



## **High Level Seminar on the Future of Economic Statistics for the Arab region**

21-22 January 2020

### **InterContinental Hotel**

Riyadh Saudi Arabia

#### **Provisional Agenda**

The 50<sup>st</sup> session of the United Nations Statistical Commission established a Friends of the Chair Group on Economic Statistics. The Commission requested that the Friends of the Chair Group convene meetings over the next year to discuss whether the current planned updates to the system of economic statistics considers priority areas of development or whether gaps exist including in incorporating broader measures of progress in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Commission also asked the Friend of the Chair Group to examine whether the current governance and statistical infrastructure supporting the system of economic statistics is sufficient to meet the need for an increasingly responsive and comprehensive system of economic statistics. The Friends of the Chair Group has been asked to report back at the 51<sup>st</sup> session of the United Nations Statistical Commission.

This High-Level Seminar is co-organized by United Nations Statistics Division and ESCWA and hosted by the General Authority of Statistics in Saudi Arabia. It is a consultative platform for UN member states of the ESCWA and Arab region on the priorities for the conceptual update of the system of economic statistics. Moreover, it provides the opportunity to identify gaps in the existing initiatives on the update of the conceptual framework, discuss whether the governance and statistical infrastructure is in place to address these priorities as well as to ensure that future priority needs are addressed responsively and efficiently.

The expected output of the meeting will include a regional perspective of priorities, statistical infrastructure and governance which will feed into the global process and ultimate the report to the Statistical Commission at its upcoming 51<sup>th</sup> Session (in 2020).



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**Tuesday 21 January 2020**

<b>08:30 – 09:00</b>	<b>Registration of participants</b>
<b>09.00 – 09.30</b>	<p><b>Welcome and opening remarks</b></p> <p>Saudi General Authority of Statistics (GA-Stat), President          UNESCWA, Juraj Riecan Director Statistics          United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), Ivo Havinga, Assistant Director          Islamic Development Bank, Areef Suleman – Director, Economic Research &amp; Institutional Learning (ERIL)          United Nations Resident Coordinator Office, Saudi Arabia, Nathalie Fustier,</p>
<b>9:30 – 11.30</b>	<p><b>Session 1 - A responsive and relevant system of economic statistics</b></p> <p>This session will identify <b>what</b> makes the system of economic statistics responsive and relevant to the emerging policy needs. It will identify the global and regional policy priorities for policy themes such as digitalization, globalization, economic well-being, inequalities, sustainability, climate change, socio-demographic change, urbanization, technological development and the informal sector. Moreover, it will identify what the national, regional and global statistical systems have contributed to the Arab and global policy priorities in the context of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.</p>
	<b>Chair of Session, Juraj Riecan</b>
<b>9-30 - 10.45</b>	The Future of Economic Statistics in Saudi Arabia Chief Statistician, GA-Stat
	Friends of the Chair Group on Economic Statistics, global policy priorities and the update of the system of economic statistics, Ivo Havinga, UNSD
	Regional policy priorities and the institutional reform to meet the new statistical needs, Wafa Aboul Hosn, ESCWA and TAGES Chair
	Economic data needs for Sustainable Development, Islamic Development Bank
	It's time for a change: broadening the SNA framework to account for sustainability and well-being Peter van de Ven, Head of National Accounts, OECD
	Economic Data needs For Regional Economic Policies, Moctar El-Hacene, Director Economic Development and Integration Division, ESCWA

<b>10.45-11.30</b>	Group Discussions in break-out session What are the regional and country policy priorities?
<b>11:30-12:30</b>	Group Photo
	<b>Coffee/ Tea Break</b>
<b>12:30-13:30</b>	Report back from the Groups in break-out session and Round Table Discussion
<b>13:30-14:30</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>14:30-16:30</b>	<b>Session 2 - The institutional transformation, new methods, services and roles – the how of a relevant and responsive system of economic statistics</b> This session will explore <b>how</b> the system of economic statistics can be more responsive and relevant to the new policy demands through institutional transformation, new technological infrastructure, methods and services required to meet the changing needs of policy makers and economists. The discussion will focus on whether the existing frameworks integrate new data sources and methods and make available microdata to meet the needs of policy makers in the context of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development
	<b>Chair of the Session: Ivo Havinga, Assistant Director, UNSD</b>
<b>14:30 15:30</b>	Global initiatives in the use of new data sources and methods including big data, new data services related to data sharing, exchange and linking including microdata and the new role as data stewards Michael Smedes, Australian Bureau of Statistics
	Modernization within integrated economic statistics in the Arab region, Omar Hakouz, Regional Advisor on National Accounts, ESCWA
	IMF-METAC initiatives and the use of new sources and methods for macro-economic data, with experience from Canada, Issam Alsammak, Real Sector Statistics Advisor, IMF-METAC
	Initiatives in the use of new data sources and methods in selected economic statistics areas Majed Skaini, Statistician and ICP regional coordinator, ESCWA
	GCC data services related to data sharing, exchange and linking, Ahmed Al Farid, GCC-Stat
	The institutional transformation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia GA-Stat
<b>15:30 16:30</b>	Group discussion in break-out session The institutional transformation, new methods, services and roles – the how of a relevant and responsive system of economic statistics.
	Report back from Groups of the break out session and Round Table Discussion

## Wednesday, 22 January

<b>09.00 – 10.00</b>	<b>Wrap-up of Day 1</b>
<b>10.00 – 11.30</b>	<p><b>Session 3 - A governance structure that ensures a responsive and relevant system of economic statistics</b></p> <p>Reflection on the present coordination and governance mechanisms to update the international statistical standards, and the role of the region within these mechanisms for standard setting and implementation for economic statistics. How can these mechanisms be improved to make them more efficient, effective, responsive and relevant?</p>
	<b>Chair of the Session: AITRS</b>
	Inventory of current governance arrangements for economic statistics standards Michael Smedes, Australian Bureau of Statistics
	Standards setting and implementation at the regional level Majed Skaini, ESCWA
	Standards setting and implementation at the regional level IMF
<b>11:30 12.30</b>	<b>Coffee/Tea Break</b>
<b>12:30-13:30</b>	<p>Group discussions in break-out sessions</p> <p>A governance structure that ensures a responsive and relevant system of economic statistics</p> <p>Report back from Groups of the break out session and Round Table Discussion</p>
<b>13:30-14:30</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>14:30-15:30</b>	<p><b>Session 4 Rebuilding Economic Statistics in post-conflict countries</b></p> <p><b>Chair of the Session: Palestine</b></p>
	Yemen
	Iraq
	Libya
	Plenary discussion
<b>15:30-16:30</b>	<p><b>Session 5 Conclusions and recommendations</b></p> <p>Presentation of recommendations of the Seminar Ivo Havinga, Assistant Director UNSD and ESCWA</p> <p>Plenary discussions</p>
	<p><b>Closing remarks</b></p> <p>General Statistical Authority, Saudi Arabia</p> <p>ESCWA</p> <p>United Nations Statistics Division</p> <p>Islamic Development Bank</p>