

**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**
Committee on Statistics**Fifth session**

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Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda*

**Achieving the vision through existing regional initiatives:
economic statistics****Progress in implementing the Regional Programme
for the Improvement of Economic Statistics in Asia and
the Pacific****Note by the secretariat*****Summary*

The Committee on Statistics at its fourth session reaffirmed its strong commitment to the implementation of the Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics in Asia and the Pacific and its core set of economic statistics. This reiteration of the relevance of the Regional Programme was made shortly after the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 70/1, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, indicating the continued relevance of the Regional Programme to the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Regional Programme is an established initiative of the Asia-Pacific statistical community which has been accorded strong commitment and priority by the Committee on Statistics on a continuous basis. The current, second, phase of the Regional Programme focuses on the acceleration of country-level and regional implementation in accordance with the Implementation Plan for the Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics in Asia and the Pacific.

During the second phase of the Regional Programme, donor support has increased substantially, the first-ever Asia-Pacific Economic Statistics Week has been held and the Steering Group for the Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics in Asia and the Pacific has changed its leadership structure and modalities of work in order to contribute its technical expertise more directly to the advancement of economic statistics in the region.

The present note, prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Steering Group, constitutes the second written progress report on the implementation of the Regional Programme. The Committee’s guidance is sought on the following: (a) overcoming challenges in national implementation of the Regional Programme; (b) communicating the importance of economic statistics for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals; and (c) reviewing options for using the Regional Programme’s planned capacity screening in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

* E/ESCAP/CST(5)/L.1.

** The present note was submitted late owing to pending consultations on document E/ESCAP/CST(5)/1.

I. Introduction

1. The Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics in Asia and the Pacific is the longest running and most established of the regional initiatives developed under the auspices of the Committee on Statistics. The Committee, at its fourth session, reiterated its resolve to improve economic statistics in the region and reaffirmed its strong commitment to the implementation of the Regional Programme and its core set of economic statistics.¹

2. This significant reaffirmation came in the early days of the second phase of implementation of the Regional Programme and shortly after the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 70/1, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, confirming the continued relevance of the Regional Programme within the requirements of the 2030 Agenda.²

3. Another decision of the Committee on Statistics at its fourth session that is consequential for the Regional Programme was the general endorsement of the Bureau’s proposal regarding the strategic direction of the Committee. As part of this proposal, the Committee on Statistics agreed that each regional programme should be reviewed and adjusted as appropriate on aspects related to: (a) cross-cutting and institutional issues, for national statistical systems; and (b) statistical capabilities required for the development agenda beyond 2015,³ now called the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

4. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development prompted much debate and discussion among statisticians in the region on both issues mentioned above. Starting with an expert group meeting organized by the secretariat in December 2014,⁴ on what the 2030 Agenda and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals would mean for national statistical systems and regional collaboration for statistics development, efforts have resulted in the proposed collective vision and framework for action by the Asia-Pacific statistical community for advancing official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,⁵ which was the outcome of the Asia-Pacific conference on transforming official statistics for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development held in Bangkok in August 2016.⁶ A founding principle of the collective vision and framework for action

¹ E/ESCAP/CST(4)/14.

² Sustainable Development Goal 17.18: By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts; and Goal 17.19: By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries.

³ E/ESCAP/CST(4)/CRP.2. Available from www.unescap.org/resources/eescapcst4crp2-strengthening-data-and-statistics-development-agenda-beyond-2015-asia-and.

⁴ For more information on the expert group meeting on “Statistics and data for the post-2015 development agenda: implications for regional collaboration in Asia and the Pacific”, see www.unescap.org/events/statistics-and-data-post-2015-development-agenda-implications-regional-collaboration-asia-and.

⁵ E/ESCAP/CST(5)/1.

⁶ For more information on this conference, see www.unescap.org/events/asia-pacific-conference-transforming-official-statistics-implementation-2030-agenda.

is that it builds on existing initiatives for statistics development, including those established at the regional level such as the Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics.

