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ESCWA

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Statistics Spotlight

Thematic activities in 2017

Newsletter, Issue No.2, December 2017



Participants at the Regional Workshop on the Compilation of Trade in Services Statistics in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Introduction

The aim of the newsletter, Statistics Spotlight, is to update readers on the main activities carried out by the Statistics Division (SD) of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). In its second issue, the newsletter provides briefings on the activities of the division during the period August 2016 until December 2017. The highlighted activities were carried out under SD's thematic clusters of work covering its two sections (the Economic Policies Section and the Social Section), its Statistical Policies and Coordination Unit, as well as related technical cooperation activities and regional advisory services.

Meetings and Workshops

1. EGM on Record Linkage Studies to Assess Completeness of Death Registration

ESCWA organized an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on [Record Linkage Studies to Assess Completeness of Death Registration](#), during the period December 21-22, 2017, at the United Nations House in Beirut, Lebanon.



EGM on Record Linkage Studies to Assess Completeness of Death Registration - Beirut, Lebanon

The meeting aimed at discussing demographic methods for evaluating completeness of data from civil registers, presenting and discussing the preliminary findings from the pilot study on completeness of death registration based on record linkage, presenting and discussing evaluation methods of vital statistics used in some member states, including record linkage and raising awareness of the use of census micro data in record linkage studies.

The meeting was attended by representative of National Statistical Offices and other governmental offices, regional, and international experts.

2. Second Meeting for the Task Force of the 2020 Round of the Population and Housing Censuses

ESCWA and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) organized in collaboration with the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics in Egypt (CAPMAS), the [second meeting for the Task Force team of the 2020 round of population and housing censuses for the Arab countries](#), in Cairo during the period 22-23 January 2017.



Meeting of 2020 Round of the Population and Housing Censuses - Egypt

The meeting summarized the lessons learned from the previous round (2010) of the population and housing censuses, and discussed and streamlined the preparation for the 2020 round.

The meeting was attended by representatives of National Statistical Offices and other governmental offices, regional, and international experts.

3. Regional Workshop on the Compilation of Trade in Services Statistics

A [Regional Workshop on the Compilation of Trade in Services Statistics](#) was organized by the Economic Policy Institute of the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) in collaboration with ESCWA, the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) during the period 20-23 November 2017 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Around thirty-seven participants representing various government entities in 16 Arab countries attended the workshop, with large representation from central banks, National Statistical Offices (NSOs), and ministries of trade/economy in the region.



Workshop on the Compilation of Trade in Services Statistics - Abu Dhabi, UAE

The workshop took stock of progress in areas such as Balance of Payments services statistics, Foreign Affiliates Statistics (FATS), and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) statistics. In addition, it addressed aspects and methods of compiling statistics for trade in services sector of interest to the region, such as transport, travel and tourism, manufacturing services, maintenance and repair services, computer services, and construction.

4. Workshop on Islamic Finance in the National Accounts

ESCWA organized a workshop on [Islamic Finance in the National Accounts](#), in collaboration with the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) during the period 24 – 26 October 2017 in Beirut, Lebanon. The workshop gathered 33 experts from 17 Arab, African and Asian countries in addition to 8 experts representing international organizations such as GCC-Stat, Bank for International Settlements (BIS), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), the Statistical Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC), UN Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP).



Workshop on Islamic Finance in the National Accounts - Beirut, Lebanon

The workshop aimed to increase the capacity of participating countries in the statistical treatment of Islamic finance in the national accounts. The workshop also addressed proposals on how to sectorize Islamic financial institutions, classify and record Islamic financial instruments and the corresponding property income and related transactions, and calculate and record the output of Islamic financial services. Participants shared their country practices and experiences in the compilation of statistics on Islamic finance and the challenges and issues involved.

