russian governmental bodies.

Case study 4. Switzerland: Selecting national indicators

In Switzerland, sustainable development has been monitored for more than 15 years by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO) with the cooperation of the Federal Office for Spatial Development, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Federal Office for the Environment. The indicators system, called MONET, includes 73 regularly updated indicators. It is based on a conceptual framework compatible with the CES framework on measuring sustainable development. It shows Switzerland's progress on the path of sustainable development across three dimensions: "here and now," "later" and "elsewhere."

During a 2016-2017 transition phase, Switzerland is translating the SDGs and related targets into the national context and expanding the sustainable development monitoring system MONET to ensure adequate monitoring and reporting at national and international levels.

This work will be done through close collaboration between statisticians and policy-makers. It will be based on the culture of dialogue between these two communities that has existed for more than 15 years in the monitoring of sustainable development in Switzerland. The experience gained shows that such collaboration is crucial to ensuring the quality of results and to benefiting from the knowledge and skills of each set of actors. However, predefined rules clarifying the roles and competencies of each stakeholder and ensuring the independence of official statistics are required for success.

The FSO has been involved from the very beginning of work on Agenda 2030, with the responsibility to systemize, document and bring its statistical expertise to the translation of the targets into the Swiss context. In addition, the FSO will be responsible, with assistance from other administrative units, for the selection of the indicators. The use of predefined selection criteria will ensure the quality and transparency of the result. The indicators will be selected from existing global (SDGs, CES framework), national (MONET) and sub-national (indicators for sustainable development of cities and cantons in Switzerland) sets.

The results of this collaborative process will be a transparent, well-documented and objective statement of the Swiss contribution to the SDGs and an analysis of gaps existing in policy and statistical systems. The indicator system will be used for national and international reporting on SDGs.

Case study 5. Switzerland: Sub-national indicators

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO) runs two indicator systems that relate to sustainable development at the sub-national level. The first one, Cercle Indicateurs, covers sustainable development in a broad manner. The second one, City Statistics, focuses on a specific aspect of sustainable development; namely, quality of life.

The Cercle Indicateurs was built in 2005 by and for Swiss cantons and cities at the instigation of the Federal Office for Spatial Development. The Federal Office for the Environment, the FSO, 17 cantons and 19 cities currently take part in the project and the FSO has been mandated since 2008 to operate and develop the indicator system.

The indicators are updated every two years for the cantons and every four years for the cities. The Cercle Indicateurs are structured according to the three "classical" dimensions of sustainable development; environment, economy and society. Each dimension contains between 11 and 12 topics, for a total of 35 topics. Each topic is described and its links with sustainable development are made explicit. The choice of the topics and their definitions reflect how Agenda 21 was interpreted in the context of the Circle Indicateurs in the early 2000s.

A preliminary analysis of the SDGs and the Cercle Indicateurs was carried out in 2016. The conclusion was that it is possible to connect the targets of the SDGs with the topics of the Cercle Indicateurs. Further work is planned for 2018. This may result in a systematic description of the links between the targets of Agenda 2030 and the topics of the Cercle Indicateurs and in a possible adaptation of some of these topics.

City Statistics (former Urban Audit) was initiated by Eurostat to gain information on the living conditions in urban areas. This data collection is used, among other things, to support the newly established urban agenda in Europe to identify and develop actions that achieve continuous improvements in the quality of life for both current and future generations as part of the sustainable development strategy of the EU. In Switzerland, the project is conducted under the auspices of the FSO, the Swiss Federal Office for Spatial Development, the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs and eight cities.⁸⁵

In Switzerland, the concept of quality of life is based on the OECD report “How’s Life” and was applied at the urban level to measure the well-being of the population in its varied and mutually interactive dimensions. Key indicators have been selected based on existing data in a participatory process with policy-makers and statisticians.

A first analysis in 2016 has shown that the project can provide indicators to measure SDG 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

The decision-making processes within the Cercle Indicateurs and City Statistics are collaborative and the selection of indicators, as well as the development of the systems, is discussed by the participants to achieve consensus. As in the case of the national SDI system, MONET, experience shows that close collaboration between statisticians and policy-makers is crucial to good results. Collaboration is based on a culture of dialogue between these two communities and allows the project to benefit from the knowledge and skills of each actor. However, it needs predefined rules to clarify the roles and competences of each stakeholder and ensure the independence of official statistics.

In addition to the two projects described above that are coordinated at the national level, several cantons and cities have developed their own sustainable development indicator systems.⁸⁶

Case study 6. Turkey: Plans on SDG indicators monitoring

SDGs monitoring and review has two distinct pillars in Turkey: national coordination of SDGs indicators framework under TurkStat and establishing a sustainable development policy framework under Ministry of Development, which will guide TurkStat especially on national SDGs indicators set.

Policy framework is likely to be established by the prospective 11th National Development Plan. The Ministry of Development has started this process by 2017 with a special project on sustainable development policy consolidation among all institutions. Following this process, all stakeholders will contribute to the development plan. This work which will clarify nationally owned indicators will be concluded in mid-2018.

