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for Sustainable Development

Work on the review of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, which was prepared in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2023/325 and past practices, provides a description of the work carried out by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, in cooperation with other entities of the United Nations system, in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It contains a description of: (a) the work carried out to prepare the annual report of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (A/78/80-E/2023/64); and (b) the work undertaken to update the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database.

In addition, the present report contains updates on: (a) the Data for Now initiative, jointly convened by the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme, the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, the World Bank and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network; (b) the collaborative on the use of administrative data for statistical purposes; (c) the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training; (d) the Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians; (e) the work of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys; and (f) the work related to citizen-generated data.

The Commission is invited to take note of the work carried out and to comment on its progress and on the proposed programme of work related to the annual report of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, the update of the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database, the Data for Now initiative, the work of the collaborative on the use of administrative data for statistical purposes, the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training, the

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* E/CN.3/2024/1.

Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians, the work of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys, and the work on citizen-generated data and of the Collaborative on Citizen Data. Action to be taken by the Commission is set out in paragraph 63 of the present report.

I. Introduction

1.   In its decision 54/102, the Statistical Commission expressed its appreciation for the work of the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, in cooperation with the United Nations system, in support of the follow-up to and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022*, the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database and the release of an updated Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Data Platform. The Commission expressed its appreciation for the capacity-development activities carried out by the Division and its partners to assist Member States in the dissemination of Goal data and indicators and commended the Division for making Goal data more widely available. It expressed its appreciation for the Data for Now initiative to build capacity in countries for the use of innovative data sources, technologies and methods and encouraged the further inclusion of countries from all regions, and it supported the work of the collaborative on the use of administrative data for statistical purposes. It expressed its appreciation for the efforts and achievements of the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training and the establishment of the Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians. It welcomed the activities of the Division in citizen-generated data, in collaboration with its partners, and supported the development of a conceptual framework for and the establishment of a collaborative on citizen data.

II. Sustainable Development Goals progress reports for 2023

2.   In 2023, the Statistics Division produced a series of reports and publications reviewing progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, including: (a) the special edition of the report of the Secretary-General, entitled "Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: towards a rescue plan for people and planet" (A/78/80-E/2023/64); (b) *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*;[1] (c) *The Sustainable Development Goals Progress Chart 2023*;[2] (d) *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2023*;[3] and (e) the extended *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023* platform.[4]

3.   In his report on progress towards the Goals, the Secretary-General sounded the alarm with an honest and sobering assessment of progress, stating: "At the midpoint on our way to 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals are in deep trouble." The report reveals that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the war in Ukraine, a creaking economy and climate-related disasters continue to wreak havoc on the Sustainable Development Goals, based on the most recent available data. The Secretary-General recommended five major areas and identified policy priority actions for urgent, transformative action.

4.   *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023* is presented in an interactive platform on the website of the Statistics Division using appealing visual storytelling, including infographics, to make the data on progress towards the Goals more accessible and understandable to a wider audience. It provides an in-depth analysis of selected indicators, both globally and across regions, supported by an array of charts and maps.

5.   *The Sustainable Development Goals Progress Chart 2023* presents a comprehensive overview of global progress for the targets outlined in the 17 Goals of

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[1] Available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023.
[2] Available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/progress-chart.
[3] Available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/gender-snapshot/2023.
[4] Available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/extended-report.

the 2030 Agenda. Among the assessable targets, a mere 15 per cent are on track to be achieved by 2030. Nearly half, or 48 per cent, of the targets that can be assessed show moderate or severe deviations from the desired trajectory. Furthermore, over one third, or 37 per cent, of the targets have experienced no progress or, even worse, have regressed below the 2015 baseline. Both the aforementioned reports and the progress chart informed the discussion at the 2023 high-level political forum on sustainable development and the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Summit.

6.   *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2023* was prepared jointly by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, through its Statistics Division. The report presents the latest evidence on gender equality across all 17 Goals, indicating that the world is failing to achieve gender equality, making it an increasingly distant goal. The report highlights the urgent need for efforts to accelerate progress towards gender equality by 2030, revealing that an additional $360 billion per year is needed to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment across key global goals.

7.   In addition to *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023*, a platform for the extended report was set up to provide more detailed storylines and information and additional resources for each indicator, prepared by custodian agencies.

