

**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**

Statistical Committee
Fourteenth session
Online session, 10-11 February 2021



Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Provisional agenda and annotations

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Annotations

1. Opening of the session

The fourteenth session of the Statistical Committee will open at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, 10 February 2021. It will be held online, using a web conferencing platform to be determined at a later date. The Chair of the thirteenth session of the Committee will give the opening address and the ESCWA secretariat will deliver a welcome statement.

2. Election of the officers

Rule 18 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia states: "Member States shall chair the sessions of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on a rotating basis, in the Arabic alphabetical order employed by the United Nations. Unless the Commission decides otherwise, those bodies shall elect all their other officers".* The Committee shall elect two vice-chairs and a rapporteur from member State representatives.

3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Rule 8 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, which apply to subsidiary bodies, states: "At the beginning of each session, once the Chair has assumed his/her duties in accordance with rule 12, the Commission shall adopt the agenda for that session on the basis of the provisional agenda". Pursuant to that rule, the Committee will review the provisional agenda for the current session as set out in the present document, E/ESCWA/C.1/2021/L.1, and the proposed organization of work as set out in document E/ESCWA/C.1/2021/L.2. The Committee shall adopt the agenda and the organization of work as submitted or in amended forms.

Follow-up issues

4. Activities implemented in the field of statistics (E/ESCWA/C.1/2021/3)

The Committee will consider the following documents:

(a) Follow-up on recommendations made by the Statistical Committee at its thirteenth session and previous recommendations (E/ESCWA/C.1/2021/3(Part I))

At its thirteenth session, held in Beirut on 29 and 30 January 2019, the Statistical Committee issued recommendations to member States and to the ESCWA secretariat. The document presents progress in implementing those recommendations.

The Statistical Committee is invited to take note of the measures taken by the ESCWA secretariat to follow up on the recommendations addressed to it, and to present action taken to implement the recommendations addressed to member States.

(b) Activities under the programme of work (E/ESCWA/C.1/2021/3(Part II))

The document summarizes the activities undertaken by the ESCWA secretariat and key achievements in the field of statistics since the thirteenth session of the Statistical Committee. It reviews the publications, reports and technical material prepared under the ESCWA work

* ESCWA member States in the Arabic alphabetical order are as follows: Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Tunisia, Algeria, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Sudan, Somalia, Iraq, Oman, the State of Palestine, Qatar, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Mauritania and Yemen.

programme in the field of economic statistics and national accounts, demographic and social statistics, and gender statistics.

The Statistical Committee is invited to take note of achievements in those areas and comment thereon.

(c) Technical cooperation activities (E/ESCWA/C.1/2021/3(Part III))

The document provides an overview of technical cooperation activities, including advisory services, workshops and capacity-building activities, undertaken by the ESCWA secretariat since January 2019 in the field of statistics. These activities were undertaken in the framework of the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation and the United Nations Development Account Programme on Statistics and Data.

The Statistical Committee is invited to take note of the document, make comments thereon and provide guidance on technical cooperation activities.

(d) Activities of the Technical Advisory Group on Demographic and Social Statistics (E/ESCWA/C.1/2021/3(Part IV))

The document summarizes the work outcomes of the Technical Advisory Group on Demographic and Social Statistics, which was formed by the Statistical Committee.

The Statistical Committee is invited to take note of the document and discuss the recommendations made by the Technical Advisory Group.

(e) Activities of the Technical Advisory Group on Economic Statistics (E/ESCWA/C.1/2021/3(Part V))

The document summarizes the work outcomes of the Technical Advisory Group on Economic Statistics, which was formed by the Statistical Committee.

The Statistical Committee is invited to take note of the document and discuss the recommendations made by the Technical Advisory Group.

Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

5. Sustainable Development Goals: monitoring challenges (E/ESCWA/C.1/2021/4)

The Committee will consider a document prepared by the ESCWA secretariat highlighting challenges, activities and achievements in the statistical monitoring of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The document outlines issues of data availability, policy relevance of data and tools developed by ESCWA based on these data.

The Committee is invited to take note of the document and provide guidance for future work on statistical monitoring of progress towards the SDGs.

6. Regional priorities for the coming years in the field of statistics (E/ESCWA/C.1/2021/5)

The Committee will have before it a document prepared by the ESCWA secretariat on regional statistical development, outlining priorities and challenges as well as achievements. The document also highlights cooperation between statistical subprogrammes of the United Nations regional commissions. The document is also being submitted to the fifty-second session of the United Nations Statistical Commission, to be held virtually in March 2021.

The Committee is invited to take note of the document, to discuss regional challenges and priorities in official statistics and provide guidance on future work in the area of official statistics.

7. Guide for a generic law on official statistics for Arab States (E/ESCWA/C.1/2021/6)

In line with the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and in implementation of the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics, the ESCWA secretariat prepared a guide on a draft law for official statistics for Arab States. It provides guidance for States to develop the statistical legislation necessary to unleash the full value of official statistics. The Guide was prepared on the basis of the “Generic Law of Official Statistics for Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia” and the “Guidance on Modernizing Statistical Legislation” of the Economic Commission for Europe, which have been adapted for the Arab region by the ESCWA secretariat, with contributions from Bahrain, Iraq, the State of Palestine and the United Arab Emirates, in addition to the Arab Institute for Statistical Research and Training.

The Committee is invited to take note of the document and adopt the Guide as a general guidance tool for developing and modernizing statistical legislation in the Arab region.

8. Webinar on localized big data for effective decision-making in crisis situations (E/ESCWA/C.1/2021/CRP.1)

At its thirteenth session held in Beirut on 29 and 30 January 2019, the Statistical Committee discussed the subject of big data and requested that the ESCWA secretariat prepare a manual to benefit from international principles on big data and related ethical standards, develop a comprehensive platform for existing initiatives on big data, and assess statistical offices’ readiness to use it. The secretariat has indeed developed a national guide for big data readiness assessments, advising public sector organizations to consider starting small, with single-function big data applications aligned with their current systems.

To prompt more discussions on this critical issue, during its fourteenth session, the Statistical Committee will hold a webinar jointly with the ESCWA Committee on Technology for Development to discuss some of these applications developed as pilot projects, in cooperation between the ESCWA secretariat and the national statistical offices of Jordan and Lebanon. The webinar will consist of presentations on “Leveraging Behavioural and Humanitarian Data Sources to Analyse the Development Challenges Faced by Syrian Refugees and Host Communities in Lebanon” and “Leveraging Big Data Sources for Policy Evaluation and Analysis in Crisis Settings: COVID-19 in Lebanon and Jordan”, followed by an open discussion.

The Committee is invited to participate in the discussion and to make recommendations for future work on big data in official statistics.

9. Date and venue of the fifteenth session of the Statistical Committee

The Committee will discuss the date and venue of its fifteenth session.

10. Other matters

This item will cover any other matters that the members of the Committee may wish to discuss.

11. Adoption of the recommendations made by the Statistical Committee at its fourteenth session

The Committee will review the draft recommendations of its fourteenth session for discussion and adoption.
