

**RECOMMENDATIONS ON DRAFT RESOLUTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENIOR OFFICIALS
TO MINISTERS FOR CONSIDERATION
SANA'A, 27 MAY 2008**

**283 (XXV). ESCWA member country compliance with international standards
for enhancing national statistical systems**

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Guided by the 1985 Declaration on Professional Ethics of the International Statistical Institute which stresses the importance of adherence by statisticians to the relevant ethics and best practices,

Committed to the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics that were issued by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 1994 with a view to enhancing public trust in official statistics and national statistical systems and establishing statistical systems that are consistent with international concepts, classifications and standards,

Affirming the importance of the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics and the recommendations that were made at the three Arab statistical forums that were held in Amman in 2003, Muscat in 2005 and Sana'a in November 2007, which called for the statistical profession to be developed and the capacities of statistical systems to be enhanced within general State administration, as an important tool in identifying, monitoring and evaluating the social and economic situation,

Affirming the Amman Declaration of Statistics, issued by the First Arab Statistical Conference, that was held in Amman in 2007, which emphasized the importance of autonomous statistical work and adherence by statisticians to the relevant ethics and best practice, and asserted the importance of building professional national statistical systems oriented towards the needs of users,

Guided by the General Data Dissemination System that was issued by the International Monetary Fund with the aim of enabling member countries to measure economic and social developments in an objective and transparent manner,

Guided also by the initiatives undertaken by several countries in the region with a view to increasing the autonomy of the statistical system:

1. *Requests member countries to take the following measures:*

- (a) Take all the measures necessary in order to produce high quality official statistics that can be used in international comparisons, by applying international concepts, classifications and standards and activating statistical institutions;
- (b) Adopt the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and take action to apply them, ensure the credibility, impartiality and autonomy of statistical institutions and enhance the credibility of statistics at the national, regional and international levels;
- (c) Complete the design and implementation of national strategies for statistical development, in accordance with the general orientations issued by Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (Paris 21);
- (d) Empower the statistical machinery to publish data in a timely fashion by adhering to the conditions of the General Data Dissemination System that was issued by the International Monetary Fund;
- (e) Enhance the position of the national statistical machinery within the national institutional structure and strengthen the structural factors that are connected to the legislative framework and regulatory arrangements in accordance with the Handbook of Statistical Organization that was issued by the United Nations in 2004;

2. *Requests* the secretariat to take the following measures:

- (a) Hold training workshops on international concepts, classifications and standards;
- (b) Support member countries in adopting and undertaking to apply the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics;
- (c) Support member countries in designing and implementing national strategies for statistical development by providing technical assistance, issuing and translating pertinent guidelines, holding workshops and contributing to the organization of Arab statistical forums;
- (d) Encourage member countries to participate in and adhere to the General Data Dissemination System and the Special Data Dissemination Standard of the International Monetary Fund;

3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to follow up on the above recommendations and submit a report thereon to the twenty-sixth session of the Commission.

286 (XXV). Gender statistics for equality and empowerment

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration,¹ in which Member States resolved, inter alia, to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate sustainable development, and the 2005 World Summit Outcome,² which reaffirmed the need to promote gender equality and eliminate pervasive gender discrimination by taking all the necessary resolute actions,

Reiterating General Assembly resolution 62/218 of 12 February 2008, on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and its earlier resolution 60/230 of 23 December 2005 on the elimination of discrimination against women,

Referring to General Assembly resolution 62/206 of 10 March 2008 on Women in Development, which stresses the importance of collecting and exchanging all relevant information needed on the role of women in development, as well as the need to develop statistics disaggregated by age and sex, *Recognizing the need to* improve the situation of women in rural areas and address the lack of timely, reliable, sex-disaggregated data and, in particular, statistics concerning women's unpaid work, for use in informing policy and programme decisions, as highlighted in General Assembly resolution 62/136 of 12 February 2008,