III.   Database

8.   The reports are accompanied by a comprehensive statistical annex [5] and supplemented by the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database. [6] The Database contains the data on the global indicators used in the above-mentioned reports and includes both country-level data and regional and global aggregates. As at 1 November 2023, it included data for 226 of the 231 unique indicators and 2.7 million data records. An accompanying metadata repository [7] provides the metadata for the indicators. Access to the country-level data and the metadata ensures full transparency with regard to the data and methodologies used for global reporting.

9.   The Database and metadata repository are maintained by the Statistics Division and contain data and metadata provided by international agencies and entities, which are referred to as custodian agencies, in accordance with their mandates. For each value of the indicator, the custodian agency is also requested to indicate whether the national data were adjusted, estimated, modelled or the result of global monitoring. [8] For example, national data may be adjusted for international comparability or, where data are missing, estimated. Since 2019, a more frequent update cycle has been

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[5] Available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/report/2023/E_2023_64_Statistical_Annex_I_and_II.pdf.

[6] Available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/database.

[7] Available at http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata.

[8] The nature of the data is determined as follows: (a) country data: produced and disseminated by the country (including data adjusted by the country to meet international standards); (b) adjusted country data: produced and provided by the country, but adjusted by the international agency for international comparability to comply with internationally agreed standards, definitions and classifications; (c) estimated: estimated on the basis of national data, such as surveys or administrative records, or other sources but on the same variable being estimated, produced by the international agency when country data for one or more years are not available, when multiple sources exist or when there are data quality issues; (d) modelled: modelled by the agency on the basis of other covariates when there is a complete lack of data on the variable being estimated; and (e) global monitoring data: produced on a regular basis by the designated agency for global monitoring, based on country data. There is no corresponding figure at the country level.

implemented for the Database in order to provide users with access to more timely data. In addition to an update in July, new data and data updates are provided towards the end of March, October and December.

A. Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Data Platform

10.   The Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Data Platform was launched in September 2021. In March 2022, an improved version of the Platform was released that took into account feedback from users. The Platform includes a new, user-friendly interface to the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database, country profiles and a Goal analytics module that allows, among other things, a detailed analysis of data availability, including for disaggregated data. As part of its advanced access options, the Platform provides Goal metadata in machine-readable format via a database interface and a Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) application programming interface. The Platform enables the user to explore the SDMX metadata application programming interface and formulate queries that return metadata for specific indicators and metadata concepts. Many users access the data via the available application programming interfaces.[9]

B. Work on data and metadata exchange

11.   The Working Group on Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange for Sustainable Development Goal Indicators of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators continued its work on the maintenance and further development of the Goal data exchange.[10] Training on SDMX for Goal indicators was provided to custodian agencies in January and February 2023, and a significant increase in SDMX data transmissions was registered following the training. As at the end of 2023, over 40 per cent of the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database was transmitted through SDMX data exchange. Countries in different regions are increasingly using SDMX-based data exchange for Goal indicators as well, supported by capacity-building activities. Jointly with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, in-person and online capacity-building was provided to countries of the Arab region and SDMX-based data exchange of Goal indicators was established between the regional commission and 17 countries, with more countries expected to join shortly. Capacity-building continues to be provided to countries in the African region thanks to collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa. Development of an e-leaning course on SDMX for Goal indicators was completed, and the training has been available since early 2023.[11]

C. "UN Data Commons for the SDGs" platform

12.   The Statistics Division, partnering with Google Data Commons, launched a platform called "UN Data Commons for the SDGs".[12] The new platform integrates

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[9] See https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/sdmx-working-group/ (SDMX application programming interface) and https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/UNSDGAPIV5/swagger/ (Swagger application programming interface). The metadata application programming interface is available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/SDMX_SDG_METADATA_API_MANUAL.pdf.

[10] The latest available data structure definition is available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/sdmx-working-group. The first official metadata structure definition for Goal indicators was published in February 2022 and is available at https://registry.sdmx.org/metadata/metadatastructure.html.

[11] See https://learning.officialstatistics.org/course/view.php?id=96.