Considering an accordance with this calendar, TurkStat started developing its own work plan; including intra and inter institutional in depth reviews, workshops and other communications with main stakeholders. As a legal background document for all these steps, TurkStat has integrated SDGs with

⁸⁵ Basel, Bern, Geneva, Lausanne, Lucerne, Lugano, St. Gallen and Zurich.

⁸⁶ For example, the cantons of Vaud, St. Gallen and Basel-Stadt all publish reports with sustainable development or quality of life indicators.

the responsible institution per each relevant global indicator in its own legal programme that came into effect this year: Official Statistics Programme 2017-2021. Moreover, all preparations for monitoring SDGs, including national indicator selection at all levels, are going to be subject to the European Code of Practice and other criteria related to policy relevant indicator sets.

TurkStat is planning to launch a web portal dedicated both to global, national and regional levels of SDGs indicators and expects that this platform will leverage other multi-thematic and spatial NRP implementations. This structure will be flexible enough for accordance of further developments mandated by national policy framework. Mainly through the web portal, SDGs indicator framework will:

- Transfer Turkey's data for global indicators to the UN;
- Establish a public information platform on SDGs indicators at all levels;
- Coordinate the statistical capacity building efforts both on national indicators list and on new data sources and disaggregations.

Case study 7. UNFPA: International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) beyond 2014 and regional indicators

The regional International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) "Beyond 2014" review process⁸⁷ has identified common trends and policy priorities for the UNECE region on key ICPD issues, which are also reflected in the SDGs. It concluded that the UNECE region still faces many barriers and challenges in fully developing citizens' potentials and achieving sustainable development. These include inter alia: high differences in mortality and morbidity between and within countries; barriers to independent, active and healthy ageing; an incomplete effort to ensure gender equality and women's empowerment; large inequalities in access to SRH information and services; discrimination and social exclusion of migrants, minorities and other disadvantaged groups; and increasing inequalities in access to employment and income opportunities that affect particularly young people.

Criteria for the selection and disaggregation of regional indicators from the ICPD/SDG perspective

From UNFPA's viewpoint, the policy priorities identified through the regional ICPD beyond 2014 process are a useful reference point for the development of regional SDG indicators. From UNFPA's perspective, regional statistical SDG indicators should be:

- (a) Able to illustrate the impact of national and regional policy investments to achieve the defined priority goals;
- (b) Politically acceptable and feasible, including the proposed levels of disaggregation; and
- (c) Produced and made available as far as possible through national statistical systems.

As the CES region is not homogenous, UNFPA suggests identifying sub-regions to better capture specific priorities and reflect statistical capabilities. These could include: a) the EU/EEA domain; b) Eastern Europe and Central Asia (as far as not covered by the EU/EEA domain); and other countries.

A guiding principle for regional SDG indicators should be use of existing indicators and harmonization of various reporting requirements to maximize synergies.

⁸⁷ See <http://www.unfpa.org/events/icpd-beyond-2014-review-process>.

The key objective of the SDGs is to monitor and address inequalities to ensure that “no one is left behind.” The regional ICPD beyond 2014 review has highlighted inequalities and discrimination based on gender, age, place and social vulnerability as major barriers to sustainable development in the countries of the region. To capture inequalities and differences between subgroups of the population, disaggregation, where relevant and feasible, should include:

- age (broad age groups: children, young people, working age, elderly etc.);
- sex;
- urban/rural (possibly with further breakdowns);
- education level;
- employment status;
- marital status;
- foreign/migrant origin;
- household or family type, and
- income quintile.

For Tier I indicators the focus should be on the improvement of data quality, comparability and disaggregation (particularly for countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia). Investment in better coverage and more regular production of Tier II and the development of certain new Tier III indicators, where relevant and in line with policy priorities, should also be undertaken.

Case study 8. United Kingdom: roles of the Office for National Statistics (ONS)

In the United Kingdom, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) will assume responsibility for reporting on the United Kingdom's progress towards the SDGs. This includes:

- Submitting United Kingdom data for SDG indicators to the UN to inform the global reporting framework (as defined by the UNSC) and making these data available to the public;
- Working with government and non-government stakeholders to identify nationally relevant SDG targets and proposing a set of supplementary indicators that are relevant to the United Kingdom;
- Exploring and developing new data sources and methods to enable ONS to report data at various levels of disaggregation (sex, race, religion, geography, disability, ethnicity, migrant status, age and income); and
- Developing an on-line platform to report these data.

To identify which of the global targets are relevant in the UK, two research exercises were undertaken. The first of these asked government departments to identify the global targets that relate to their existing departmental plans. The second exercise was open to all non-governmental organisations (private and voluntary); again, these organisations were asked to identify which global targets were relevant to their work. In both exercises, where a global target was identified as being relevant, respondents were asked whether the global indicator was the most suitable indicator to measure progress towards the target in the United Kingdom. If not, respondents were asked to suggest alternatives.

