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Item 3 (b) of the provisional agenda*

**Achieving the vision through existing regional initiatives:
population and social statistics**

Meeting the data and statistics needs for socially inclusive development for all: proposed implementation plan for the regional strategy to improve population and social statistics in Asia and the Pacific

Note by the secretariat**

Summary

At its fourth session, the Committee endorsed the “Regional strategy to improve population and social statistics in Asia and the Pacific” and requested the Bureau to establish a steering group on population and social statistics to oversee the implementation of the regional strategy. The Bureau decided to create Friends of the Chair Group as an interim mechanism with the mandate to develop a plan for implementing the regional strategy.

The Committee will have before it the proposed implementation plan developed by the Friends of the Chair Group. The proposal is positioned as an integral component of a framework for collective actions proposed in document E/ESCAP/CST(5)/1, translating the goals of the regional strategy to improve population and social statistics in Asia and the Pacific into a series of collaborative activities, with a particular focus on supporting informed decision-making for achieving the SDGs.

The Committee is invited to review and provide advice on the proposal of the Friends of the Chair and provide, in particular on its appropriateness for contributing to the implementation of the framework for action for advancing official statistics for SDGs implementation.

The Committee is invited to endorse the proposal.

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

** The present note was submitted late owing to pending consultations on document E/ESCAP/CST(5)/1. It is being issued without formal editing.

I. Implementing the regional strategy in the context of the collective vision for transforming official statistics

1. The Committee at its fourth session endorsed the “Regional strategy to improve population and social statistics in Asia and the Pacific” (hereafter referred to as the Regional Strategy), which framed a vision that all countries in the region should have the capability to provide a core set of population and social statistics.¹ The Regional Strategy focuses on key system-level issues, ranging from enabling policy environment to statistical infrastructure to skills and competency. The Committee requested the Bureau to establish a steering group on population and social statistics to oversee the implementation of the Regional Strategy.² In view of the on-going review of regional initiatives on statistics development to support the implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Bureau subsequently decided to create a Friends of the Chair Group as an interim mechanism with the mandate to guide the secretariat in developing a plan for implementing the Regional Strategy for the Committee on consider.³

2. A key development in official statistics in Asia and the Pacific is the call for taking collective actions to transform national statistical systems to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through an agreed collective vision and framework for action. The results framework of the Regional Strategy and proposed regional-level activities have been reformulated to be aligned with the vision statement as well as areas of collaborative actions as contained in “Advancing official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: a collective vision and framework for action by the Asia-Pacific statistical community”.⁴

3. The rest of the document outlines the key elements of the proposed implementation plan, including the strategic focus, results framework, approach, governance and monitoring arrangements for achieving the vision and targets of the Regional Strategy.

II. Regional core set as the guide with focus on data disaggregation

4. The core set of population and social statistics, which the Regional Strategy aimed to deliver at the national level, outlines eleven topical statistical domains that are fundamental to evidence-based decision-making in the region regarding the lives and living conditions of people and communities in the region.⁵ The core set underpins many of the indicators of the global monitoring framework for the sustainable development goals (SDGs). Thus, the various domains of the core set represent building blocks that can be integrated to allow for an efficient and harmonized statistical production system that produces evidence and enables integrated policy

¹ E/ESCAP/CST(4)/CRP.1.

² E/ESCAP/CST(4)14.

³ Members of the Friends of the Chair Group were: Mr Nemat Khuduzade (Azerbaijan), Mr Dipankar Roy (Bangladesh), Mr Tashi Dorjee (Bhutan), Mr Sairi Hasbullah (Indonesia, Chair), Ms D. Oyunchimeg (Mongolia) and Ms Fauzia Viqar (Pakistan).

⁴ E/ESCAP/CST(5)/1.

⁵ ESCAP (2012). “Core set of population and social statistics for Asia and the Pacific” (E/ESCAP/CST(3)/5/Add.1).

analysis in support of implementation of the multifaceted 2030 development agenda. They set the scope of the implementation of the Regional Strategy.