[12] Available at https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/undatacommons/sdgs.

authoritative data on the Goals and insights from across the United Nations system into a public repository with advanced search functionality and an innovative, user-friendly interface. It is aimed at putting high-quality data sets and digital public goods at users' fingertips, allowing for seamless exploration of diverse statistical data sets, the annual global report on the Goals, and analytics, to ultimately facilitate informed, data-driven decisions.

13. The reports, data platforms and metadata repository are hosted on the Goal indicators website,[13] which is maintained by the Statistics Division. The website also contains information on the work and activities of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In addition, the website contains rich resources related to Goal monitoring and reporting, including a good practices wiki page containing country examples of good practices in Goal monitoring on data platforms, data disaggregation and the use of non-traditional data sources; a toolkit on using small area estimation for the Goals; a toolkit on data storytelling for voluntary national reviews and Goal reporting and data visualization; a practical guide for evidence-based voluntary national reviews; and a Goal monitoring and reporting toolkit for United Nations country teams.

IV. Work programme of the inter-agency working group on the global Sustainable Development Goals review

14. More than 50 international agencies and organizations contributed data and analysis to the progress reports and to the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database and metadata repository. In order to provide a working mechanism for the United Nations system to prepare the report, as mandated in the 2030 Agenda, the Statistics Division has been convening meetings and teleconferences with the entities that provide data and analysis for the preparation of the annual progress reports and the regular updating of the Database. The group met on 10 and 23 October and on 5 December 2023.

15. The inter-agency working group:

(a) Reviews and discusses plans for the production of the annual progress report of the Secretary-General and the complementary annual *Sustainable Development Goals Report*;

(b) Agrees on the structure, scope and coverage of the annual reports and related contributions by the relevant organizations;

(c) Contributes to the regular updating of the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database, including by providing updates and refinements to the metadata, as needed;

(d) Exchanges information and updates on capacity-development activities relating to statistics and indicators for the 2030 Agenda;

(e) Reports annually to the Commission as part of the present report.

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[13] http://unstats.un.org/sdgs.

V. Data for Now initiative

16.   The Data for Now initiative[14] supports countries in the use of innovative data sources, technologies and methods for the streamlined production and dissemination of better, more timely and disaggregated data on key areas related to specific Sustainable Development Goals. The initiative is co-led by the Statistics Division, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network Thematic Research Network on Data and Statistics, in close coordination with members of the national statistical systems in participating countries and partners from across the United Nations system, the private sector, academia, civil society and the development community at large. The initiative emphasizes country ownership, sustainability and scalability of data challenges and solutions as the key guiding principles for the design and execution of activities. The activities are aimed at integrating new methods and sources into existing national statistical systems and are explicitly intended to avoid creating parallel data production processes at the country level.

17.   Over the past year, Data for Now activities expanded to more countries, with the core partners having secured additional funding to support the work. New partners also joined, contributing to the work, including UNDP, which joined as a core partner in the second half of 2023. The activities involved securing high-level support and government buy-in, engaging with key providers and users of data across the national statistical system, strengthening the skills within the national statistical system to implement innovative approaches to fill data gaps, and communicating and disseminating results through the main channels of the national statistical office in each participating country.

18.   Capacity-development activities of the Statistics Division under the Data for Now initiative in 2023 continued with support from the Governments of Italy, Norway and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Priority areas of work were set, based on the needs identified by each country. For example, in the State of Palestine, the work was focused on Goal 11 indicators, making use of geospatial and statistical information. In Ethiopia the work was focused on the disaggregation of Goal 2 indicators using small area estimation techniques, and in Tunisia the work was focused on gaining insights into internal migration using mobile positioning data. Modernization of the information technology architecture to support the implementation of innovative approaches was included as a cross-cutting area of support. Substantial contributions were also made on cross-cutting themes, including contributing to the development of the conceptual framework for citizen data and the road map for its implementation, bringing many countries to the table, and the development of a road map for national statistical office-academia collaboration. Owing to the prioritization by many countries of geostatistical integration, the Data for Now team also liaised with the secretariat of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management within the Division to jointly support work in countries on integration of statistical and geospatial information. A high-level seminar was organized in Bangkok in November, in partnership with Statistics Norway and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), engaging around 20 countries to strengthen their geostatistical capacity. The work is guided by the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework and the SDGs geospatial road map, responding practically, inter alia, to Commission decisions 54/101 and 54/118, in

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[14] The Data for Now initiative was launched by the Deputy Secretary-General on the margins of the session of the General Assembly in September 2019. See https://unstats.un.org/capacity-development/data-for-now.

which the Commission requested the mobilization of resources for their implementation and operationalization.

