

SPEAKING NOTES FOR AGENDA ITEM 6: Consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme

Thank you very much Mr Chair.

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to introduce agenda item 6: preparation of the draft programme of work. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific statistics subprogramme comprises the statistics division of the secretariat as well as the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP).

Our main roles span three areas:

- Intergovernmental dialogue, like the one we are holding this week;
- Capacity development; and
- Knowledge production in the area of official statistics, which includes the production of our annual SDG progress report.

This subprogramme contributes to the objective, to improve the availability, accessibility and use of quality data and official statistics in support of sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific.

ESCAP is part of the secretariat of the United Nations, and like all of the Secretariat entities, our programme of work is supported through the global United Nations.

The United Nations uses an annual programme budgeting cycle. In this case, our programme of work will cover planned results for the upcoming calendar year of 2023 as well as a performance report on the year just gone, which in this case is the calendar year 2021.

The document for this agenda item is A/77/6. It covers ESCAP's programme of work for 2023 starting from page 50 if you would like to take a look. This document was endorsed by the ESCAP Commission held earlier this year in May.

As Director of the Statistics Division I would just like to highlight a few areas of work.

As you have seen in the agenda, we have a comprehensive programme of work supporting member states in a wide range of areas covering economic, social and environmental statistics, ranging from national accounts to ocean accounts, as well as disaster-related statistics and population and social statistics. Over the last two years, we have continued to support countries to strengthen their national statistical systems with an increased focus on the use of data by policy makers.

In the programme of work, we also briefly report on progress during 2021.

This was a challenging year as the COVID-19 pandemic continued which limited

face-to-face events at a time when there was an increased demand for timely, quality and granular data.

A key focus of our work over this time has been on lesson learning and exchanges of knowledge and experience. Statistics Division further developed its virtual platforms which included the Asia-Pacific Stats Café series; communities of practices and e-learning courses. The development and use of such platforms not only enabled continued training and exchanges of knowledge and experience, but it also meant we were able to reach a much broader audience. [Next slide please]

On this slide you can see the reach of these different virtual platforms. This year we celebrated the two-year anniversary of both the Stats Café series in March – we have now held 65 cafes with over 6500 participants (many attending more than one café) these covered various topics in line with the work plan of the subprogramme. Then in April this year we celebrated the two-year anniversary of the launch of the Data Integration Community of Practice, which now has over 450 members and continues to grow. It facilitates the exchange of knowledge and expertise on different aspects of data integration across multi-domain statistical themes.

Our colleagues at the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific continue to adapt to new ways of working and as of 30 September 2021 had conducted 25

web-based training courses of which 18 were on new topics. There were over 2,500 participants of which over 1500 were female.

As we heard under item 5 on emerging issues, there is growing recognition of the need to capture broader measures of well-being and sustainability and to strengthen data governance. Subject to the deliberations of our committee this week, both of these areas will be a focus for our work programme in 2023.

We will build on the work we already do to support countries on environmental-economic accounts, ecosystem accounts, ocean accounts, national accounts and disaster and climate change related statistics. We will stay abreast of the latest developments in measuring progress beyond GDP and on emerging work on data governance and will facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experience of practitioners in the region which will also help to inform the development of normative frameworks, tools and manuals at the global level. These developments are in line with global discussions on measuring progress beyond GDP and on data governance and data stewardship which we will hear more about at next year's UN Statistical Commission in March.

So, Mr Chair I just want to highlight that the programme plan was endorsed by the Commission in May this year.

Before I hand back to you Mr Chair, I would like to ask the secretariat if they could please share a short video which will give you some of the highlights from our Stats Café series.

Thank you Mr Chair.