The exercise targeting non-governmental organisations was undertaken collaboratively with a UK-wide group called UK Stakeholders for Sustainable Development (UKSSD), which provided access to a wide range of organisations from across all sectors. ONS used an online platform and contacted stakeholders, including UKSSD's members, via e-mail through existing networks and through social media.⁸⁸

It is anticipated that ONS will report on UK progress towards the SDGs annually. These reports will include plans for filling data gaps and acknowledge adjustments to UK circumstances which impact the UK reporting framework.

Case study 9. Mexico: From a national reporting platform for MDGs to SDGs

Mexico developed a national reporting platform for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Its purpose was to avoid duplication and inconsistencies in data by centralizing all relevant official data within INEGI (Mexico's national statistics office - Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía). For each MDG, there were three types of indicators: official MDG indicators, proxy indicators and Mexico's own national indicators. Altogether, the project produced 80 indicators.

This experience has been very useful for designing a new SDG platform and in having established the coordination mechanisms and procedures for data flows from the ministries and agencies to the INEGI. This new platform has been developed jointly with the Mexican government, under open data and open source standards, with further application of geospatial tools. This approach aims to improve accessibility, providing the public with better tools to visualize and manipulate the data.

The Mexican SDG platform was launched on 26 April 2017, and currently displays 45 indicators; an additional set of national indicators will be included to complement the global indicator framework placing more emphasis on those for states and municipalities. This national set of indicators will include 31 indicators from the MDGs that are considered relevant for the 2030 Agenda.

For each indicator, metadata is published along with all of the underlying data in such a way that any user could replicate any indicator.

Case study 10. United States: national reporting platform for SDGs

The United States provides another example of a national reporting platform for SDGs. The US did not participate in the MDGs reporting process. Further, the US routinely collects its own national statistics; it does not rely on statistics produced by international organizations. Additionally, the US has a highly decentralized statistical system, with over 125 federal statistical programs. Given the interest in SDG indicators, the US anticipated many requests from various stakeholders for access. Therefore, the US needed to develop a reporting solution that would allow public access to national statistics (and related information) for the global SDG indicators. Further, this solution needed to allow contribution of statistics and metadata to the platform on a continuous basis. Such a solution needed to maximize interoperability with other platforms to ease comparability of statistics for international organizations and the public at large. Last, the solution needed to use open source (and therefore free) technology so that other NSOs

⁸⁸ The results of the consultation are available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/file?uri=/aboutus/whatwedo/programme-and-projects/sustainabledevelopmentgoals/howshouldtheukreportprogressstowardsthesustainabledevelopmentgoals.pdf>.

could maximally benefit. The result is the US National Reporting Platform (NRP), which was developed in consultation with several other NSOs.

The US NRP site was built to accommodate information from multiple Federal data providers on a flow basis. The official site, <https://sdg.data.gov/>, was launched in September 2016. As of January 2017, 62% of Tier 1 and 2 indicators have been populated with official national statistics. The site features secure access for data providers and automated tracking of revisions to ensure quality. The platform is also accessible to the general public and uses open source technology that can be shared freely and easily with interested countries by forking through GitHub. Training materials are provided for NSOs considering using an NRP, how to clone the US NRP and customize it for their own use, and for data providers. As of May 2017, seven countries have signaled their intent to clone and customize the US NRP for their own use. A data reporting status dashboard feature has been added, and the NRP is available in English or Spanish. Future enhancements include improved data visualization, and subnational estimates for global indicators. For more information on the US NRP site, please contact sdgs@omb.eop.gov.

Case study 11. Poland: From SDIs to SDGs - national reporting platform

Poland has a publicly accessible NRP for dissemination of sustainable development indicators. The platform was created by the Central Statistical Office of Poland (CSO) using open source licenses and is maintained by the CSO as the coordinator of SDG indicators. The Polish platform was created before the adoption of Agenda 2030 and is being remodelled to include the global SDG indicators.

Following the Polish concept of sustainable development monitoring, there are three modules in the NRP: national, sub-national and municipal. The global SDG indicators will create a fourth module.

The NRP allows for tabular presentation of data as well as its visualization in the form of graphs and maps. Together with a database, it contains a comprehensive set of metadata and information on sustainable development.⁸⁹

Case study 12. United Kingdom: plans for data collection

The UK Office for National Statistics (ONS) is in the process of putting in place a data collection and reporting platform for the SDGs. To inform this process, the ONS has been working very closely with the CES Steering Group on statistics for SDGs, private companies and ONS data collection transformation work-streams including teams looking at big data and administrative data, as well as the newly formed data science campus.

An eight-week project is currently underway, the result of which will be recommendations on the best approach. This project has been informed by UN guidance. For example, the ONS is committed to utilising the principles of open data and the SDMX international standard of transmission.