19. The Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data dedicated significant efforts to implement activities within the Data for Now initiative, including capacity-development programmes, peer and knowledge exchange sessions and strategic and policy endeavours. This included training in data science, with a specific focus on enhancing climate and health monitoring and outcomes, and in the utilization and access of privately held mobile network operator data. It also featured a data fellowship component, providing technical assistance for use cases and skills transfer to ensure the sustainability of efforts at statistics offices. In addition, the Global Partnership engaged country partners in exploring strategic and policy discussions regarding the utilization and access of citizen-generated data for national statistics. The work was directed primarily towards country partners in the African region and in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Global Partnership received support for these endeavours from the Wellcome Trust, the Islamic Development Bank and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

20. The Thematic Research Network on Data and Statistics supported a study by the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis and the Ghana Statistical Service on the feasibility of using drone imagery for marine litter mapping and how it could complement citizen science data. In Rwanda, the Network supported the convening of meetings between representatives of the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda and civil society organizations to improve the dissemination of the population census.

21. The World Bank has strengthened its partnership with private companies to leverage non-traditional data and has developed innovative methodologies to address data gaps when traditional data are unavailable. For example, it has used Internet connectivity, business activity, night-time lights, and mobility data, among other data sources, to measure and monitor the socioeconomic impacts felt by countries affected by natural disasters or conflict. These efforts to understand when and how to use alternative data will help to guide countries on how they can leverage non-traditional data on their own. UNDP joined only midway through the year but has already actively engaged in strategic discussions and initiated first engagements with countries.

22. The Data for Now initiative also benefited greatly from the direct involvement and support of many partners. A key example was Statistics Norway, which engaged with a number of countries, including on the use of web-scraping techniques in Tunisia and geospatial approaches in Namibia. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) supported Goal 11 work in several countries, and Digital Earth Africa also engaged in various activities.

23. In the coming year, it is expected that the partners will continue strategic discussions and work together actively in meeting demands of countries under the Data for Now umbrella. More information on the initiative and projects can be found on the Data for Now web pages and in the background document for the present report.[15]

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[15] The background document is entitled "Data for Now initiative: use of innovative methods, tools and data sources for more accurate, timely and granular Sustainable Development Goal data".

VI. Strengthening capacity for the use of administrative data for statistical purposes

24. The collaborative on the use of administrative data for statistical purposes was initiated in May 2020 in response to the urgent need for more timely and disaggregated data to inform the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as well as to respond to the pandemic and its socioeconomic effects. The collaborative is co-convened by the Statistics Division and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data. In 2023, it had a membership of over 30 countries and 25 regional and international agencies.

25. The collaborative takes a cross-cutting approach, focusing on the process of making use of administrative data sources, from access to and engagement with administrative data holders, to data quality and interoperability considerations, to information technology and other related matters. In order to help ensure that the work does not overlap with other more thematically focused activities, an inventory of resources has been created that provides over 100 different materials, including recommendations, guidelines, courses, tools and practical case studies from countries. The collaborative also organizes webinars and expert meetings on selected topics. New practically oriented materials were also developed in the course of 2023. The inventory and other materials can be found on the homepage of the collaborative.[16] The background document on the work of the collaborative provides more details on the progress made and materials developed.[17]

26. In 2021, a project under the thirteenth tranche of the Development Account on administrative data for disaggregated Sustainable Development Goal indicators in Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Latin America was initiated; it is closely linked to the work of the collaborative. The work is led by the Statistics Division and carried out in close collaboration with regional commissions and resident coordinator offices. The project provides support to Bhutan, Cameroon, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Maldives,[18] Namibia, Sri Lanka and the United Republic of Tanzania in their work to increase the use of administrative data for the production of statistics and will run until June 2024. For each country, two or three thematic areas have been chosen to ensure a specific scope, but with an overall focus on the processes for the successful engagement with and use of data from administrative data owners. The project benefits from the exchange of experiences through the collaborative and is also expected to provide learning opportunities and materials that benefit the collaborative over time.