5. EGM on the Implementation Framework for the Environmental Dimension of the 2030 Agenda

ESCWA organized a [Consultative Meeting on the Implementation Framework for the Environmental Dimension of the 2030 Agenda in the Arab Region](#), in cooperation with UN Environment and the League of Arab States (LAS) during the period 18 - 21 September 2017 in Cairo, Egypt. The Meeting was attended by 84 experts and representatives of 20 regional organizations including Environment Ministries in Arab countries members of the Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region (JCEDAR), representatives of National Statistical Offices (NSOs), regional organizations, as well as experts from environmental research institutes.



EGM on the Implementation Framework of Environmental Dimension - Egypt

During the meeting, ESCWA presented a proposed "Implementation Framework for the Environmental Dimension of the 2030 Agenda" developed by ESCWA and its partners in response to the resolution of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) in 2016, which called "to prepare an implementation plan for the environmental dimension of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda" in cooperation with UN Environment and LAS.

6. ICP Regional Workshop on Estimating Detailed National Accounts Expenditures

Under the framework of integration between price statistics and national accounts, the ICP team at ESCWA conducted a regional capacity building workshop on Model Report on Expenditure Statistics (MORES) during the period 26-27 April 2017 in Cairo, Egypt. The workshop was carried out within the scope of the 2016 Regional Round for the production of PPPs which aims at the production of numerous indicators, among which are Real National Accounts Expenditures at the level of the GDP and its aggregates, thus ensuring the regular production of detailed and reliable price and national accounts expenditures data.



Workshop on Estimating Detailed National Accounts Expenditures - Egypt

The regional workshop included sessions to familiarize the national accounts experts from 11 Member States with the Model Report on Expenditures Statistics (MORES) and presenting the indicators which can be used for the estimation of detailed GDP expenditures. Participants were reminded of the importance of increased cooperation and coordination between price experts and national accounts experts at the national level for the production of reliable price and expenditures data, thus ensuring the accuracy of the comparison.



7. Workshop on Measuring Women's Representation in Local Government

ESCWA organized a workshop on [Measuring Women's Representation in Local Government in the ESCWA region](#), in collaboration with [UN Women](#) during the period 12-13 September 2017 in Beirut, Lebanon. The workshop gathered representatives of National Statistical Offices, electoral management bodies, line ministries overseeing local government and women's machineries.

The workshop emphasized the importance of [SDG indicator 5.5.1b](#) on women's participation in local government in providing a more holistic picture of women's participation in political life. It also noted that the indicator measures the proportion of women in local government institutions, and that local government institutions are defined in constitutions and laws at the national level.



Workshop on Measuring Women's Representation in Government - Lebanon

Participants learned about key programmes and activities undertaken by ESCWA's Statistics Division (SD) to support building the capacity of countries in the region to produce gender statistics and use them to understand women's political participation, availability of SDG gender-related national data in the Global SDG database and challenges to produce and disseminate data. The workshop also discussed steps to increase the production process in the NSS and importance of collaboration.

8. Expert Meeting on Disability Measurement in Support of SDGs

The [Expert Meeting on Disability Measurement in Support of SDGs](#) was organized by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) in collaboration with ESWCA and the [National Centre for Statistics and Information](#) (NCSI) of Oman; it was held during the period 14-16 March 2017 in Muscat, Oman. Representatives from National Statistical Offices (NSOs) of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Sudan, Syria, UAE, Yemen, attended the meeting, in addition to representatives from GCC-Stat, UNICEF, WHO, and the Washington Group on Disability Statistics.



Expert Meeting on Disability Measurement in Support of SDGs - Oman

This meeting aimed at taking stock of current national practices in measuring and monitoring disability in the Arab region. It discussed disability in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and reviewed selected SDG global indicators explicitly referring to persons with disabilities. Moreover, the meeting acknowledged that to fulfill new SDGs indicators requirements, an unprecedented amount of statistics will need to be produced by National Statistical Systems, including on the status of persons with disabilities.

9. Workshop on Improving Disability Statistics in Arab Countries

The [Workshop on Improving Disability Statistics in the Arab Countries](#) in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, was held in collaboration with the Washington Group on Disability Statistics, during the period 17-20 April 2017 in Casablanca, Morocco. It brought together 18 participants from 11 Arab National Statistical Offices (NSOs), policymakers, and a representative from the United Nations Statistics Office (UNSD).