5. The Implementation Plan for the Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics in Asia and the Pacific stipulates that the Steering Group for the Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics in Asia and the Pacific should provide an annual activity report and a report on results achieved at the end of each phase of the Regional Programme to the Committee on Statistics.⁷ Given that the Regional Programme is currently in the middle of its second phase of implementation, the present progress report focuses on activities and relies on inputs provided by countries and development partners to the Steering Group at its 5th meeting. A results-based progress report, including on core set implementation,⁸ will be prepared at the end of the second phase of implementation of the Regional Programme on the basis of the second capacity screening exercise in 2017.

6. The present note highlights key activities completed or in progress for the period 2015-2016 and identifies links between the Regional Programme and the action areas of the proposed collective vision and framework for action in an effort to illustrate the contributions of the Regional Programme to implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

7. Section II of the present note provides a report of the progress achieved in implementing the Regional Programme at the national and the regional levels. Section III illustrates how the Regional Programme can support statistics development for the Sustainable Development Goals in the light of the proposed collective vision and framework for action. Section IV summarizes the major challenges faced in the implementation of the Regional Programme during the period 2015-2016. Lastly, section V concludes with specific questions for the consideration of the Committee.

II. Progress in implementing the Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics in Asia and the Pacific

8. At its 5th meeting, held on 5 and 6 May 2016 in Bangkok, the Steering Group was informed of progress in the implementation of the Regional Programme between April 2015 to May 2016, through presentations and other inputs by countries and development partners. Progress was reported in line with the four outputs of the Regional Programme, namely advocacy, coordination, statistical infrastructure and skills. Countries were also asked to provide updates on ongoing technical cooperation for the improvement of economic statistics and any statistics-related initiatives concerning the monitoring and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at the national level.

9. The Implementation Plan for the Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics in Asia and the Pacific indicated that implementation of the Regional Programme would ultimately be at the national level and hence would be evidenced in the national context. A summary overview of economic statistics development at the national level, as provided by countries to the Steering Group at its 5th meeting, is provided

⁷ E/ESCAP/CST(3)/CRP.1. Available from www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/pre-ods/CST3-CRPIE.pdf.

⁸ E/ESCAP/CST(2)/4.

in the national implementation matrix available from www.unescap.org/resources/national-regional-programme-economic-statistics-rpes-implementation-matrix.

10. The annex to the present note summarizes the reports from development partners on their recent regional activities and upcoming priorities that support the implementation of the Regional Programme. In addition, substantial information on regional as well as national implementation of the Regional Programme is available on the web-based platform at <http://communities.unescap.org/economic-statistics>.

11. The highlights of the reports from countries and development partners are given in the following paragraphs.

National statistical systems are using the Regional Programme and its core set as guidance for economic statistics development

12. Eight countries have reflected the core set of economic statistics and/or the Regional Programme in their strategic plans for the development of statistics. This is an essential step in supporting advocacy, coordination and sustainable progress towards the implementation of the Regional Programme.

Implementation of the core set is progressing

13. A total of 10 out of 13 countries informed the meeting that implementation of the core set of economic statistics had improved, in terms of an increase in the number of core set statistics that are available and/or in terms of increased frequency.⁹

Countries are getting support on environmental-economic accounting

14. Five countries reported ongoing technical assistance related to environmental-economic accounting. This is a welcome development, as the natural resources component of the core set was produced by less than a fifth of the countries that had responded to the first round of capacity screening in 2013-2014. Awareness of the importance of the measurement of this component of the core set has increased owing to the requirements by the 2030 Agenda to measure sustainable economic growth.

Countries have converging priorities in the areas of support for statistical infrastructure and skills development for economic statistics

15. Based on the national reports, the Steering Group identified the following priorities in the areas of statistical infrastructure and skills development for producing and disseminating economic statistics: (a) national accounts, especially rebasing of gross domestic product, integrated national accounts, institutional sector accounts, quarterly national accounts and implementation of supply-and-use frameworks; (b) measurement of natural resources; (c) labour/employment statistics; (d) short-term economic statistics; (e) statistical business registers; (f) metadata frameworks; and (g) quality assurance frameworks. Taking these priorities forward, two Steering Group Task Forces, one on statistical business registers and the other on quality assurance frameworks, were subsequently established (further detail on the Steering Group Task Forces is included below).