27. In 2023, practical-level work continued. Workshops were held for the national statistical offices and around 15 administrative data-holding agencies each in the Dominican Republic, Maldives and Sri Lanka, with the aim of creating a common understanding and increasing collaboration and data exchange. In-depth and follow-up work was carried out in all project countries. In Cameroon, an implementation plan is in place for the calculation of intentional homicide; in Chile, work on a statistical population register is progressing; the Dominican Republic is progressing well towards being able to calculate the number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters; Maldives has started work on migration and labour statistics; Bhutan and Namibia gained access to administrative agriculture data and are exploring them; Sri Lanka has gained access to new data sources for its statistical business register and has drafted a new version of its

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[16] https://unstats.un.org/capacity-development/admin-data.
[17] The background document is entitled "The collaborative on the use of administrative data for statistics: practical experience exchange and tool developments".
[18] Maldives replaced Ecuador in 2023.

statistical legislation; and the United Republic of Tanzania has a plan for its vital statistics report. Work in almost all countries has been carried out in partnership with colleagues from other international and regional agencies. Activities are described in more detail in the background document of the collaborative on the use of administrative data.

VII. Further development cooperation and technical assistance activities of the Statistics Division on Sustainable Development Goal indicators

28.   The High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in its report (E/CN.3/2024/5), provides information on work related to the implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data, including on the new high-impact initiative on the power of data, launched at the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, held at United Nations Headquarters on 18 and 19 September 2023. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, in its report (E/CN.3/2024/4), provides information on its work to implement the global indicator framework, such as methodological work on the indicators, and the efforts of its working groups and task team (the Working Group on Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange for Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, the Working Group on Geospatial Information and the Task Team on Sustainable Tourism). A comprehensive overview of the activities of the Statistics Division related to technical capacity-building, including those related to the implementation of the Goal indicators, was provided in the previous year's report of the Secretary-General on statistical capacity development (E/CN.3/2023/14).

VIII. Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training

29.   The Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training, established to address the data demands of the 2030 Agenda and the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals, continued its work to foster training in key areas of official statistics. There are currently 25 members from international agencies, regional training institutes and national statistical offices that provide training beyond their own borders. The Network is managed by a board consisting of the Network's Chair, the three task team leaders and the secretariat. In addition, a stakeholder advisory group provides input and guidance on the direction and focus of work.

30.   At its sixth annual meeting, held remotely on the margins of the fifty-fourth session of the Commission, the Network decided to continue the work of the task teams, as agreed in 2019, that addresses the following topics in statistical training: (a) specific demands from national statistical offices to meet data needs for the Goals; (b) an e-learning community of practice and an online gateway for training courses; and (c) statistical literacy in the context of the 2030 Agenda. The task teams have made good progress in their work. In addition, it was agreed that a group would be established to look at how to facilitate the translation of materials to languages other than English. The Network also agreed to emphasize continued work on communication and fundraising as part of its general work.

31.   In 2023, the task team on addressing specific demands from national statistical offices continued its work on sustainable statistical training programmes at the national level. A draft statistical training needs assessment tool was further refined, and six countries, namely Colombia, Ghana, Malawi, Maldives, Mexico and Papua New Guinea, volunteered to test it. Colombia, Ghana and Mexico also carried out

larger pilots, with staff of the national statistical offices of those countries providing useful data for the analysis and further development of training programmes. Two consultants supported work to refine the tool and make it available on an online open-source platform. Missions were also conducted to Colombia and Ghana for in-depth discussions on the results of the questionnaires and how to prioritize identified training needs into training plans. The assessment tool is expected to be made available to all countries in 2024.

32. The task team on an e-learning community of practice and an online gateway continued to work on improvements to the "UN SDG:Learn" landing page for courses on statistics.[19] The landing page gives an overview of available learning materials and provides links to courses offered by the various agencies. The work was carried out in partnership with the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, which encourages custodian agencies to add their learning materials to make it easier for countries and other partners to find all learning materials in one place. The task team also developed guidance on the certification of courses and methodologies and a document on how to provide remote learning.

33. The task team on statistical literacy discussed various approaches for improving literacy among user groups, continuing work on guidance on statistical literacy for official statistics. The team also continued to add materials to the statistical literacy inventory. Collaboration with the International Statistical Literacy Project also continued.