Addressing “leave-no-one-behind” focus of the 2030 Agenda

5. In particular, the core set’s principle of “producing and disseminating statistics across 11 domains by relevant population characteristics” is very much in alignment with the tenet of “leave no one behind” of Agenda 2030. The core set provides that all statistics across the 11 domains should be disaggregated by such key population characteristics as age, sex, place of residence, place of birth, ethnicity, income, and so forth. Each domain builds into the core set additional dimensions and characteristics for disaggregation. For instance, employment characteristics add occupation, industry, status in employment, formal or informal employment to this list. For housing statistics, characteristics expand to include the type of dwelling. By emphasizing disaggregation across the various domains, the core set presents a tool in identifying population groups and framing issues for target interventions as countries strive to “leave nobody behind”.

III. Results framework

6. The implementation plan is designed to achieve the results as outlined in the Regional Strategy as endorsed by the Committee on Statistics on its fourth session.

A. Reformulated vision of the Regional Strategy

7. In alignment with the proposal for a collective vision and framework for action by the Asia-Pacific statistical community, the vision of the Regional Strategy is re-formulated as the follows:

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

B. Goals and targets

8. The Regional Strategy spells out a set of goals and targets, reflecting enhanced capacity of national statistical systems in the production, dissemination and use of population and social statistics. These goals and targets have been merged and reformulated in consideration of the areas of regional collaborative actions to transform national statistical systems in view of the requirements for data and statistics arising from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Consideration was taken to have a focus on issues that had been identified by the preceding Technical Advisory Group as challenges and opportunities that are particularly relevant to the production, dissemination and use of the regional core set of population and social statistics.

Goal 1: Enabling policy environment to maintain demand for population and social statistics. Supportive and well-coordinated policy environment is in place to ensure effective demand for the production and dissemination of the core set of population and social statistics to support SDG implementation

9. Target 1.1 Key population groups, and their needs and issues, are identified for target interventions in national and sub-national development policies and programmes, with such population groups and issues incorporated in relevant monitoring frameworks. This is to be achieved

through engagement with national and sub-national policy bodies to review the overall social, economic and environmental development plans and strategies, as well as that for individual sectors (such as health and education). The review is to be guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other international and regional development frameworks. Inclusion of the relevant statistics in monitoring of national development strategies and plans is key to ensure political support to and investment in the production and dissemination of such statistics. As national policy priorities are likely to evolve, the population groups and their issues should be regularly reviewed and updated.

10. Target 1.2 National Strategies for the Development of Statistics or national statistical master plans are updated to address the priority statistical information needs as identified in Target 1.1. This process is to be assisted by the existing and upcoming regional statistical frameworks, including the core set of population and social statistics in Asia and the Pacific, to strengthen the production and dissemination of the statistics underpinning the relevant key monitoring frameworks and indicators. The inclusion of the issues in National Strategies for the Development of Statistics or national statistical master plans will ensure the long term investments required for the production and dissemination of the core set of population and social statistics.

11. Target 1.3 The work programmes of the national statistical office and statistical departments/divisions of other government agencies are aligned with the priorities as laid out in the National Strategies for the Development of Statistics or national master plans regarding the production and dissemination of the core set of population and social statistics, including appropriate disaggregation, arising from the relevant monitoring frameworks. The inclusion of the issues in the work programmes of national statistical systems is necessary for the appropriation of budget and the allocation of other resources necessary to implement the required population and social statistics. The review and updating of the particular issues is aligned with existing government planning cycles.

Goal 2: Strengthened production of the core set of population and social statistics. Quality, comparable and timely statistics of the core set are available to address national data gaps and meet policy and monitoring requirements for national and international development goals, include the SDGs

12. Target 2.1 The application of internationally agreed classifications, measurement standards and guidelines supports enhanced data quality and data production. The production and dissemination of population and social statistics are guided by integrated measurement framework for monitoring national and international development goals including the sustainable development goals. This includes the adoption and application of common, internationally agreed definitions, classifications, statistical methodologies and guidelines of all domains of population and social statistics.

13. Target 2.2 Data integration drives improvements in cost-effective production and dissemination of the core set of population and social statistics with required data disaggregation. Production of the core set of population and social statistics is built upon the systematic integration of the complete range of administrative and survey data sources available, primarily anchored with statistical registers (e.g. population registers), national population and housing censuses, other major administrative and survey data sources as well as big data.