Workshop on Improving Disability Statistics - Casablanca, Morocco

Participants at the workshop reaffirmed the importance of compiling harmonized disability statistics in the region and committed to regularly report on regional comparable and harmonized disability statistics. They also urged ESCWA to develop the Arabic Regional Guidebook on the implementation of the Washington Group Questions in the region with national examples to illustrate good practices for future implementation of surveys and censuses. A regional group on Disability Statistics will also be formed in the future to follow up on the developments of disability statistics at the regional and global levels, and act as a regional reference source of experts on compilation of disability statistics in line with the Washington Group recommendations and the Regional and Global Guidelines.

10. High-level Regional Workshop on Implementation of the SDG Indicator Framework

The High-level Regional Workshop on the [Implementation of the SDG Indicator Framework in the Arab Region](#) was organized jointly by the Statistics Division (SD) at ESCWA and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) during the period 5-6 April 2017 in Beirut, Lebanon. A total of 40 participants attended the meeting, representing 12 Arab countries and a slew of regional and international organizations including UNFPA, UNEP, ILO, UN-Habitat, UNDP, UNICEF MENARO, UNHCR, UNESCO, GCC-STAT, and SESRIC.



Workshop on Implementation of the SDG Indicator Framework - Lebanon

The overall objective of the workshop was to reflect on the preparation of national indicator frameworks based on national, regional and global priorities, and on the roadmaps for the development of a clear set of strategies to strengthen national statistical systems and their deliveries in line with the Global Action Plan. The workshop also launched the 10th Tranche of the [Development Account \(DA 10\) Programme on Statistics and Data](#) for ESCWA Member States.

Selected Publications

1. Bulletin of Industrial Statistics for Arab Countries - Issue 9

Issue number 9 of "[Bulletin of Industrial Statistics for Arab Countries](#)" 2008-2014 provides detailed industrial data on Arab countries for users of this type of statistics, such as policymakers, analysts and researchers. It includes time series and indicators for the period 2008-2014 which were drawn primarily from national sources, and complemented by secondary sources when needed.



The Bulletin is divided into two parts. Part I includes summary tables on overall industrial trends, including levels of output; labour productivity; the contribution made by industry to gross domestic product; and the average wage of employees in Arab countries. Part II contains tables of industrial statistics for each Arab country, which present available data on the number of establishments, the number of employees, their wages and salaries, output value added, and index numbers of industrial production.

2. External Trade Bulletin of the Arab Region - Issue 25

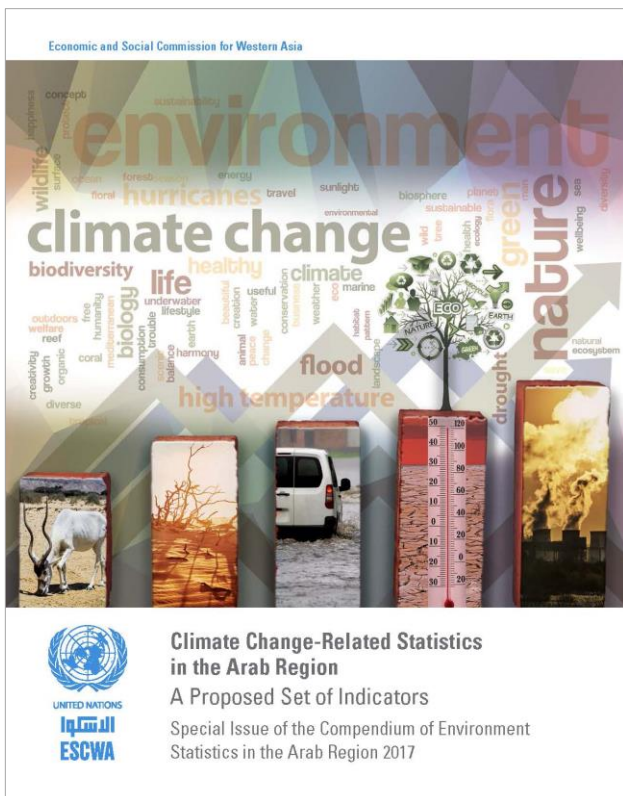
Issue number 25 of "[External Trade Bulletin of the Arab Region](#)" presents statistical indicators on external and intraregional trade in goods in the region. Data are presented in time series until 2015 and were drawn primarily from national sources and secondary sources when needed. The Bulletin aims to assist policymakers, analysts, researchers and other users at the national, regional and international levels. The upcoming issue will contain new addition on country profiles showing the main indicators with graphics and text.