⁹ See E/ESCAP/CST(4)/2 for the latest comprehensive report on core set implementation against signpost 1.

Direct support for implementation of the Regional Programme increased in 2015

16. Direct support for the Regional Programme is defined here as support provided at the regional or national level with clear reference to the Regional Programme. The most significant increase is as a result of the contribution by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Island of more than \$2 million to the secretariat's activities for the implementation of the second phase of the Regional Programme.

Support for statistical infrastructure has been the focus of development partner activities

17. Based on the reports from development partners to the Steering Group at its 5th meeting, the majority of regional activities on economic statistics development focused on statistical infrastructure through support for survey programmes, methodology (including model questionnaires) and the establishment or improvement of statistical business registers.

Development partners support institutional strengthening at the planning stage, contributing to the advocacy and coordination outputs of the Regional Programme

18. Many development partners also mobilized resources and efforts for institutional strengthening, mainly by supporting the design and implementation of national strategies for the development of statistics. A total of 12 countries were mentioned (by the countries themselves or by development partners) as benefiting from such support.

The design and implementation of country-level activities within partnership arrangements must be guided by national priorities and coordinated by the national statistical office in all Regional Programme activities supported by the secretariat

19. Partnership arrangements require that countries and the secretariat collaborate in the design and implementation of country-level activities based on an initial project concept endorsed by the head of the national statistical office. Such concepts were developed and endorsed in Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Maldives in 2015-2016. The development of a project concept is currently underway in Sri Lanka. This approach maintains that support provided within the Regional Programme should respond to the needs and priorities of national statistical systems, be nationally owned and driven and in that manner transcend a particular project and contribute to sustainable long-term institutional strengthening.

20. Peer reviews and the development of national economic statistics development plans are two kinds of support that are institutional in nature and are part of country project concepts. Peer reviews – national statistical system-wide assessments covering institutional (including legal framework),¹⁰ organizational and business process components, as well as issues specific to economic statistics such as the implementation of relevant international standards – are coordinated by national statistical offices with the involvement of the relevant stakeholders, such as other economic statistics producers, policymakers and users. National statistical offices have an

¹⁰ The Regional Programme has supported the review of the Statistics Act of the Lao People's Democratic Republic in terms of its compliance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.

essential role in the following areas: (a) finalizing the review tool in terms of its scope to ensure that all issues of importance to the national statistical system are sufficiently covered; (b) investing sufficient staff time in the review process; and (c) coordinating with concerned national agencies so that they participate in the review in an effective manner. The first review mission has taken place in Maldives and a draft report is in progress, whereas for Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic the review tools have not yet been finalized.

21. Similarly, national statistical offices have a pivotal role in elaborating national economic statistics development plans based on the outcomes of peer reviews. National economic statistics development plans are designed as part of broader national statistical strategies and enable an iterative flow of feedback between national priorities and technical assistance provided within the Regional Programme. To ensure the relevance and actual use of these plans, it is essential that they are developed by the national statistical system and coordinated by the national statistical office. The secretariat's role is one of support, through the preparation of a review report and through advisory missions and workshops to identify economic statistics development priorities. In Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Maldives, the peer review exercise is linked to a midterm review of the national strategy for the development of statistics in cooperation with the development partners involved.

22. Beyond these institutional activities that contribute to the advocacy and coordination outputs of the Regional Programme,¹¹ the support provided by the secretariat through its training component (under the skills output) also aims at institutional capacity-building. Contributions are focused on training materials, e-learning courses and training-of-trainers courses on selected core set components, with due attention to economic statistics requirements for the Sustainable Development Goals. The Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific, comprising national statistical training institutes and development partners, has an important advisory role for this component. The successful implementation of the training component depends on the uptake of the outputs by the national statistical systems; for example, by incorporating the training materials into national statistical training curricula. The secretariat is in the process of developing a repository of existing training materials on the core set and recruiting a training coordinator to support the training institutions in this process.