Any recommendations will comply with the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice and Principles. Data collection will be informed by user engagement with proportionate burden. Data will be disseminated when they are judged ready and will be accessible via the national publication hub.

⁸⁹ See <http://wskaznikizrp.stat.gov.pl/index.jsf?jezyk=en>.

Case study 13. UNICEF: the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS)

MICS (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey) is an international household survey programme developed and supported by UNICEF. It provides up-to-date information on the situation of children and women and measures key indicators that allow countries to monitor progress towards internationally agreed development goals. Supporting countries in monitoring the MDGs has been one of the primary objectives of MICS surveys over the last decade. The programme is well positioned to support SDG monitoring and reporting, already covering approximately half of the SDG indicators that can be monitored through household surveys.

One of the main advantages of MICS is the possibility of generating nationally representative data, as well as disaggregating data by dimensions such as wealth, disability or migratory status. Most of the indicators covered in MICS are not captured through other surveys or administrative data sources. The data-gap assessment conducted at the beginning of the exercise in each country allows the NSO to avoid duplication and focus on the most important social indicators in MICS. The findings of MICS may also lead partners to conduct additional analysis or thematic in-depth data collection. In the case of Kyrgyzstan, for example, relatively high child labour figures from MICS were followed up by a separate child labour study producing a more detailed thematic analysis. The findings of MICS are presented both on NSO websites (e.g. Serbia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan) and the global MICS website.

Case study 14. UNFPA: the contribution of the ICPD beyond 2014 regional review

As indicated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the follow up and review of the SDGs should build to the extent possible on “data and information from existing reporting mechanisms” and “draw on as far as possible, existing networks of follow up and review institutions and mechanisms” (para 48, para 77) in order to capitalize on other review processes that are related to SDGs and to minimize the monitoring and reporting burden of states.

In line with the above, the mandated follow up and review of the ICPD beyond 2014 in the UNECE region can contribute substantively to SDG monitoring, building on the considerable synergies and substantive areas of overlap across both of these global development agendas.

The ICPD Programme of Action (1994) and the outcome documents of its review conferences, including the ICPD beyond 2014 global review and the outcome of the UNECE regional review conference provide a ‘Framework for Actions’ on population and development issues that is highly correlated and synergistic with SDGs.

In conformance with the mandate of the General Assembly that reaffirmed and renewed the ICPD agenda beyond 2014, the UN system - particularly UNFPA - will continue to support member states in the full implementation of the ICPD beyond 2014, including undertaking periodic global and regional reviews to assess progress in the full implementation of ICPD’s unfinished business and a range of new and emerging issues in the area of population and sustainable development.

These ICPD reviews will be sequenced and synchronized to the extent possible with the follow up and review of SDGs at regional and global levels, and will provide concrete inputs to the High Level Political Forum as required.

The follow up and review of the ICPD in the UNECE region will be supported by UNFPA and will cover a range of issues reflected within the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals and Targets that are of particular priority in the UNECE region, as determined by member states .

To that effect, many of the indicators that will be used to track and monitor progress on the full implementation of the ICPD beyond 2014 in the region will derive from the global SDG indicator framework, ensuring coherence with SDG monitoring and avoiding duplication of efforts. It is important to note that for certain population and development issues that require a more in depth approach and analyses, other relevant thematic indicators may be used to track progress in the region.

As agreed with the UNECE secretariat, gathering of data and information will build on multiple sources to fulfil reporting needs on ICPD and contribute to SDG reporting, supported by UNFPA.

These sources would include regional consultations to be conducted by UNFPA's Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (EECARO) under the auspices of UNECE, combined with relevant data and information provided by regional statistical and research institutions supported by UNFPA, as well as relevant SDG indicators and other relevant thematic indicators that are routinely tracked and/or compiled at the global and regional levels by UN entities, including but not limited to UNFPA.

The regional follow up and review process of the ICPD beyond 2014 will be conducted under the auspices of UNECE with the full support of UNFPA.

Case study 15. Germany: experience with national communication strategies for statistics

A formal strategy can enable NSOs to define communication priorities and objectives and systematically steer communication activities. In Germany, the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) has developed the Communication Strategy 2020, which was launched in 2016 and was selected as a best practice in the ESS-Vision project DIGICOM for simplicity, broad coverage and clarity of presentation. It addresses important challenges of official statistics in the information society. In a future-oriented and knowledge-based society, facts are an important basis for decisions and for evaluating the success of decisions. The objective of the German strategy is to increase the profile and visibility of the FSO as the leading provider of high-quality statistical information. In general, official statistics in Germany are prepared in compliance with the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice and the UN FPOS.

The strategy consists of five key points and can be applied to official statistics in general but also to specific topics like the UN SDGs.

The first key goal of the strategy is to strengthen the brand of official statistics. Reference to "Statistisches Bundesamt" serves both as a brand name and as a seal of quality. The intention is to further raise the profile of official statistics and to reinforce people's trust in them. To this end, data quality and quality management in general are important factors in communication. As part of the strategy, it is emphasized that data are obtained independently.