The Bulletin comprises three parts. Part I covers external trade showing annual trade growth rates in the region, the total values of imports and exports, and the percentage of those values by section of the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding Systems (HS). Part II discusses intraregional trade highlighting intraregional imports and exports as a share of total imports and exports by country and HS section. Finally, Part III covers the directions of trade showing the imports and exports of each country with major countries and economic groupings in the world.

3. Climate Change-Related Statistics in the Arab Region: A Proposed Set of Indicators

Climate change and its impacts represent a major challenge to sustainable development in Arab countries. Reliable statistics are crucial for measuring and monitoring the economic and social impacts of climate change at the national and regional levels. In this special issue of the “[Compendium of Environment Statistics in the Arab Region](#)”, ESCWA presents the potential role of national statistical offices in leading and coordinating climate change statistics.



With a view to improving climate change-related statistics collected by national statistical offices in the Arab region, the report proposes a set of climate change-related indicators for Arab countries. The set of indicators is relevant to the region, uncumbersome to compile, feasible given existing data and methods, and consistent with international recommendations in this area.

4. National Accounts Studies of the Arab Region – Bulletin No. 35

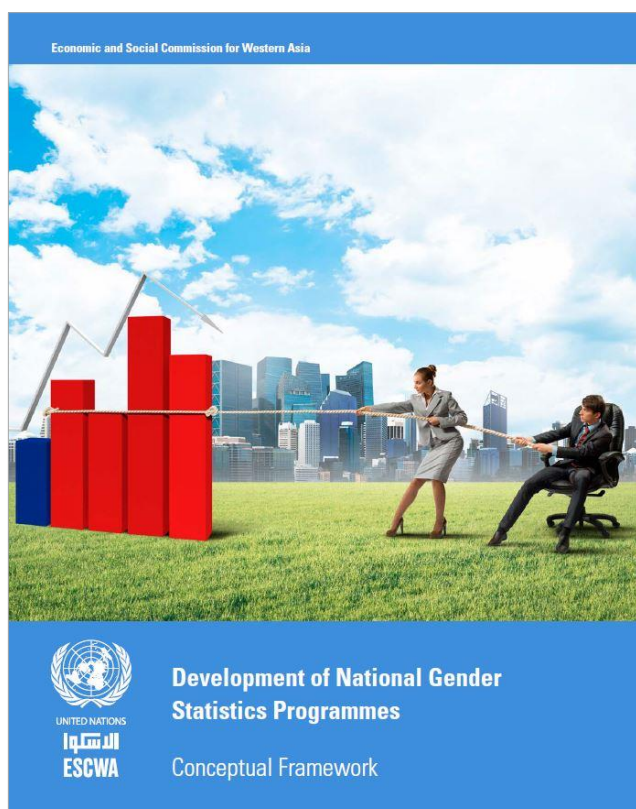
Bulletin number 35 of the “[National Accounts Studies of the Arab Region](#)” includes available data and estimates provided by the ESCWA of gross domestic product (GDP) at both current and constant prices, in addition to the consolidated national accounts for each ESCWA member states during the period 2011-2015, and the estimated real GDP growth for 2016.



Data were compiled from national statistical sources and member states responses to questionnaires prepared by ESCWA. This publication is intended for economists, social researchers, and policymakers.