1. *Calls upon* member countries to adopt the set of indicators in the Arab Gender Issues and Indicators Framework as a common set of indicators, and produce the statistics related to those indicators for use in the monitoring and evaluation of strategic policies and work plans in areas related to gender;
2. *Calls upon* member countries also to develop a mechanism for the collection, dissemination and analysis of gender-sensitive indicators and sex-disaggregated data by rural, urban and age information for the formulation of gender-related and gender-sensitive policies and programmes;
3. *Encourages* member countries to formulate and implement training programmes to mainstream gender issues and statistics into their statistical systems, with a view to sensitizing data producers and users to the issue of gender equality and women's empowerment;
4. *Calls upon* the secretariat to provide technical support to member countries in the form of advisory services and workshops, and assist member countries in integrating a gender perspective into national strategies for the development of statistics and national statistical system plans of action;
5. *Requests* the secretariat to work with member countries in developing a detailed gender database to act as a gender mainstreaming observatory in all sectors;
6. *Calls upon* the secretariat to mainstream gender statistics, as appropriate, into its programmes and outputs;
7. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to report to the twenty-sixth session of the Commission on the implementation of this resolution.

¹ General Assembly resolution 55/2.

² General Assembly resolution 60/1.

287 (XXV). Strengthening statistical capacities for evidence-based policymaking

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling the 2005 World Summit Outcome,¹ in which the General Assembly reiterates its determination to ensure the timely and full realization of the development goals and objectives agreed at the major United Nations conferences and summits, including those agreed at the Millennium Summit, that are described as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),

Referring to the significance of the impartiality of national statistical offices (NSOs) and of ensuring effective coordination between those offices and other State organs, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 1994,

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 2005/50 of 27 July 2005 on the Damascus Declaration, and the role of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including MDGs,

Also recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 2005/13 of 22 July 2005 on the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme, which stressed the increasing importance of population and housing censuses in meeting data requirements for follow-up on activities related to the Millennium Summit,

Reaffirming the need to improve institutional statistical frameworks in member countries and intensify efforts aimed at strengthening statistical capacity to produce and disseminate timely and reliable results on progress towards national and international development goals, including MDGs, as emphasized by the Commission in resolution 276 (XXIV) of 11 May 2006 on the strengthening of statistical capacity in the ESCWA region,

Reaffirming also the crucial role of the ESCWA secretariat in facilitating the sharing of knowledge between member countries and supporting those countries in strengthening their national statistical capacities for evidence-based policymaking by means of technical cooperation and capacity-building activities aimed at improving the comprehensiveness, quality and comparability of economic and social statistics,

Reaffirming further the need for the secretariat to continue its efforts to mobilize the necessary additional resources in support of member country efforts in that respect,

Having reviewed the report of the Statistical Committee on its seventh session, which was held in Beirut from 7 to 9 November 2006,²

Welcoming the recommendation of the Statistical Committee on the setting up of a task force of statisticians that includes NSO directors,

1. *Approves* the recommendation of the Statistical Committee that ESCWA region NSO capacity building needs should be periodically assessed in order to monitor progress;
2. *Urges* member countries to produce MDG indicators and, in particular, indicators related to poverty, education and health, using surveys and other relevant sources;
3. *Also urges* member countries to adopt the Common Set of Core Information and Communications Technology Indicators issued by the Global Partnership on Measuring Information and Communications Technology for Development, and make available the data related to those indicators

for use in the drafting, evaluation and review of strategic policies and work plans in areas of priority for the development of an information society in the region;

4. *Stresses* the need to strengthen NSO impartiality in order to produce objective data, and improve coordination mechanisms within the statistical system with a view to improving the production and use of statistical data for evidence-based policymaking;

5. *Urges* member countries to exchange experience and information for best practice in the development of statistical activities and systems;

6. *Commends* the support given by Oman to the Task Force on Population and Housing Censuses and the activities that it has undertaken for the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses;

7. *Calls upon* member countries to accelerate implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts and its revisions, in order to enable policymakers to monitor economic changes and improve economic performance;

8. *Requests* the secretariat to:

(a) Assist member countries in building their capacity to unify concepts and definitions and carry out multi-purpose family surveys and improve their administrative records at the national level through holding workshops and providing technical services;

(b) Prepare and submit to the ESCWA Statistical Committee periodic reports on progress made in the development of NSO statistical activities, based on ESCWA region NSO capacity-building needs assessments;

(c) Facilitate, through its official webpage on the Internet and the provision of technical consultancy, the interchange between member countries of experience and knowledge, with a view to promoting best practice in the development of statistical systems and activities;

(d) Increase its efforts to mobilize extrabudgetary resources to support various activities, including those of the Task Force on Population and Housing Censuses, and implement the 2010 Population and Housing Census Programme.

¹ General Assembly resolution 60/1.

² E/ESCWA/SCU/2006/IG.1/12.