Second, the FSO continuously improves the accessibility of statistical information. The central statistical information system (GENESIS-Online) is user-friendly and presents the results of official statistics at national and sub-national levels. Data are made available through readily accessible interfaces (open data). Digital information is presented in a media-friendly format to support a variety of devices and can be easily accessed by popular search engines. The strategy ensures that information is offered on platforms used

by target user groups. The guiding principle for a future-oriented communication policy is to develop the strategy “from pull to push” meaning that statistical offices should communicate proactively. Internally, new digital sales structures will be developed accordingly.

Regarding the communication about SDGs, a dedicated website on Agenda 2030 including national data on the global indicators was published by the FSO in July 2016.

The third key goal is meeting the needs of target groups. High-quality data on social, economic and ecological issues are provided. The diverse information needs of targeted users (general public, policy-makers, administration, the media, businesses, associations, the scientific and research communities, students and respondents) are analysed by modern market observation and monitoring instruments. The FSO then promotes targeted users’ understanding of statistics. In order to reach targeted users, a range of different communication channels is used. Further, information and services are adjusted to targeted users’ changing requirements.

The fourth key goal of the strategy is to broaden dialogue on statistics using forums and social media (e.g., Twitter) to communicate with targeted users. The users’ needs and ideas are considered in refining the range of information and services offered. These channels are also used to communicate about SDGs. The FSO took part in UN DESA’s Twitter chat on the occasion of the World Statistics Day in October 2015 and communicated with target users about SDGs and statistics.

The final goal is to provide information in a clear and comprehensible matter by, for example, using innovative forms of visualization. In addition, comprehensive information about statistical methods is offered.

ANNEX II

Context

A. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

1. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030), including 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets, was agreed in September 2015 by heads of state and governments' high representatives. The SDGs aim to spur social, economic and environmental progress between now and 2030 to:

- end poverty and hunger everywhere;
- combat inequalities within and among countries;
- build peaceful, just and inclusive societies;
- protect human rights and promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; and
- ensure the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources.

2. The Goals also strive to create conditions for sustainable, inclusive and sustained economic growth, shared prosperity and decent work for all, considering different levels of national development and capacities.

3. Goal 17 aims to “strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.” Its targets 17.18⁹⁰ and 17.19⁹¹ as well as several paragraphs in the outcome document Transforming our World – The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development refer directly to the work of the official statistical community.⁹² The UN Statistical Commission (UNSC) is responsible for ensuring data provision on SDGs at the global level.

4. Agenda 2030 recognizes that the regional level is an important bridge between national and global reporting and monitoring.⁹³

B. Policy context

5. The SDGs and associated targets were developed over the course of several years through policy discussions among UN members at the General Assembly, particularly through the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. The evaluation of progress against these goals and targets will be led by member states, primarily through the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).

⁹⁰ Target 17.18: *By 2020, enhance capacity -building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.*

⁹¹ Target 17.19: *By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries.*

⁹² See paragraphs 48, 57, 61, 62, 74, 75, 76 and 83 in http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1.

⁹³ See paragraphs 80 and 81 in http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1.

1. UN General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals

6. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 2012 (Rio+20), resulted in an agreement by member states to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals through “an inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process (...) that is open to all stakeholders.”⁹⁴ For this purpose, an intergovernmental Open Working Group (OWG) was created.

7. OWG proposed the SDGs and associated targets which the UN General Assembly endorsed as Agenda 2030 in September 2015. The OWG noted that the targets would be further elaborated through indicators focused on measurable outcomes.⁹⁵ The task of identifying suitable indicators was assigned to the UN Statistical Commission (see Section C below).

2. The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)

8. HLPF⁹⁶ is the central platform for follow-up and review of Agenda 2030. It oversees the processes at the global level and “will facilitate sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, and provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for follow-up.”⁹⁷ HLPF comprises representatives from all member states of the United Nations and member states of specialized agencies.

9. In accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 67/290,⁹⁸ HLPF should carry out regular reviews. The first meeting of HLPF took place on 11-20 July 2016 in New York on the theme “Ensuring that no one is left behind.”⁹⁹ HLPF will meet every four years under the auspices of the UN General Assembly represented at the level of Heads of state to provide high-level political guidance on Agenda 2030 and its implementation. Under ECOSOC, the HLPF will meet every two years or even more frequently to discuss selected themes to follow up on the implementation of the Agenda. HLPF in 2017 took place on 10-19 July under the theme “Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world.”

10. Follow-up and review at HLPF will be informed by an annual progress report on the SDGs to be prepared by the Secretary-General in cooperation with the UN system, based on the global indicator framework and data produced by national statistical systems.¹⁰⁰ The global indicators and accompanying available statistics will be contained in a database maintained by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD).