23. Lastly, the secretariat provides analytical capacity-building support for national studies produced under partnership agreements with national statistical offices. National studies are funded through the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) Resource Facility, a pool of funds for which national statistical systems can apply to undertake analysis and research for the development of economic statistics. The proposals are reviewed by the secretariat and national and/or international experts, such as the Steering Group members. The ESCAP Resource Facility was officially launched at the Asia-Pacific conference on transforming official statistics for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in August 2016.

¹¹ Regional Programme activities are organized under four major outputs – advocacy, coordination, statistical infrastructure and skills – at both the regional and national levels. For further information on the results framework of the Regional Programme, see E/ESCAP/CST(3)/CRP.1. Available from www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/pre-ods/CST3-CRP1E.pdf.

24. The objective of the national studies is to encourage and enable national statistical offices, together with other national agencies, to make better use of the statistics that they produce and to explore applications of international standards with a view to improving, in particular, the quality of economic statistics. It is important to note here that the improvement of the quality of economic statistics is an integral part of institutional strengthening of national statistical systems.

25. The scope of national studies is delineated by the core set of economic statistics, statistical infrastructure for economic statistics and institutional setting for economic statistics production and dissemination. The principal substantive criterion for the studies is alignment of the research topic with the Regional Programme objectives and with a national strategy for the development of statistics. This criterion ensures that the resulting national study contributes to the improvement of economic statistics in the country and constitutes a “regional good” that can be shared with other member States. Topics that lend themselves to a collaborative study by multiple national agencies are encouraged, with the national study coordinated by the national statistical office.¹²

26. Currently, four national studies are in progress in the region: (a) improving coverage of business statistics in Kyrgyzstan; (b) improving methodology for compiling the gross value added in the agricultural sector in Mongolia; (c) piloting trade-related surveys for computing trade margins in Tajikistan; and (d) using tax administration data for enhancing statistical business registers in Viet Nam. Preliminary findings of the first three studies will be presented to the Committee on Statistics at its fifth session.

27. National studies are disseminated through regional seminars such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Statistics Week, of which the inaugural session took place in Bangkok in May 2016. It was designed to facilitate regional substantive exchanges among member States and development partners to support effective and efficient production and dissemination of basic economic statistics. The topics were selected with the capacity-building priorities of the region in mind, thereby linking analytical work more closely with the development of economic statistics within the Regional Programme.

28. The first Asia-Pacific Economic Statistics Week was organized by the secretariat, the Statistics Division and the Asian Development Bank and comprised a seminar, the 5th meeting of the Steering Group and economic statistics project support meetings. In the seminar component, three Steering Group members (Australia, Mongolia and Turkey) acted as session organizers and seven contributed papers (Australia, India, Malaysia, Mongolia, New Zealand, Pakistan and the Philippines).

29. The seminar focused on quality issues for economic statistics in five sessions spanning administrative data sources for economic statistics, data management and classifications, prices statistics, statistical business registers and national accounts compilation. During the seminar, experts from national statistical offices and central banks from 35 countries in the region discussed the challenges that they encountered in producing and disseminating

¹² Desirable topics for national studies include economic statistics underlying monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals, and economic statistics with a gender equality perspective, such as informal employment or business ownership by women. For further information on the ESCAP Resource Facility and the criteria for national studies, see http://communities.unescap.org/system/files/resource_facility_trifold.pdf.

economic statistics, and their research efforts to improve quality based on 30 study papers produced by countries. A number of prerequisites for quality improvements to be achieved were also at the centre of the discussions, in particular those related to the institutional environment, such as long-term planning, legal basis and the relationship with data providers and users, high-level support and leadership.¹³

30. At its 5th meeting, following the seminar component, the Steering Group, based on the positive feedback received by participants, agreed that the Asia-Pacific Economic Statistics Week should be organized on an annual basis by a task force comprising selected Steering Group members.