34. The group on the translation of training materials to languages other than English held its first meetings to agree on the scope of its work and on which training materials to prioritize. Key discussions were held on the approaches that could be taken, copyright, and who could support translation into the respective languages.

35. Information on the current membership, outputs and plans of the Network can be found on its homepage.[20]

36. The Network held side events at various international meetings, prepared two additional newsletters and continued its presence on social media, aiming to reach more users with the materials developed. The background document on the work of the Network[21] provides more details on the progress made and materials developed.

IX. Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians

37. The Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians[22] was launched on 20 October 2020 by the Statistics Division. In three years, the Network has established itself as an important platform for knowledge-sharing and as a facilitated professional online social network that supports national Governments in building resilient and sustainable national data and information systems for the full implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. It also plays an important role in improving coordination within and among national statistical systems, United Nations country teams and international and regional organizations.

38. In July 2023, the Network conducted an online satisfaction survey among its members. The survey received 389 responses from members based in 124 countries. When asked how satisfied they were with the Network on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being

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[19] Available at www.unsdglearn.org/statistics.

[20] Available at https://unstats.un.org/GIST.

[21] The background document is entitled "Coordinating statistical training for increased accessibility and sustainability: the work of the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training (GIST)".

[22] See https://www.yammer.com/unstats/.

"very dissatisfied" and 10 being "very satisfied"), the median score from the respondents was 8.0. Respondents reported that the three most valuable contributions of the Network were: (a) the opportunity to learn about United Nations work on statistics, data and geospatial information; (b) resources for Sustainable Development Goal monitoring and reporting; and (c) access to a community of experts from whom they can seek advice on technical issues.

39. With its innovative approach of an open and inclusive membership, the Network has become a vital platform for the global statistical community for collaboration on Sustainable Development Goal monitoring and beyond. The Network had 3,200 members as at November 2023, approximately half of them from national statistical systems and the other half from the United Nations system, other international organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector. In addition to the main network, 16 groups have been created on specialized topics: household surveys, administrative data, machine learning, nowcasting and forecasting, environment statistics, the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting, geospatial data, tourism statistics, transport statistics, economic statistics, population and housing censuses, core values of official statistics, SDMX, quality assurance for official statistics, resilient and agile national statistical systems, and the United Nations Datathon.

40. In the past 12 months, 1,260 messages were posted on the Network, which have been read over 100,000 times. The Global Network continues to hold its regular flagship Global Network webinars and organized 18 webinars on various topics in the past year, attracting more than 2,034 participants. The Global Network webinar series has become a successful platform for members to share the newest developments in data collection, processing and dissemination. In addition, the Network is used to announce upcoming capacity-development activities.

X. Work of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys

41. The Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys, in its paper entitled "Positioning household surveys for the next decade",[23] as endorsed by the Commission at its fifty-fourth session, in 2023, had identified eight technical priorities as a guide to support countries. Over the past year, the Working Group has carried out the activities below in implementing the paper, with a focus on three work areas: coordination, methodological development, and advocacy and communication.

42. With regard to coordination, the Working Group finalized a series of reports[24] in 2023 that documented the experiences of five countries and the Pacific Community. The reports offer insights on good practices and challenges, as well as on what might help to improve coordination among household survey activities.

43. In November 2023, the Working Group launched an annual survey to elicit information on national household surveys planned for the next two years, starting with the period from 2024 to 2025. The responses will be used to build a calendar of national surveys, with basic information on each survey, support received and needs

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[23] Available at https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/statcom/session_54/documents/BG-3c-Position_paper-E.pdf.

[24] Available at https://unstats.un.org/iswghs/TaskForcesDetails/recommendations-on-a-comprehensive-national-hhs-programme.

for additional capacity-building. The survey questionnaire was tested with 20 national statistical offices.[25]

44. In the past year, the Working Group has also worked on the methodological areas below.

Enhancing the interoperability and integration of household surveys (technical priority 1)

45. The toolkit on using small area estimation for the Sustainable Development Goals[26] is being regularly updated. In August 2023, the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the Statistics Division of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the United Nations Population Fund, launched an e-learning course[27] in English on the topic. By November, the course had attracted 450 self-paced trainees and 120 guided trainees. The guided sessions were offered, with support from the regional commissions, in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. A French version of the course, supported by the Data for Now initiative, is being finalized. The Statistics Division of the Department calls for more partners to support countries through the e-learning course.