14. Target 2.3 Modernization of business processes and tools strengthens the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of population and social statistics. Producers of all the domains of population and social statistics organize their business processes in line with frameworks of quality management and integration of data sources, such as the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) and the Generic Activity Model for Statistical Organizations (GAMSO) and standards and tools such as the Generic Statistical Information Model (GSIM), the Common Statistical Production Architecture (CSPA), the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI), and the Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (SDMX).

Goal 3: Enhanced accessibility and use of the core set of population and social statistics. The core set of population and social statistics is accessible to all key users (including governments, civil society, academia and the business sector) and is used to promote evidence-based advocacy and analysis of policies and programmes

15. Target 3.1 Monitoring and assessment of national and international development goals and targets are supported with increased accessibility, quality and demand for priority domains and themes of population and social statistics. High quality population and social statistics should underpin regular monitoring and progress assessments towards achieving national and international development goals, including the SDGs. It might be necessary to identify national user-producer dialogues and leverage their support for statistics, including by creating issue-focused statistics coordination mechanisms, for producers of the population and social statistics to engage with policy makers and other users to improve their understanding of statistical information and address data gaps.

16. Target 3.2 Key population and social statistics are made accessible to major user communities at national, regional and global levels and are disseminated in accordance with the relevant internationally agreed principles and guidelines. This includes regular publication of the core set of population and social statistics by the national statistical system at the national and local levels with metadata for principal data sources, standardized to allow for comparison across different data sources. It also includes the use of web-based platforms, data dissemination and visualization tools for a broad audience at national, regional and global levels. National dissemination of population and social statistics supports the building of high quality and comprehensive evidence base to monitor and understand progress, gaps and challenges in achieving national and international development goals including the SDGs.

17. Target 3.3 Capacity of national statistical systems as well as key users (including government, civil society and other actors) to analyse and interpretation of population and social statistics to inform decision-making is strengthened. This will include the analysis and interpretation of indicator data as well as micro-data. The analysis of micro-data is often required for understanding drivers of successes and challenges in achieving development goals and targets, and for evaluating effectiveness of policy options to identify desirable interventions. Key users will have access to relevant tools of data analysis and presentation, training and technical assistance.

IV. National implementation arrangements

18. The achievement of the vision of the Regional Strategy ultimately depends upon appropriate actions to be taken by national stakeholders.

19. National actions will have to be driven by country demand and address the data and statistical needs of national development priorities. There is no one-size-fits-all solution for national actions, given the diversity across member States in the region in the status of development, the institutional arrangements, and a multitude of other factors related challenges and opportunities regarding official statistics in general and population and social statistics in particular. The goals and targets provide broad directions of action for governments and development partners to address the particular needs of individual countries.

20. National actions should also build on ongoing efforts to improve population and social statistics. This requires review of such efforts and identify success for scaling up and further strengthening. This means the updating and strengthening of national master plans of official statistics and/or national strategies for the development of statistics in view of required actions to achieve the goals and targets of the Regional Strategy. This also includes the updating and strengthening of the work programmes of national statistical systems including national statistical offices. Where mechanisms of user-producer dialogues exist regarding official statistics, they should also be utilized and strengthened to support the achievement of the vision of the Regional Strategy.

21. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has emphasized the importance of robust and evidence-based follow-up and review mechanisms at national, regional and global levels, which will proffer opportunities for establishing and/or strengthening national mechanisms for user-producer dialogues. The implementation of the Regional Strategy should take advantage of such opportunities. National implementation also requires leveraging and strengthening knowledge and expertise in national systems for continuous improvements of population and social statistics.

A. National coordination of population and social statistics

22. National level implementation requires, *inter alia*, coordination among key producers of population and social statistics within the national statistical system, as well as with key users. In countries where coordination mechanisms already exist, such mechanisms will function as the country-level governance for the implementation of the Regional Strategy. The composition and functioning of such mechanisms are likely to vary across countries, given the diversity in country size, overall government structure, etc. The bodies responsible for the coordination mechanisms are encouraged to examine the scope of the domains of population and social statistics and consider aligning it the regional core set in view of national develop priorities.