Changes in the working arrangements of the Steering Group

31. The Steering Group decided to form topic-based Task Forces in order to be able to contribute the collective and individual expertise of its members to the implementation of the Regional Programme in a more direct and substantive way. At the end of the term of the Chair of the Steering Group (New Zealand), the Steering Group also revisited its leadership arrangements, and agreed a new arrangement where co-chairs would also lead topic-based Task Forces.

32. The Steering Group's work is now organized around the following Task Force areas:

- (a) Asia-Pacific Economic Statistics Week, 2017 (Chair: Malaysia);¹⁴
- (b) Capacity screening 2017 (Chair: Singapore);¹⁵
- (c) Statistical business registers (Chair: Pakistan);¹⁶
- (d) Quality assurance frameworks for economic statistics (Chair: Australia).¹⁷

33. The above Task Forces were established as of September 2016 comprising member States and development partners. The workplans of the Task Forces comprise the collective workplan of the Steering Group. It is expected that these topic-based Task Forces will also enhance and deepen coordination among international organizations working on economic statistics in the region.

¹³ The report of the Asia-Pacific Economic Statistics Week is available from http://communities.unescap.org/system/files/apes_report_compiled_full_final.pdf.

¹⁴ Terms of reference available from www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/SGRPES_Task_Force_TOR_APES2017.pdf.

¹⁵ Terms of reference available from www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/SGRPES_Task_Force_TOR_Capacity_Screening_Tool_II.pdf.

¹⁶ Terms of reference available from www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/SGRPES_Task_Force_TOR_Statistical_Business_Register.pdf.

¹⁷ Terms of reference available from www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/SGRPES_Task_Force_TOR_QAF_for_economic_statistics.pdf.

III. The role of the Regional Programme in supporting statistics development for the Sustainable Development Goals

34. According to a review by the secretariat, 97 of the 230 Sustainable Development Goals indicators in the global monitoring framework for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are based on economic statistics covered by the core set. Hence, by contributing to national statistical capacity to produce and disseminate the core set, the Regional Programme directly adds value to the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals.

35. The requirements of the 2030 Agenda concerning national statistical systems and the global statistical community, however, go well beyond the production and dissemination of a list of indicators for monitoring the Goals. Indeed, the emphasis of the 2030 Agenda on statistics development, in terms of both the quality of statistics and improvement of measurements, points to a stronger national and analytical capacity requirement embedded in the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals in comparison, for instance, with the Millennium Development Goals. This requirement is most clearly outlined in Sustainable Development Goal targets 17.18 and 17.19.

36. The collective vision and framework for action for advancing statistics for the 2030 Agenda has been developed with the requirements of the 2030 Agenda in mind. It is aimed at the transformation of modern national statistical systems through global, regional and national action. It builds on existing commitments and efforts, and can therefore be viewed as a unifying framework for ongoing initiatives for statistics development, including regional programmes.

37. The table illustrates linkages between regional and national activities under the Regional Programme and the five action areas of the proposed collective vision and framework for action. The related Regional Programme outputs (advocacy, coordination, statistical infrastructure and skills) are indicated in parentheses for each activity.

Relevance of Regional Programme activities and linkages to the implementation of the proposed collective vision action areas

<i>Collective vision action areas</i>	<i>Regional activities</i>	<i>National activities</i>
A. User engagement and investment in statistics	Analysis of linkages between the core set of economic statistics and the Sustainable Development Goals (Advocacy)	Peer reviews for economic statistics production, processing and dissemination (Advocacy)