5. Development of National Gender Statistics Programmes - Conceptual Framework

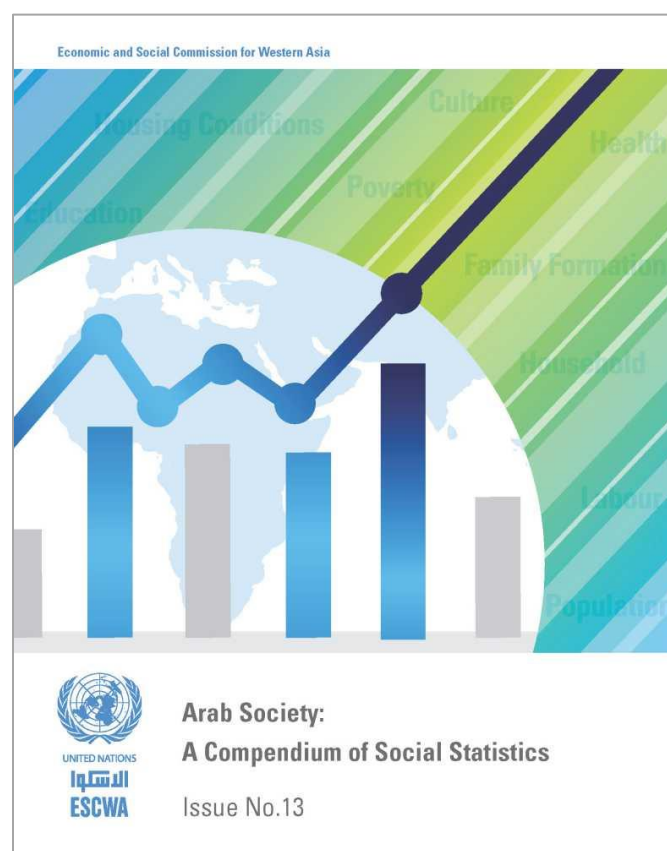
This technical study on the [Development of National Gender Statistics Programmes - Conceptual Framework](#) was prepared by the Statistical Policies and Coordination Unit under the umbrella of the "[Inter-regional Cooperation to Strengthen National Capacities to Measure Progress in Achieving Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment](#)" project. Major gaps in developing gender statistics, such as lack of, or deficiencies in data on gender equality persist.



The study addresses the fundamental elements of developing gender statistics programmes, as well as the measures and actions necessary for creating an effective enabling environment. It also dwells upon the development of a road map for gender statistics programmes based on national, regional and international instruments and frameworks. National case studies on gender statistics from Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, and Tunisia are also presented.

6. Arab Society: A Compendium of Demographic and Social Statistics - Issue 13

Issue number 13 of "[Arab Society: A Compendium of Demographic and Social Statistics](#)" provides a broad description of Arab society, focusing on population dynamics, household composition and family formation, housing conditions, health, education, labour, poverty and inequality, and culture and social participation.



The report shows that the population in the Arab region continues to grow rapidly and diversify. The population is young overall, but there is considerable heterogeneity in the age-sex profile of countries in the region owing to varying demographic transitions, the size of migrant laborers and influx of refugees in some countries. In recent years, the region has experienced a rapid decline of fertility and mortality.