11. HLPF will conduct national reviews and thematic reviews of the implementation of Agenda 2030 with inputs from other intergovernmental bodies and forums, relevant UN entities, regional processes, major groups and other stakeholders. In 2016, 22 countries took part in voluntary national reviews¹⁰¹ at HLPF, including the following CES participants: Colombia, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Mexico, Montenegro, Norway, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Switzerland and Turkey. In 2017, 44 countries took part, including CES participants Argentina, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden and Tajikistan.

⁹⁴ See resolution 66/288 in *The Future We Want*, Annex, para. 248 (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/futurewewant.html>).

⁹⁵ See section IV, para. 18 in http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/68/970.

⁹⁶ See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>.

⁹⁷ See http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/67/290.

⁹⁸ See http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/67/290&Lang=E.

⁹⁹ See http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/2016/L.11.

¹⁰⁰ See paragraph 83 in http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1.

¹⁰¹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf#vnrs>.

12. A regular exchange between the HLPF and the UN Statistical Commission could enhance communication of SDG challenges and expectations of political and statistical communities. For example, during Session 12 of the 2016 HLPF “National mechanisms for monitoring progress and reporting on implementation for the achievement of SDGs,” the national statistical offices of South Africa, the Philippines and Switzerland discussed the role of a statistical office pertaining to the SDG implementation process on the national level.¹⁰²

C. Statistical activities

13. The challenging task of measuring progress against SDGs was well recognized prior to the issuance of Agenda 2030. The RIO+20 outcome document acknowledged the need for broader measures of progress to complement gross domestic product (GDP) to better inform policy decisions and requested the UNSC to launch a programme of work in this area. To respond to this demand, the UNSC established a Friends of the Chair group to advise on the development of broader measures of progress and provided its advice to the OWG. Building on those inputs, the UNSC established the Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for Agenda 2030 to work on the SDG indicators and to support statistical capacity building.

1. Friends of the Chair Group on Broader Measures of Progress

14. At its forty-fourth session in 2013, UNSC created the Friends of the Chair Group on Broader Measures of Progress (FOC) as a response to the request of the Rio+20 conference.¹⁰³ The mandate given to FOC was a) to build a work programme to develop broader measures of progress based on an assessment of current national, regional and international practices in this field; and b) to prepare thematic/technical inputs to ensure that a robust statistical measurement approach is incorporated from the outset in preparations for the post-2015 development agenda.

15. FOC contributed to the OWG deliberations on SDGs explaining how statistics can assist in the design of SDGs and targets. In March 2014, the UNSC Chair transmitted to the Co-Chairs of OWG a compendium of 29 statistical notes drafted under the auspices of the FOC by experts from many national statistical offices and international organizations.

16. In June 2014, the FOC provided OWG co-chairs a correspondence table between available indicators and the targets contained in the OWG’s “zero draft” and an assessment of the broad data availability for these indicators in countries. At the end of 2014 and beginning of 2015, FOC carried out a survey to obtain information on the availability of data for indicators to measure SDGs and the associated 107 substantive targets proposed by OWG. The Report of the FOC to the Statistical Commission in 2015 presented a road map for the development and implementation of an indicator and monitoring framework for the post-2015 development agenda.

¹⁰² It is not yet known if a session on monitoring progress on the SDGs will be prepared each year during Agenda 2030.

¹⁰³ See decision 44/114 of the 44th UNSC (p. 18 in <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/44th-session/documents/statcom-2013-44th-report-E.pdf>).

2. The Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators

17. Building from the work of the FOC, the UNSC established the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) in March 2015. Its aim is to develop a list of technically robust indicators for the monitoring of the SDGs and the targets of Agenda 2030 at the global level, provide technical support for the implementation of the approved indicator and monitoring framework, regularly review methodological developments and issues related to the indicators and their metadata, and report on progress towards the SDGs and targets of Agenda 2030 at the global level. The Group should also regularly review and make recommendations on capacity building activities relevant to SDG monitoring to the UNSC, the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for the 2030 Agenda and the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities, and support work by the Secretariat for the development of a SDG data-user forum, tools for data analysis and an open dashboard on the state of SDGs.

18. The global indicator framework proposed by IAEG-SDGs was adopted by UNSC at its 48th session in March 2017, together with a Resolution “Work of the UN Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. Subsequently, the resolution and the list of global SDG indicators were adopted by ECOSOC in May and UN General Assembly in July 2017.

19. In addition, during its 47th session, the UNSC established a work stream on data disaggregation and three working groups under IAEG-SDGs: geospatial information, Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (SDMX) and inter-linkages. Together, these four bodies will assist with the revision and refinement of the global indicator framework. There is also a common subgroup with the High-level group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics.

20. To assess the availability of data and methodologies for the SDG indicators, IAEG-SDGs is implementing a Tier system as follows:

- **Tier I** indicators are those that are conceptually clear, with established methodology and standards available and data regularly produced by countries (data are available for at least 50 per cent of all countries and cover at least 50 per cent of the population in every region of the world wherever the indicator is relevant);
- **Tier II** indicators are those that are conceptually clear, with established methodology and standards available but data are not regularly produced by countries (data are not available in all regions or do not cover at least 50 per cent of all countries or 50 per cent of the population in every region of the world wherever the indicator is relevant); and
- **Tier III** indicators are those indicators for which there is no established methodology and standards, or the methodology/standards are being developed or tested.