23. Countries where national statistical coordination mechanisms do not exist or do not function adequately are encouraged to pursue establishment/improvements through country-level implementation of the Regional Strategy.

24. National statistical offices are expected to lead the coordination of the implementation of the Regional Strategy.

B. National focal points for Regional Strategy implementation

25. National focal points are necessary to connect country-level implementation with regional-level support. Where countries participate in regional support and collaboration for the implementation of the Regional

Strategy, the heads of the national statistical offices are to nominate national focal points to liaise with the ESCAP secretariat on relevant activities.

26. The national focal points should have major management and technical responsibilities for key domains of population and social statistics. This can be senior managers or technical expert from the national statistical office. Depending upon the organization of the work on population and social statistics, the heads of the national statistical office may nominate representatives from another ministry responsible for producing key domains of population and social statistics. For countries with membership on the Steering Group, the members can serve as the national focal points.

27. Regional support and collaboration will be liaised through the national focal points. The national focal points will regularly receive supporting materials to assist with implementation of the Regional Strategy activities and will have access to the network of such focal points from all member States in order to facilitate exchanges of experiences.

V. Regional-level oversight and coordination

28. The governance for the implementation of the Regional Strategy will include both regional and national level arrangements.

A. The Committee on Statistics and its Bureau

29. The Committee on Statistics has the ultimate ownership of the Regional Strategy as well as its Implementation Plan.

30. The Bureau of the Committee will guide, in between the Committee sessions as necessary, the Steering Group for the Regional Strategy to Improve Population and Social Statistics in Asia and the Pacific” and the secretariat in coordinating follow-up activities required in accordance with the Committee’s decisions and recommendations on the implementation of the Regional Strategy.

B. Steering Group for the Regional Strategy to Improve Population and Social Statistics in Asia and the Pacific

31. The Steering Group, to be established by the Committee, is to oversee the implementation of the Regional Strategy and therefore remain in place for the duration of the Regional Strategy until 2030. More specifically, the Steering Group is to provide strategic and technical guidance on the implementation of the Regional Strategy, including advocacy, resource mobilization, and developing and disseminating relevant methodological guidelines; establish milestones for the implementation plan, monitor progress and propose any adjustments to the implementation plan as the needs arise; and provide strategic and technical guidance to the secretariat on the day-to-day management of the implementation activities.

32. The Steering Group will play an important role in ensuring the alignment with other relevant initiatives and the effective coordination of activities among development partners. This is to be achieved through representation on the Steering Group of key multilateral and bilateral institutions in the production, dissemination and use of population and social statistics.

33. The composition of the Steering Group needs to take into consideration of the responsibilities which focus on strong and effective

strategic and technical leadership, advocacy and coordination. In addition, the production, dissemination and use of population and social statistics span a wide range of agencies within government, multiple partners from civil society and research organizations, as well as regional and global organizations. Representation from a multitude of stakeholders is required to bring about the transformation to achieve the vision of the Regional Strategy. Moreover, there is benefit for capitalizing on the existing network of senior experts in the region and building upon the membership of the Technical Advisory Group on Population and Social Statistics which was responsible for developing the core set of population and social statistics and the Regional Strategy.

34. A proposed Terms of Reference for the Regional Steering Group is contained in Annex I.

C. Role of the secretariat

35. The ESCAP secretariat, through the Statistics Division, functions as the secretariat of the Committee on Statistics and its Bureau as well as the other steering and working groups established by the Committee. The secretariat is therefore well-positioned to ensure that the Regional Strategy is implemented in alignment with national priorities and harmonized with other ongoing regional capacity development efforts. The secretariat will also strive to ensure that the implementation of the Regional Strategy is also harmonized with the ESCAP-wide work on regional analysis, norm setting, advocacy and technical cooperation in the economic, social and environmental issues.

36. The secretariat will support the functioning of the Steering Group, act as the contact point between country-level and regional-level implementation of the Regional Strategy, and play a central role in ensuring the technical support is made available to national statistical systems in coordination with the relevant development partners and national statistical offices.