<i>Collective vision action areas</i>	<i>Regional activities</i>	<i>National activities</i>
B. Stronger national statistical systems and quality assurance	<p>Capacity screening for economic statistics (Coordination)</p> <p>Task Forces on Quality Assurance Frameworks for Economic Statistics and on Statistical Business Registers (Statistical infrastructure)</p> <p>Development of training materials based on the core set of economic statistics and training of trainers (Skills)</p>	<p>National studies on improving economic statistics supported by the ESCAP Resource Facility (Coordination, statistical infrastructure and skills)</p> <p>Development of statistical business registers (Statistical infrastructure)</p>
C. Integrated statistics and innovation	<p>Asia-Pacific Economic Statistics Weeks involving national statistics offices, central banks and research institutions (Coordination)</p>	<p>National studies on improving economic statistics supported by the ESCAP Resource Facility (Coordination, statistical infrastructure and skills)</p>
D. Modernizing statistical business processes	<p>Asia-Pacific Economic Statistics Weeks: for example, sessions on the use of administrative data and data management (Statistical infrastructure and skills)</p>	<p>Peer reviews for economic statistics production, processing and dissemination (Advocacy and coordination)</p>
E. Skills and human resources	<p>Development of training materials based on the core set of economic statistics and training of trainers (Skills)</p> <p>Research-based training for the development of national studies; for example, for the development of statistical business registers (Statistical infrastructure and skills)</p>	<p>National studies on improving economic statistics supported by the ESCAP Resource Facility (Skills)</p>

38. The table can be viewed as an activity-level review of the Regional Programme vis-à-vis the requirements of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. While not exhaustive, the Regional Programme activities depicted in the table do demonstrate a strong link to all the action areas that comprise the proposed collective vision and framework for action.

39. Beyond linking the framework and Regional Programme, however, there is a need to identify how the Regional Programme, as with other ongoing initiatives, can orient its activities to support the delivery of action areas. One concrete opportunity is the second round of capacity screening, which will be conducted in 2017 to take stock of changes in economic statistics production and dissemination capacity by the end of the second phase of the Regional Programme. The capacity screening will contribute directly to monitoring progress towards achieving the collective vision and the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

40. An interim task force conducted an in-depth review of the capacity screening tool that was used for the 2013-2014 round, together with the results obtained, and presented their recommendations to the Steering Group at its 5th meeting. The newly established Task Force is currently preparing the tool for the second round.

41. One possibility may be to see if capacity screening can collect more targeted information on the national statistical systems in the region within the five action areas while maintaining sufficient comparability with the data collected in the first round. Another aspect to consider is a strategy for effective dissemination and communication of the results of the second round of capacity screening given the relevance of the results to cross-cutting issues across various domains of statistics.

IV. Challenges in implementing the Regional Programme

42. As mentioned above, secretariat support for Regional Programme implementation at the national level has as its core principles partnership and country ownership. However, country implementation of the Regional Programme has been hampered by significant delays in devising and reaching partnership agreements and in implementing agreed activities. Such delays, especially those in the implementation of the activities agreed upon with national statistical offices, constitute a serious risk to donor support for the Regional Programme.

43. In order to mitigate this risk, the secretariat has instated biannual regional project support meetings and will enhance national activities with regional activities where possible, such as by holding regional workshops instead of or in addition to offering country-level technical assistance.

44. One of the challenges in implementing the ESCAP Resource Facility, in particular for least developed countries, is that these countries, while requiring the most support, also tend to be more limited in their capacity to design and conduct analytical studies. The secretariat, in an effort to support countries in developing proposals, envisages holding research-based workshops, the first one of which is to be integrated into the second project support meeting, at the end of November 2016, and will focus on statistical business registers.

45. Beyond the development of study proposals, countries often need additional support in conducting national studies. This support can be in the form of technical assistance on the subject matter as well as on report writing.

The secretariat has so far provided such assistance either directly or by organizing expert missions. However, with an increasing number of studies, providing the same level of support may require new approaches, such as improved joint planning and an increased level of involvement by other development partners.

V. Conclusion

46. Given the above progress report on the implementation of the Regional Programme, the Committee is invited to:

- (a) Comment and advise on how to address challenges related to:
 - (i) National implementation of economic statistics projects under partnership arrangements;
 - (ii) Widening the reach of the ESCAP Resource Facility across national statistical systems of varying levels of development;
- (b) Advise on how the importance of quality economic statistics for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals can be better illustrated and communicated to stakeholders and decision makers;
- (c) Advise on possibilities for using the capacity screening exercise to support the implementation of the collective vision and the framework for action, such as for monitoring Sustainable Development Goals targets 17.18 and 17.19.