7. Arab Disability Statistics in Numbers 2017 - e-Publication

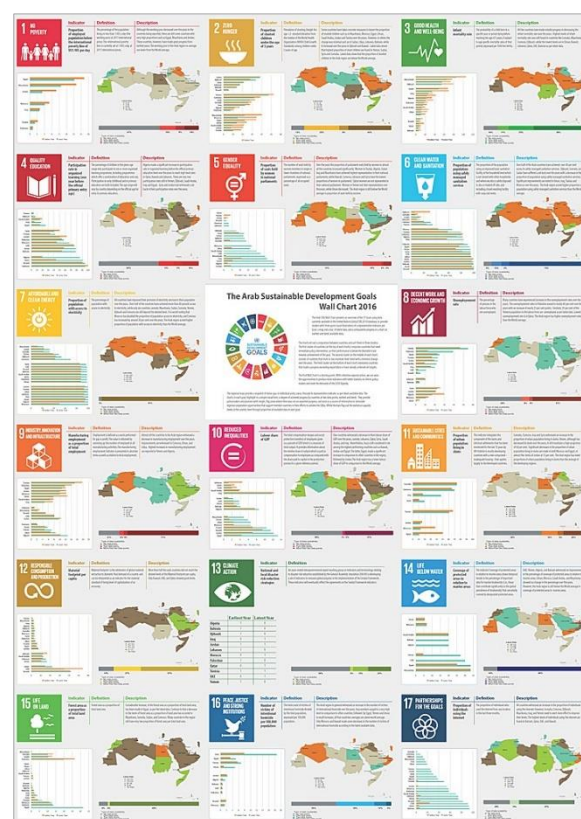
The [Arab Disability Statistics in Numbers 2017](#) e-publication is based on national data, harmonized to the extent possible, to allow for comparable regional data analysis, based on different sources such as population censuses, and household surveys for poverty, labor force, health and household budget, cross-cutting in a number of socio-economic areas.



The main purpose of this publication is to present a picture of the situation of persons with disabilities in comparison to those with no disabilities in numbers. All data presented in this publication are national data compiled and verified by the Statistics Division (SD) of ESCWA. The e-publication will be updated periodically as countries collect more disability statistics. The scope of covered areas will also be expanded in the future to allow further in-depth analysis.

8. The Arab Sustainable Development Goals - Wall Chart

The [Arab SDGs Wall Chart 2016](#) presents an overview of the 17 goals using data currently available in the United Nations Global SDG 2016 database, it provides readers with 3 quick visual illustrations of a representative indicator per goal: a map and a bar of latest data, and a comparative progress in a chart; at earliest and latest available data.

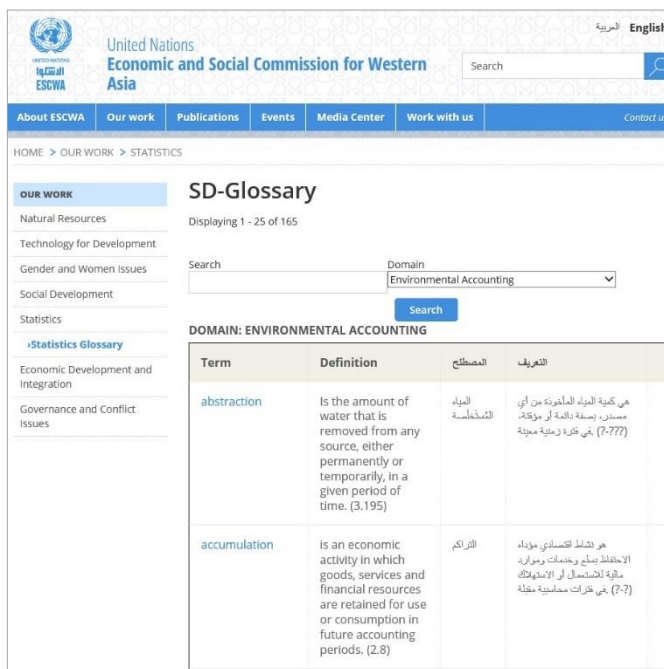


The regional maps provide a snapshot of status quo, in individual policy areas, through its representative indicator as per latest available data. The charts, in each goal, highlight in a simple visual form, a degree of achieved progress by countries at two data points; earliest and latest. They provide policymakers and planners with insight, flag areas where there was not an expected progress, and serve as a source of information to stimulate regional cooperation opportunities that support member states in their efforts to achieve the SDGs. The bars pinpoint the statistical capacity needs at the country level through proportion of available data in each goal.

Capacity-building Portals

1. ESCWA E-Glossary of Statistical Terms – Web Portal

ESCWA developed the [E-Glossary of Statistical Terms](#), an Arabic/English web portal of about 5,000 statistical terms in 14 statistical areas spanning national accounts, economic, sectoral energy and environment and others. A specific element of the glossary is the glossary of terms for the Statistical Business registers developed through a partnership with the Palestinian Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), in accordance with the guidance issued by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE).



