



Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**Seventy-seventh session**

Bangkok and online, 26–29 April 2021

Item 4 (c) of the provisional agenda**

Review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific and issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission: Committee on Statistics**Report of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on its sixteenth session***Summary*

The sixteenth session of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific was held online on 30 November and 1 December 2020. During the session, Council members expressed their views on the draft resource mobilization strategy of the Institute and advised on next steps in its development. The Council also considered its regular agenda items, including the report of the Director of the Institute on its achievements in 2020 and the proposed work programme and financial plan for 2021.

With regard to the draft resource mobilization strategy of the Institute, the Council welcomed the focus on partnerships and supported the importance of partnerships with the private sector, especially with regard to new technologies, new technical skills and access to new data sources. It recommended that the draft strategy be further developed in greater detail for consideration by the Council at its seventeenth session.

The Council reviewed and endorsed the work programme and financial plan for 2021 except for the hiring of consultants for the implementation of the resource mobilization strategy, since the strategy was to be further considered at the seventeenth session, to be held in 2021.

I. Matters calling for action by the Commission or brought to its attention

1. The Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific notes the actions taken by the Institute to implement recommendations including those made during the fifteenth session.
2. The Council, having reviewed the Institute's progress as well as its administrative and financial status, acknowledges the significant achievements

* Reissued for technical reasons on 12 April 2021.

** ESCAP/77/L.1.

made possible by the adoption of e-learning and webinars as alternative modalities during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic when international travel was not possible, beginning in April 2020.

3. Having reviewed the draft resource mobilization strategy of the Institute, the Council:

(a) Welcomes the focus on partnerships and supports partnerships with the private sector, especially regarding new technologies, new technical skills and access to new data sources;

(b) Recommends that the Institute strengthen partnerships with custodian agencies of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to build capacity, address data gaps and increase the resource base;

(c) Recommends that the Institute strive to diversify its resource base, given the difficulty of increasing voluntary cash contributions from member States due to the COVID-19 pandemic and resource limitations;

(d) Notes the importance and efficiency of e-learning as a training modality and recommends that e-learning also be reflected in the draft resource mobilization strategy;

(e) Recommends the consideration of non-reimbursable loans as a means of reinforcing human resources at the Institute;

(f) Notes that further investigation will be required to determine how the budgetary framework of the United Nations, especially in light of the reforms of the United Nations development system, including programme support costs and cost recovery rates, will work in the context of the draft resource mobilization strategy;

(g) Recommends that the draft strategy be further developed in greater detail for consideration by the Council at its seventeenth session.

4. The Council calls on members and associate members to continuously provide voluntary cash contributions as well as in-kind contributions for the activities of the Institute, and notes the offer of in-kind contributions from several member States, such as facilities and human resources for the Institute's training programmes.

5. The Council, having reviewed the work programme and financial plan of the Institute for the year 2021, endorses the programme and plan except for the hiring of three consultants for the implementation of the resource mobilization strategy, which is to be developed in further detail for consideration by the Council at its seventeenth session, in 2021.

6. The Council, while noting that face-to-face training courses are to resume once the travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic are lifted, requests that the e-learning training modality continue, that more resources be devoted to it and that more of the Institute's training materials and resources be made accessible to users, and requests the Institute to provide training services on machine learning, data integration, data matching and other topics related to big data.

7. The Council decides that its seventeenth session will be held in Bangkok on 13 and 14 December 2021.

II. Proceedings

A. Matters arising from the fifteenth session of the Governing Council (Agenda item 2)

8. The Council had before it a note by the secretariat on matters arising from its fifteenth session. It noted with satisfaction the action taken and the current status of the matters as reported by the Institute.

B. Report of the Director of the Institute (Agenda item 3)

9. The Council had before it the report of the Director of the Institute. The Director highlighted key results and accomplishments in 2020 and summarized the Institute's financial and administrative status.