21. IAEG-SDGs recommends that capacity building efforts should be reinforced for the Tier II indicators. As for the Tier III indicators, conceptual work is a barrier for reporting; therefore, work plans for Tier III indicators have been developed and discussed at the 5th IAEG-SDGs meeting in March 2017 in Ottawa, Canada.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/meetings/iaeg-sdgs-meeting-05/TierIII_Work_Plans_03_03_2017.pdf.

22. IAEG-SDGs is preparing a document clarifying the process for making revisions¹⁰⁵ or refinements¹⁰⁶ to SDG indicators.¹⁰⁷ The document will suggest two review schedules: a plan for yearly refinements of the indicators, and comprehensive reviews of the global indicator framework in 2020 and 2025. The principles and criteria are defined to take advantage of statistical developments while at the same time ensuring stability and flexibility so that reporting will allow policymakers to review the status and progress towards the goals and targets of Agenda 2030. The principles are also intended to ensure transparency in the entire process. This document will be presented to the 49th UNSC in 2018.

23. The 48th UNSC session has “requested the IAEG-SDGs to develop guidelines on how custodian agencies can work together to contribute to the data flows necessary to have harmonized statistics”¹⁰⁸. Therefore, IAEG-SDGs set up in March 2017 a subgroup to work on the development of the Guidelines and Best Practices for Global SDG Data Reporting. The subgroup should present the guidelines in 2018.

3. The High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

24. The High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for Agenda 2030 (HLG-PCCB) was established by the UNSC in 2015. Its task is to provide strategic leadership for the SDG implementation process with regard to follow-up and review of Agenda 2030. HLG-PCCB is responsible for establishing and supporting a member state-led reporting process at the global level. HLG-PCCB collaborates with IAEG-SDGs regarding the development and coordination of global reporting mechanisms.¹⁰⁹ A joint-subgroup of the HLG-PCCB and IAEG-SDGs is tasked with developing a plan to address the immediate priorities including statistical capacity building and financial framework for the statistical reporting of the global SDG indicators.

25. At its 47th session, UNSC asked HLG-PCCB to develop a Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data in consultation with all relevant stakeholders. The aim is to modernize and strengthen statistical systems to meet the 2030 Agenda. Further, UNSC noted that such a Global Action Plan should consider existing regional road maps.¹¹⁰

26. Additionally, HLG-PCCB is responsible for conducting the UN World Data Forum under the auspices of the UNSC. The Forum provides a venue both for a high-level exchange between data producers (official and non-official) and data users (policy ministries, civil society, academia, etc.), and for technical discussions of opportunities and challenges in applying information, data and statistics to measure global progress of Agenda 2030.

¹⁰⁵ Revisions include adding (when it is obvious that the indicator does not cover a particular aspect of the target), deleting or changing indicators in a way that will disrupt the time series. (Note, very minor disruptions could possibly be exempted from this rule).

¹⁰⁶ Refinements include the following types of changes: specifying or correcting the unit of measurement; simple clarification of terms used in the indicator; spelling and other obvious errors; “splitting” indicators into their components in multiple component indicators. A refinement can also be a minor change in an indicator or indicator list that will, in a simple way, solve a problem that is spotted when the collection of data has begun.

¹⁰⁷ A first draft of the document should be available for the 6th IAEG-SDGs meeting.

¹⁰⁸ https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/meetings/iaeg-sdgs-meeting-05/7b.Guidelines%20on%20global%20SDG%20reporting_plenary.pdf.

¹⁰⁹ See paragraph 37 in <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/47th-session/documents/2016-2-IAEG-SDGs-Rev1-E.pdf>.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

27. The first UN World Data Forum was held in Cape Town (South Africa) from 15 to 18 January 2017¹¹¹. This event marked the launch of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data, which was later approved by the 48th UNSC in March 2017.

4. CES and its Steering Group on Statistics for SDGs

28. The UNECE Conference of European Statisticians (CES) has been working on measuring sustainable development since 2005. From 2009 to 2013, a joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD task force developed the CES Recommendations on Measuring Sustainable Development.¹¹² More than 60 countries from the UNECE region and beyond (including OECD member countries) and major international organisations endorsed the CES recommendations in June 2013. In 2015, CES established a task force to adjust the sustainable development measurement framework presented in the CES recommendations to align with SDGs and targets.

29. As a response to Rio+20, a first CES seminar on measuring sustainable development was held in 2013. The second seminar, under the title Response by Official Statistics to the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, discussed the role of the official statistical community at the regional level. One output of that seminar was the Declaration on the Role of National Statistical Offices in Measuring and Monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals¹¹³ which forms the basis of the road map presented in this document.

