

## **Draft intervention for Chair of Regional Steering Group on Population and Social Statistics**

### **Distinguished delegates, Excellencies, gentlemen and ladies**

I am honoured to present a brief report about the Regional Steering Group on Population and Social Statistics as the Chair of the Group.

The Regional Steering Group on Population and Social Statistics was established in 2017, following a decision by the Committee at its fifth session in 2016. The role of the group is to oversee the “Implementation Plan of the Regional Strategy to Improve Population and Social Statistics in Asia and the Pacific” and to ensure the progress towards the Regional Strategy’s vision. The regional vision states that “the countries of Asia and the Pacific have the capacity to produce, disseminate, and use the core set of population and social statistics by 2030”.

The Group also plays a key role in monitoring the achievement of the Regional Strategy’s three Goals. These include developing an enabling policy environment and maintaining demand and support; improving availability and quality of disaggregated statistics; and enhancing data accessibility, analysis, interpretation and use. The Regional Steering Group is composed of representatives from 28 member States and ten international agencies. These are all senior managers who have technical responsibilities in population and social statistics.

In September 2021, the Regional Steering Group on Population and Social Statistics virtually convened its third meeting. The meeting was chaired by Bhutan and attended by 17 countries,<sup>i</sup> all ten member agencies<sup>ii</sup> as well as representatives from the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

At the third meeting, the Regional Steering Group on Population and Social Statistics reviewed and acknowledged the progress with regard to the regional strategy and identified future priority areas and activities. More information is available in ESCAP/CST/2022/INF/3, the report on the Third meeting of the Regional Steering Group on Population and Social Statistics.

The Regional Steering Group also noted its terms of reference had not been reviewed since being endorsed by the Committee at its fifth meeting in 2016. The Regional Steering Group is obliged to review its terms of reference every two years to ensure it has the necessary mandates to perform effectively and efficiently.

Thus, at the third meeting, the Regional Steering Group reviewed and slightly revised its terms of reference. These revisions included prioritising its strategic functions and delegating technical roles to virtual task forces. The revised terms of reference also call for an increase in the meeting frequency to annually and to create an online space to enhance the communication, coordination and functionality of the group. In support of these decisions, the secretariat established a specific online collaboration space. The Regional Steering Group used the online space to review and finalise the meeting report and to amend its terms of reference. The revised terms of reference are contained in the annexe to the regular paper ESCAP/CST/2022/4.

Finally, allow me to underscore one of the priority areas identified by the Regional Steering Group, which is the modernisation of census-taking, mainly through utilising new data sources and conducting register-based censuses. In response to the discussions during the meeting of the regional steering group, the secretariat led a study and published a report on Emerging Trends in Census Approaches in Asia and the Pacific and a Stats Brief on the same topic, which showcased how countries in the region have used administrative data in their censuses. The secretariat also hosted an Asia-Pacific Stats Cafe session where the findings of the report were presented and discussed. Furthermore, the secretariat created a specific page on the Asia-Pacific Data Integration Community of Practice online platform and hosted several online meetings to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences on modernised census-taking.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the Regional Steering Group as well as the secretariat for their kind support and assistance in advancing the regional strategy to improve population and social statistics in Asia and the Pacific.

Thank you for your kind attention

---

<sup>i</sup> Armenia, Bhutan, Cambodia, Georgia, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Philippines, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu.

<sup>ii</sup> Member agencies: International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-WOMEN), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Statistics Division and World Bank.