Term	Definition	المصطلح	التعريف
abstraction	Is the amount of water that is removed from any source, either permanently or temporarily, in a given period of time. (3.195)	المياه المستخلصة	هي كمية المياه المأخوذة من أي مصدر، بصورة دائمة أو مؤقتة، في فترة زمنية معينة (2-777).
accumulation	Is an economic activity in which goods, services and financial resources are retained for use or consumption in future accounting periods. (2.8)	التراكم	هو نشاط اقتصادي مؤبد، الإحتفاظ بسلع وخدمات وموارد مالية للاستعمال أو الإستهلاك في فترات محاسبية مغلقة (2-7).

ESCWA and the [MEDSTAT IV](#) Working Group (WG) on Business register and Business statistics, led by Palestine and Tunisia, reviewed the Arabic translation and published the final version.

2. The System of Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA) - Training Programme in Arabic

The System of Environmental-Economic Accounting 2012—Central Framework is a multipurpose conceptual framework for measuring the interactions between the environment and the economy. By providing an internationally agreed standard with agreed concepts, definitions and classifications, the SEEA is an invaluable tool for compiling integrated statistics on the economy and the environment and deriving coherent and comparable indicators to measure progress towards sustainable development.

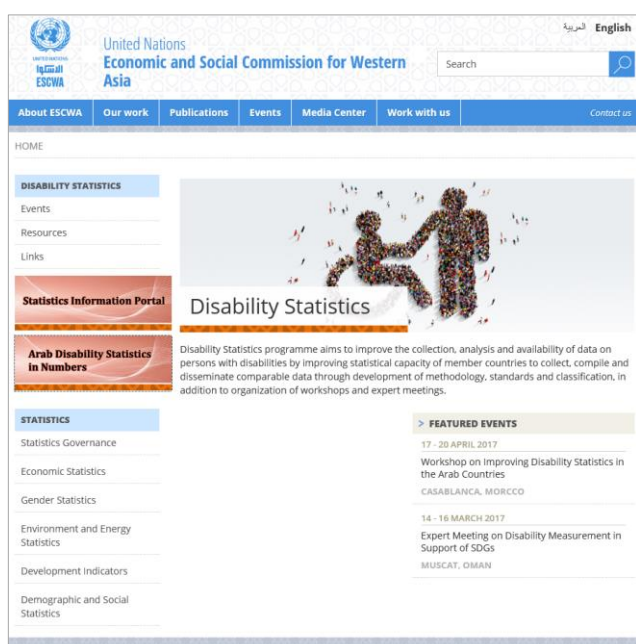
[The training programme](#) on the System of Environmental Economic Accounting Central Framework (SEEA-CF) and environment-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicators will be launched on 1 February 2018.



The programme consists of a self-paced online training with webinar sessions, an in-person workshop and follow-up country activities. The Statistics Division at ESCWA has translated the into Arabic under the [UN Development Account Programme on Statistics and Data \(DA10\)](#), Pillar II on Environment. The Arabic version of the course can be accessed by following [this link](#).