30. In October 2015, the CES Bureau set up the Steering Group on Statistics for SDGs to develop the current Road Map and follow up on the implementation of the Road Map. The members of the Steering Group are Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Sweden, Switzerland (co-chair), Turkey, United Kingdom, United States (co-chair), Eurostat, OECD and UNECE.

¹¹¹ See <https://undataforum.org>.

¹¹² See http://www.unece.org/publications/ces_sust_development.html.

¹¹³ See ECE/CES/89/Add.1 (<http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=38920/>).

ANNEX III

Groups working on related issues

| Name of group | Chair(s) | Members from CES | Mandate/aim | Time-line | Link to more information |
|---|---|---|---|-------------|---|
| HLG-PCCB (High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development) | Hungary and Cote d'Ivoire | Denmark, Hungary, Italy, Switzerland, United States | Partnership, coordination and capacity building | 2015 - 2030 | http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/hlg/ |
| IAEG-SDGs (Inter-agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators) | Mexico and Tanzania (until 2017 Philippines) | Belarus (until 2017 Armenia), France, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, Canada, Russian Federation, Tadjikistan (until 2017 Kyrgyzstan) | Provide list of indicators at the global level and technical support for their implementation | 2015 - 2030 | http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/ |
| SDMX working group | Colombia | Brazil, France, Mexico, Russian Federation, Eurostat | Development of a global metadata structure for SDG reporting | 2016 - 2030 | http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/Working-Group-ToR--SDMX.pdf |
| Geo-spatial information working group | Mexico and Sweden | Brazil, France, Germany, Mexico, Sweden, Eurostat | How geo-spatial information can contribute to the SDGs | 2016 - 2030 | http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/Working-Group-ToR--GeoSpatial.pdf |
| Working Group on inter-linkages of SDG statistics to allow for integrated analyses in the monitoring | Canada and China | Brazil, Canada, France, Netherlands, Kyrgyzstan, Sweden | Identification of inter-linkages between the goals and targets and within the underlying statistics | 2015 - 2030 | http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/Working-Group-ToR--Interlinkages.pdf |
| Joint subgroup IAEG/HLG | Mexico, Philippines (IAEG); Hungary and Cote d'Ivoire (HLG) | Canada, Denmark, Hungary, Italy, Mexico | Links between HLG and IAEG | 2016 - 2030 | http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/meetings/hlg-meeting-05/2.%20TORs%20for%20the%20Joint%20subgroup%20-%20(as%20of%202%20June%202016)%20clean.pdf |

| Name of group | Chair(s) | Members from CES | Mandate/aim | Time-line | Link to more information |
|--|----------------|---|---|-----------------------------------|---|
| Sustainable Development and Europe 2020 Indicators Working Group | Eurostat | 28 EU Member States + EFTA States | Developing an indicator set at the EU level | No time limit/a meeting each year | http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/europe-2020-indicators |
| Task Force on the Value of Official Statistics | United Kingdom | United Kingdom, Canada, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Turkey, Eurostat and OECD | Defining the value of official statistics and developing ways for its measurement allowing better understanding and communication | 2015-2017 | http://www.unece.org/statistics/statstos/task-force-on-the-value-of-official-statistics.html |
| High-level Group for the Modernisation of Statistical Production and Services | Netherlands | Netherlands, Australia, Italy, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, United States, Eurostat, OECD and UNECE | Reflect on new developments in business architecture for statistics and advise the CES Bureau on strategic developments. Subgroup working on communication issues. | 2013-2019 | http://www.unece.org/statistics/statstos/high-level-group-for-the-modernisation-of-statistical-production-and-services.html |
| UN-GGIM: Europe - Working Group on Data Integration | Germany | Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom and Eurostat | European contribution to the global process on developing a framework for monitoring UN SDG indicators, ensuring a two-way interaction with the IAEG-SDG Working Group on Geospatial Information. | 2017-2020 | http://un-ggim-europe.org/content/wg-b-data-integration |

Conference of European Statisticians Road Map on Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals

This **Conference of European Statisticians Road Map on Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals** provides guidance to national statistical offices on producing statistics for SDGs. It lays out what needs to be done, who is to do what and when, who are the stakeholders, and what are the opportunities for cooperation. The Road Map deals with establishing national mechanisms for collaboration, assessing data gaps, developing national indicators, providing data on global SDG indicators, statistical capacity building and communication.

The Road Map can be used in communications with other stakeholders involved in implementing SDGs, like policy makers, academia, civil society, private sector and media, to explain the issues related to statistics for SDGs, and the critical role of official statistics.

The Road Map was developed by the CES Steering Group on Statistics for SDGs, which includes 17 countries, Eurostat, OECD and UNECE. The Heads of statistical offices of more than 60 countries from UNECE, OECD and beyond approved the Road Map in June 2017.

This First Edition of the Road Map will be updated in the coming years to take into account any new developments and national and international experience.

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