1. Key results and implementation strategies

10. The Director said that the Institute had faced a serious challenge due to the COVID-19 pandemic which had resulted in the cancellation, postponement and modification of the training programmes, and that the repurposed training programmes had ultimately been delivered through e-learning and webinars.

11. The Institute had organized 11 training courses comprising 1 face-to-face training programme and 10 online training courses (e-learning courses and webinars) attended by 2,428 government officials as of 30 September 2020. The number of participants in 2020 had almost doubled compared to the same period in 2019.

12. The issue of improving the e-learning platform of the Institute had been in need of attention for some time. The Institute had successfully developed a new learning management system for all its online training programmes. The system, launched in June 2020, provided access to training programmes including facilitated learning and self-paced learning courses, webinars and/or pre-requisites for face-to-face learning.

13. Since its establishment in 1970, the Institute had been evolving to meet the needs of the countries in the region. In conjunction with the seventh session of the Committee on Statistics, a webinar to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Institute had been held on 24 August 2020 on the theme topic "50 years of statistical capacity-building by the Institute: perspectives from alumni chief statisticians".

14. During the opening of the session of the Committee, on 26 August, the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) had congratulated the Institute on its fiftieth anniversary and launched a fiftieth anniversary report in which the history of the Institute and its contributions were captured and its future perspectives explored.

2. Management and administration

(a) Human resources

15. The Director said that the Institute's core staffing structure consisted of 10 full-time posts. Of those, 6 were at the professional level: 1 director (D-1), 1 deputy director (P-5) and 4 statisticians/lecturers (P-3). The remaining 4 were general service posts: 1 training assistant (G-6), 1 administrative assistant (G-6), 1 programme management assistant (G-5) and 1 staff assistant (G-5). All the

posts in the Institute had been filled. In addition, the Institute used the services of interns and consultants for the delivery of its training programmes.

(b) Financial resources

16. The Director said that, as of 30 September 2020, the Institute's fund balance had stood at \$4,498,090, from a total income of \$301,359 less expenditure of \$1,444,267 plus fund balance as of 1 January 2020 of \$5,640,998.

C. Resource mobilization strategy of the Institute

(Agenda item 4)

17. In 2019, in an independent evaluation, commissioned by ESCAP to review the performance of the Institute during the 2015–2019 strategic plan period, it was recommended that a resource mobilization strategy be developed and that it should include but also go beyond a request that member States enhance their contributions to the Institute. The Commission endorsed the evaluation report at its seventy-sixth session, in May 2020, and agreed to develop a resource mobilization strategy for the Institute in line with the programmatic content of the strategic plan and rules and regulations of the United Nations.

18. Developing an effective resource mobilization strategy had been identified as the key activity in the 2020–2024 strategic plan of the Institute.

19. At its fifteenth session, the Council had also noted the intention of ESCAP to discuss a human resource and financial resource mobilization strategy with member States for consideration by the Council in 2020.

20. A draft resource mobilization strategy had been developed with the support of a consultant who was well versed in advising on strategies to develop required resources from various sources including international agencies, funds and programmes as well as development partners including private trusts and funds.

21. The aim of the draft strategy was to improve the quality and increase the quantity of the Institute's financial and in-kind resources, and to diversify the Institute's resource base by strengthening relationships between the Institute and its existing donors and by forming new partnerships that were more effective, strategic and sustainable, including with the private sector and private foundations.

22. The representative of Bangladesh welcomed the draft strategy, saying that it was well drafted and encompassed many relevant issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic, big data and cooperation with the private sector. By strengthening cooperation among agencies, the Institute could assist in reducing the data gap in the monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals among member States. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Institute needed to explore further diversifying its resources, with regard to both cash and partnership modalities. The private sector could play a significant role in the efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and in technological development and training in new areas.

23. The representative of China supported the objective of the draft strategy and the general aim to increase partnerships, including the shift from donor-orientated to partnership-orientated relationships and increased in-kind contributions, which could take the form of shared innovation, knowledge, technology, training facilities and e-learning modules. The representative emphasized the importance of e-learning courses, which benefited more

statisticians, provided advanced training activities and faced fewer restrictions compared to face-to-face training modalities, and requested that more resources be mobilized for the improvement of e-learning courses and that training modules/materials and e-learning platform costs be shared, including through increased partnerships.