46. *Integration of geospatial and survey data*. Under the guidance of the Working Group, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and the Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information, the Statistics Division, in collaboration with the World Bank and academic partners, is producing a review paper that will provide initial recommendations on small area estimation through the integration of census/survey data and geospatial data sources.[28] The paper will be available in 2024.

47. *Measuring adult mortality through an integrated approach*. A community of practice[29] was established in 2023 as a space for: (a) sharing and curating knowledge and experiences in collecting adult mortality data through surveys, censuses and data integration for countries without reliable civil registration systems; and (b) developing methodological guidance. Technical and financial support is provided by the Working Group, New York University Abu Dhabi, the ESCAP Statistics Division and Bloomberg Philanthropies.

48. *Assessing national practices on data integration*. Led by the Department of Statistics of Malaysia, a short survey is being prepared to assess: (a) national practices on data integration of household surveys with other data sources; and (b) national capacities in and needs for capacity-building on data integration. The survey respondents will be national household survey focal points, and the survey will be conducted in 2024.

Designing and implementing more inclusive, respondent-centric surveys (technical priority 2)

49. *Respondent-centred design*. Led by the Office for National Statistics of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the task force has reviewed

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[25] The report of the testing is available at https://unstats.un.org/iswghs/documents/survey-calendar-pilot-report.pdf.

[26] Available at https://unstats.un.org/wiki/display/SAE4SDG/SAE4SDG.

[27] Available at https://learning.officialstatistics.org/course/view.php?id=103.

[28] An annotated outline of the review paper is available at https://unstats.un.org/iswghs/documents/geospatial-data-for-SAE-outline.pdf.

[29] Email iswghs.secretariat@un.org to join the community of practice.

the Office's "Three levels of respondent-centred design"[30] in the context of 10 other national statistical offices [31] that joined the task force. The document provides recommendations on research design needed for survey questions and tools for conducting respondent-centred design surveys. A thematic analysis of the feedback will be carried out by the Office.

50. Accessibility of phone and web surveys. The Working Group initiated its work to produce guidance on making household surveys more accessible, especially in the context of mobile phone and web surveys. The initiative will improve the inclusiveness of survey instruments.

Improving sampling efficiency and coverage (technical priority 3)

51. To foster the exchange of innovative approaches and improve national capacities on sample frames and sampling, the Working Group conducted a two-day technical meeting[32] in October 2023, which was attended by 200 participants and covered topics including sample frames, household listing, strategies to sample rare and hard-to-reach populations and the use of non-probabilistic sampling.

Revision of United Nations handbooks on household surveys

52. Under the guidance of the Working Group, the Statistics Division has initiated the process of revising the United Nations handbooks on household surveys, the majority of which were originally published between the 1980s and the 1990s. [33] Given the advances in technology, survey methodologies and the availability of new data sources for integration with household surveys, the revised handbook is aimed at providing more current yet practical guidance to countries. The revision will be aligned with the objectives outlined in the Working Group's paper.

53. To facilitate this effort, a technical meeting is scheduled to be held in China in January 2024, with experts from national statistical offices, academia and regional and international organizations in attendance. The meeting participants will define the scope of the revision, discuss ways to balance between theory and practice and determine the modality and format for the revised handbook. In addition, discussions will cover the timeline and processes for the revision. The meeting report, along with an annotated outline for the revision and a draft workplan, will be available as a background document for the Commission's input.

54. Throughout the revision process, close consultation with national statistical offices will be conducted to ensure that the handbook aligns with practical needs and national experiences. The draft of the revision will be available, for the Commission's input, in 2026.

55. In the area of advocacy and communication, the Working Group organized sessions during or contributed to all major statistical events and forums. A total of eight webinars were organized in 2023 in collaboration with partners, covering topics related to technical priorities identified in the Working Group's paper. The Working Group is also actively engaging with partners from academia, civil society and national statistical offices through its various task forces.

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[30] Available at https://analysisfunction.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/the-three-levels-of-respondent-centred-design-rcd/.