Annex

**Reports of development partners to the Steering Group for the
Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics
in Asia and the Pacific at its 5th meeting**

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Advocacy and coordination</i>	<i>Statistical infrastructure</i>	<i>Skills</i>	<i>Priorities for 2016-2017</i>
Asian Development Bank (ADB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National strategy for the development of statistics and statistics act (Myanmar) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed analytical tools for elaborating supply and use tables (19 economies) Developed ADB statistical business registers prototype 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive training and continuous support on supply and use tables Statistical business registers Support to price statistics within the International Comparison Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Comparison Program Launch of statistical business registers in four economies Linking statistical business registers with trade database (Malaysia)
Department for International Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific – ESCAP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced Data Dissemination Initiative (International Monetary Fund) Wealth Accounting and the Valuation of Ecosystem Services (World Bank) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training component of the Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics (ESCAP) 	
International Labour Organization		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Household survey based data collection support (Afghanistan; Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; Fiji; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Maldives; Myanmar; Nepal; Papua New Guinea; Samoa; Tonga) Building statistical system for quarterly labour force survey (Myanmar) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional training on the resolution of the nineteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians Training on labour migration statistics (in cooperation with Statistics Korea) Training on informal employment (in cooperation with the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of the resolution of the Nineteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians Support for member States in updating their measurements of decent work elements contributing to monitoring of the Goals (Fiji; Mongolia; Pakistan; Philippines; Samoa; Viet Nam)

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Advocacy and coordination</i>	<i>Statistical infrastructure</i>	<i>Skills</i>	<i>Priorities for 2016-2017</i>
Secretariat of the Pacific Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National strategy for the development of statistics: design and implementation support (Fiji; Papua New Guinea; Tonga; Vanuatu) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model questionnaires and guidelines for implementing the resolution of the nineteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization Pilot labour force survey (Philippines; Viet Nam) Household income and expenditure surveys (Cook Islands; Micronesia (Federated States of); Niue; Solomon Islands; Tokelau; Tonga; Tuvalu) Pacific Consumer Price Index Compilation Guide Pacific Standard Industrial Classification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Merchandise Trade Statistics Business statistics Consumer price indices Agricultural and fishery statistics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National strategy for the development of statistics Micronesia (Federated States of); Nauru; Tuvalu) Household income and expenditure survey support (Kiribati; Marshall Islands) Pacific commodity trade statistics database
United Nations (ESCAP, Statistics Division)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support through the Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics for planning through peer reviews (Maldives) and statistics act (Lao People's Democratic Republic) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asia-Pacific Economic Statistics Week 2016 National studies on business statistics (Kyrgyzstan; Viet Nam), gross value added of agricultural sector (Mongolia) and trade statistics (Tajikistan) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple regional training workshops on the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting Experimental Ecosystem Accounting in Asia and the Pacific, April and November 2015 and in 2016 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country-level implementation of the Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics Asia-Pacific Economic Statistics Week 2017

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Advocacy and coordination</i>	<i>Statistical infrastructure</i>	<i>Skills</i>	<i>Priorities for 2016-2017</i>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional course on the System of National Accounts, 2008 (special topics): improving exhaustiveness of gross domestic product coverage, August 2015 • Regional workshop on measuring the informal sector and the non-observed economy, October 2015 • International workshop on short-term statistics, May 2015 (with the National Bureau of Statistics of China) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the System of National Accounts, 2008, and the short-term statistics programme • United-Nations-wide project being planned to improve compilation of economic statistics to support monitoring of the Goals
World Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive reforms and capacity-building of statistical systems (Indonesia; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Mongolia) • National strategy for the development of statistics: implementation support (Bangladesh; Myanmar; Philippines) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household income and expenditure surveys (Bangladesh; Marshall Islands; Myanmar; Nepal; Vanuatu/Solomon Islands) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive reforms and capacity-building of statistical systems (Indonesia; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Mongolia) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household income and expenditure surveys • Strengthening the National Statistical System Project (LAOSTAT)