3. Disability Statistics – Web Portal

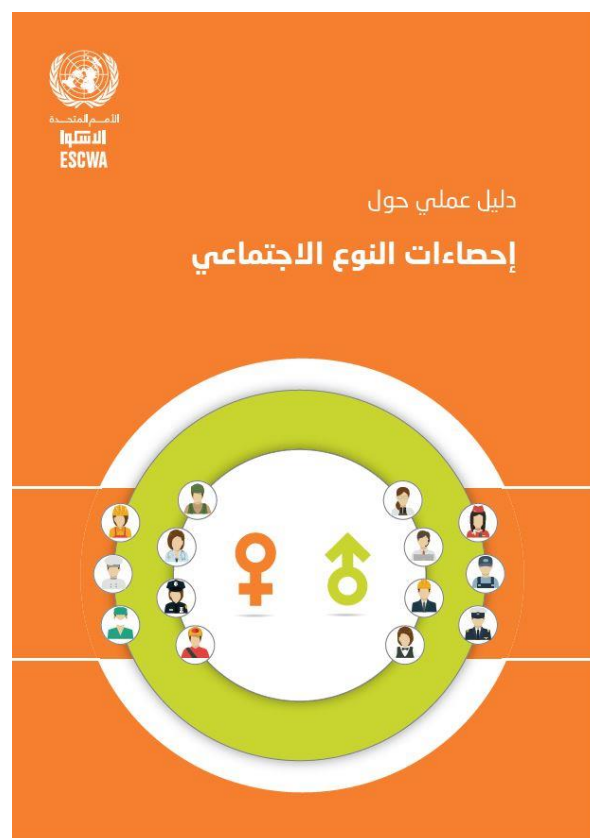
The Statistical Policies and Coordination Unit at the Statistics Division (SD) of ESCWA has established a new programme on Disability Statistics. The programme aims to improve the collection, analysis and availability of data on persons with disabilities. This will be achieved by enhancing the statistical capacity of member countries to collect, compile and disseminate comparable data through development of methodology, standards and classification.



In addition, capacity-building activities of this programme will be held in the form of workshops and expert group meetings. A dedicated [web portal on Disability Statistics](#) has been developed for the purpose. It currently hosts all activities and outputs undertaken since the launch of the programme in 2017.

4. Toolkit on Gender Statistics – Training Curriculum in Arabic

On the sidelines of the 12th session of its Statistical Commission held in Beirut during the period 4-5 April 2017, ESCWA launched the first [Toolkit on Gender Statistics](#) in the Arabic language as a training curriculum. The preparation of this Toolkit falls within the context of the Development Account project on "[Interregional Cooperation to Strengthen Capacities to Measure Progress in Achieving Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment](#)".



The gender training curriculum aims to promote a gender perspective in national statistics. It primarily targets statisticians working in National Statistical Offices in the Arab region in addition to users of gender statistics in other national and international organizations. It is expected that the toolkit will strengthen the capacity of relevant national institutions in the region to improve the quality of their data and statistics required for monitoring progress towards SDG Goal 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.

Additional Events

We organized and participated in additional meetings, workshops, and consultations during the year (2017). A selection of these is listed below:

- [ESCWA Statistical Committee 12th session](#), 4-5 April 2017; in Beirut, Lebanon.
- Regional ICP Validation Workshop in Western Asia, 6-10 February 2017; in Cairo, Egypt.
- Workshop on Turnover indices, 22-24 May 2017; in Muscat, Oman.
- Regional ICP Workshop for Developing Purchasing Power Parities in Western Asia, 20-24 April 2017; in Cairo, Egypt
- Regional Workshop on Industrial Statistics and Meeting on Short Term Economic Indicators in the Arab Region, 11-15 December 2017; in Beirut, Lebanon.

Upcoming Events

We plan on holding, organizing, and participating in additional events during the first-half of 2018. A selection of these is listed below:

- [Regional Workshop on the Use of Technology in Population and Housing Censuses in Arab Countries](#), 29-31 January 2018; in Cairo, Egypt.
- Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics, First-half of 2018.
- Workshop on the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting Central Framework and environment-related SDG indicators for Arab Countries, March 2018; in Amman, Jordan.
- [Workshop on Sound Institutional Environment, Cooperation, Dialogue and Partnerships for the Production and Utilization of SDG Indicators](#), 06-08 February 2018; in Tunis, Tunisia.
- Workshop on Violence against Women and Time Use Statistics, May 2018; in Morocco.
- Regional training workshop on the use of existing data for monitoring gender equality and women's empowerment, First-half of 2018.

Disclaimer

This newsletter has been published electronically by the Statistics Division (SD) at ESCWA without formal editing by the United Nations.

Dates for all upcoming events are tentative and subject to change without prior notice.

Visit our website at: <https://www.unescwa.org/our-work/statistics>

Readers' comments are welcome, please send your e-mail to escwa-sd@un.org