24. The representative of India said that resource mobilization was more important than ever in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, as national statistical offices, especially in developing member States, needed to be modernized in order to harness granular, disaggregated and big data in order to fulfil the data requirements for the Sustainable Development Goal indicators. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, donor member States would not have sufficient resources for the next one to two years; therefore, it was important that the Institute seek out alternative sources of funding and encourage partnerships with the private sector, which had been greatly involved in the 2030 Agenda. The development and delivery of e-learning courses should continue to be emphasized even after the COVID-19 pandemic ended and face-to-face courses resumed.

25. The representative of Mongolia said that to ensure sustainable and predictable funding, resource mobilization was necessary; however, in light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, additional time would be needed by the member States to adequately review the draft strategy.

26. The representative of Japan found that other organizations had formulated their strategies to accomplish the requirements of the reform of the United Nations development system based on the resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 21 December 2016,¹ and raised a question in relation to how the United Nations budgetary framework, especially in the context of the United Nations development reforms, including the programme support cost and cost recovery rates, would work in the context of that resource mobilization strategy.

27. The representative of the Republic of Korea agreed that resource mobilization was necessary for the Institute, but further details were needed in the action plan and on the gap in resources as mentioned in the draft strategy. It was not possible to increase the country's present level of cash contribution, a consideration which should be taken into account in developing the strategy.

28. The representative of Thailand expressed appreciation to members and associate members for their cash and in-kind contributions to the Institute. The representative supported the draft strategy and was satisfied with expanding the activities of the Institute in the Pacific and Central Asia. The representative proposed the use of non-reimbursable loans to expand the Institute's human resources and said that the short-term and e-learning courses were effective ways to control the budget.

29. The representative of Malaysia said that the draft strategy provided a fresh outlook, especially with regard to partnerships with the private sector. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, non-traditional data collection methods and sources had become the new normal, emerging as new data sources for statistics. Governments in the region needed to learn how to access these non-traditional data sources and efficiently integrate them into official statistics. In that regard, the representative requested the Institute to take a lead role in fostering the

¹ General Assembly resolution 71/243.

sharing of expertise, knowledge and data as well as increasing partnerships with other regions.

30. The representative of Sri Lanka said that there was a need to review the harmonization of big data and data produced by traditional methods to minimize the possibility of producing misleading statistics.

D. Work programme and financial plan for 2021

(Agenda item 5)

31. The Council had before it the Institute's work programme and financial plan for 2021.

32. The Director of the Institute presented the proposed training courses, workshops and seminars, training development activities and indicative timetable for 2021. The plan had been prepared with the assumption that the COVID-19 situation would improve during 2021. However, if that assumption did not prove accurate and travel restrictions continued, face-to-face training programmes and events would be cancelled, postponed or moved online, depending on the severity and period of travel restrictions and in consultation with relevant partners.

33. The representative of China expressed satisfaction with the increased number of e-learning courses in 2021.

E. Other matters

(Agenda item 6)

34. The representative of Mongolia said that face-to-face training programmes were the most effective method of learning and requested the Institute to continue its face-to-face courses once travel was permitted. The representative also requested that more e-learning training materials be made accessible via the Institute's website.

35. The representatives of India and the Islamic Republic of Iran requested the Institute to implement training activities on using administrative data for the compilation of statistics in line with the recent transition in data sources from survey data to administrative data.

F. Dates of and venue for the seventeenth session of the Governing Council

(Agenda item 7)

36. The Council considered possible dates of and venues for its seventeenth session.

37. The Council decided that its seventeenth session would be held in Bangkok on 13 and 14 December 2021.

G. Adoption of the report of the Governing Council on its sixteenth session

(Agenda item 8)

38. On 1 December 2020, the Council discussed section I of the present report and adopted the recommendations and decisions therein.