[31] Austria, Canada, Ghana, Indonesia, Italy, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, South Africa, United States of America and State of Palestine.

[32] See https://unstats.un.org/iswghs/EventDetails/innovative-approaches-to-improve-sampling-efficiency-oct2023.

[33] See https://unstats.un.org/iswghs/SurveyHandbooksRevision.

56. In 2024, the Working Group will continue its support to national statistical offices in implementing its paper. The Working Group will also provide its full support to the Statistics Division on the revision of the United Nations handbooks on household surveys.

XI. Building a conceptual framework for citizen data

57. In 2023, the Statistics Division continued its work on citizen-generated data, implementing the provisions of Commission decision 54/102, adopted by the Commission at its fifty-fourth session, in March 2023, namely developing a conceptual framework for citizen data and establishing a collaborative as a platform for collaboration and exchange of experiences and to advance the work in this area.

58. The Collaborative on Citizen Data[34] was established in April 2023, during the fourth United Nations World Data Forum, and was tasked with developing the conceptual framework for citizen data, providing a space to share knowledge, resources and experiences, mobilizing relevant stakeholders, fostering collaboration, identifying conceptual and methodological gaps and developing guidance. The Collaborative is led by the Statistics Division and UN-Women and is overseen by a steering committee composed of the Danish Institute for Human Rights, the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, the International Civil Society Centre, Open Data Watch, the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century, the Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities for Sustainable Development, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the World Bank.

59. On 28 and 29 September 2023, the Statistics Division conducted its second expert group on citizen-generated data. During the meeting, a draft "Copenhagen framework on citizen data" was reviewed, and discussions were held to outline the steps for operationalizing the conceptual framework. Moreover, meeting participants explored the ways in which the Collaborative on Citizen Data could play a pivotal role in supporting the operationalization process. The draft conceptual framework and a road map for its implementation, refined on the basis of recommendations from the experts, as well as the draft terms of reference for the Collaborative, are available as a background document for the Commission's input.

60. Prior to the expert group meeting, a one-day workshop on citizen-generated data took place on 27 September 2023, highlighting challenges and experiences in building trust, improving data quality and fostering partnerships. The two meetings were a collaborative effort supported by various initiatives and partners, both technically and financially. Notable contributors include the Data For Now initiative, the ESCAP, UN-Women, the International Civil Society Centre, and the Danish Institute for Human Rights, which hosted the meetings.

61. In 2024/25, the Collaborative on Citizen Data will engage with members from different communities, including national statistical offices, major groups and other stakeholders representing civil society organizations, the human rights institution network, the citizen science network and other researchers, United Nations agencies and philanthropic entities. The Collaborative will also finalize the "Copenhagen framework on citizen data" and the corresponding implementation road map, based on testing with country case studies and a global consultation. The Framework will be reviewed by an expert group meeting in June/July 2024 and will be submitted to the Commission in March 2025.

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[34] See https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/citizen-data/.

62.   Beyond 2025, the Collaborative will continue to support the implementation of the conceptual framework. This will involve piloting the national road map, including the development of national toolkits for civil society organizations, fostering the establishment of similar collaboration mechanisms at the regional and national levels, in collaboration with United Nations country teams and other relevant national stakeholders. The Collaborative will also conduct a mapping exercise of citizen-generated data, organize meetings with donors to support national-level initiatives, provide technical assistance and produce guidance to support the work on citizen-generated data in countries.

XII.   Action to be taken by the Statistical Commission

63.   **The Commission is invited:**

(a)   **To take note of the work carried out by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in cooperation with the United Nations system and its proposed programme of work, and to comment on the progress of work;**

(b)   **To express its views on the Data for Now initiative;**

(c)   **To express its views on the work of the collaborative on the use of administrative data for statistical purposes;**

(d)   **To express its views on the progress of the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training;**

(e)   **To express its views on the progress of the Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians;**

(f)   **To express its view on the work of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys and on the plan for the revision of the United Nations handbooks on household surveys;**

(g)   **To express its view on the work on citizen-generated data by the Division and the draft "Copenhagen framework on citizen data" and the road map for its implementation;**

(h)   **To express its view on the work of the Collaborative on Citizen Data, and its workplan for 2024–2025 and beyond.**

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