39. It was agreed that, as Secretary of the Council, the Director of the Institute would prepare the full report on the sixteenth session for submission to the Commission at its seventy-seventh session.

III. Organization

A. Opening, duration and organization of the session

40. The sixteenth session of the Council was held in Chiba, Japan, on 30 November and 1 December 2020. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the session was held online.

41. The representative of Japan, who had served as the Vice-Chair in the fifteenth session of the Council, officially opened the sixteenth session.

B. Attendance

42. The session was attended by representatives of the host country, Japan, and by six of the eight elected members of the Council: Bangladesh; China; India; Mongolia; Republic of Korea; and Thailand. The representatives of Pakistan and the Russian Federation were unable to attend.

43. Representatives of the following members and associate members of the Commission attended the session as observers: Azerbaijan; Brunei Darussalam; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Maldives; Myanmar; Nepal; Philippines; Sri Lanka; Timor-Leste; Turkmenistan; Uzbekistan; and Viet Nam.

44. Representatives of the following offices of the Secretariat attended: Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat; and Statistics Division, ESCAP.

45. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and funds attended: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; International Labour Organization; United Nations Children's Fund; and United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

46. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations attended: Asian Development Bank; Association of Southeast Asian Nations secretariat; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development; and Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries.

47. A representative of the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century also attended.

C. Election of officers

48. The Council elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chair: Ms. Hataichanok Chinauparwat (Thailand)

Vice-Chair: Mr. Akira Tsumura (Japan)

D. Agenda

49. The Council adopted the following agenda:
 1. Opening of the session:
 - (a) Opening statements;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
 2. Matters arising from the fifteenth session of the Governing Council.
 3. Report of the Director of the Institute.
 4. Resource mobilization strategy of the Institute.
 5. Work programme and financial plan for 2021.
 6. Other matters.
 7. Dates of and venue for the seventeenth session of the Governing Council.
 8. Adoption of the report of the Governing Council on its sixteenth session.

Annex I

Financial statement of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific for the year ended 31 December 2020

(United States dollars)

<i>Income</i>	
Contributions	2 229 619
Interest income	79 116
Total income	2 308 735
<i>Less: Expenditure</i>	
	(1 990 055)
Net income over expenditure	318 680
Fund balance as at 1 January 2020	5 640 998
Refunds to donors/fund transfer	-
Fund balance as at 31 December 2020	5 959 678

Annex II

**Cash contributions to the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific
for the institutional support account received for the year ended
31 December 2020**
(United States dollars)

<i>Country/area</i>	<i>Year ended 31 December 2020</i>	<i>Year ended 31 December 2019</i>
Australia	8 892	34 875
Azerbaijan	-	-
Bangladesh	10 000	5 000
Bhutan	-	-
Brunei Darussalam	15 000	15 000
Cambodia	2 000	2 000
China	70 000	70 000
Fiji Islands	-	9 173
Hong Kong, China	30 000	30 000
India	25 000	50 000
Indonesia	-	30 000
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	-	-
Japan	1 859 765	2 350 799
Kazakhstan	5 000	5 000
Kiribati	-	-
Macao, China	20 000	20 000
Malaysia	20 000	20 000
Maldives	-	4 000
Mongolia	9 482	9 982
Myanmar	1 000	1 000
Pakistan	-	14 994
Papua New Guinea	-	-
Philippines	-	36 750
Republic of Korea	53 000	53 500
Russian Federation	30 000	45 000
Samoa	1 980	-
Singapore	15 000	15 000
Sri Lanka	10 000	10 000
Thailand	23 000	23 000

<i>Country/area</i>	<i>Year ended 31 December 2020</i>	<i>Year ended 31 December 2019</i>
Timor-Leste	-	-
Tonga	-	-
Turkey	-	-
Tuvalu	-	-
Vanuatu	-	-
Viet Nam	20 500	19 500
Total	2 229 619	2 874 572