VI. Phased implementation

A. Endorsement of the Core Set of Population and Social Statistics (2013)

37. Governments across Asia and the Pacific, through ESCAP Commission resolution 69/16 endorsed the Core Set in April 2013 as a regional guideline for national capacity development to focus national efforts, coordinate regional cooperation and mobilize support by all relevant partners. The resolution signifies that: a) governments recognize the importance of high quality population and social statistics for informed decision-making, and b) governments commit to supporting national statistical systems, including national statistical offices and other agencies that produce and compile population and social statistics. The resolution thus represents the commitment by governments in the region to active involvement of all government producers of population and social statistics for collective actions.

B. Developing and piloting a framework of national capacity of population and social statistics (2013-14)

38. Many of the challenges in improving population and social statistics in the national context are similar to or the same as those in economic statistics. At the same time, population and social statistics have their

distinctive challenges. In particular, the breadth of ambition articulated in the core set, the lack of a unifying framework or measure that would help integrate the elements it contains, and the lack of imperatives to adopt international standards in its compilation pose challenges for moving forward with the Core Set. The Technical Advisory Group therefore developed a framework that defines the essential characteristics of a national statistical system capable of producing the Core Set. The framework includes policy context, data sources and existing classifications and technical guidelines relevant to each domain of the Core Set. It thus provides a basis for assessing the quality of population and social statistics and identifying challenges and opportunities for improvements.

39. Following the development of the capacity framework, the Technical Advisory Group guided the further development of a process for supporting senior managers of national statistical systems to apply the framework to integrate the Core Set in national production and dissemination of population statistics. The process also includes the identification of particular characteristics of national statistical systems that require priority national actions and where regional support was particularly effective. The process was piloted in Bhutan and the Philippines respectively in December 2013 and March 2014.

C. Endorsement of the Regional Strategy and alignment with existing and upcoming capacity building initiatives (2015-16)

40. Drawing on the Core Set and the capacity framework and taking into consideration the results of piloting the capacity framework, the Technical Advisory Group developed the Regional Strategy that laid out a set of goals and targets of system-level improvements regarding population and social statistics. While endorsing the very ambitious Regional Strategy at its fourth session in March 2015, the Committee also considered and endorsed a set of proposals by the Bureau to review existing regional statistics development initiatives for improved integration and coordination. These include regional efforts to improve economic statistics, agricultural and rural statistics, civil registration and vital statistics, gender statistics, disaster-related statistics, environmental statistics, as well as statistical training.

41. At the same time, senior managers and experts of the statistical community in Asia and the Pacific convened in August 2016 to strategize on ways forward to meet the data and statistical needs to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The outcome of the discussion is a proposed collective vision and framework of action in five areas to transform national statistical systems, which serves as an over-arching guide for the implementation of the various regional initiatives of statistics development, including the development of this implementation strategy.

D. Initial implementation of the Regional Strategy (2017-18)

Formulating national action plans

42. Initial implementation of the Regional Strategy is to focus on the formulation by national statistical systems of an effective national action plan to develop capacity to produce, disseminate and use the core set of population and social statistics, and the coordination and galvanization of support from development partners towards this aim.

43. National action plans, to the extent possible, should be based on existing strategies and plans for the production and dissemination of official statistics. Governments have committed to national implementation of the 2030 Agenda that requires high quality population and social statistics across a broad range of issues. This includes the emphasis on improving data disaggregation – by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and geographic location or other characteristics – which provides an opportunity for national statistical systems to engage key policy counterparts to identify priority areas for improvement and agree on the support by a broad range of government agencies.

44. Effective coordination is key to national implementation and to the monitoring and reporting arrangements at the national and regional levels. This is an urgent priority for the initial phase of implementation.

Regional collaboration

45. Regional collaboration aims to support national actions for improvements. In view of the goals and targets, regional collaboration in the phase of initial implementation can focus on the following:

(a) Develop and disseminate tools and guidelines to support national statistical systems to engage key policy counterparts to identify priority population groups and issues for policy and programme intervention, incorporate them in monitoring frameworks of national development plans and strategies as well as national strategies for the development of statistics (Targets 1.1-1.3);

(b) Support discussions around national adaptation of the SDGs indicators, including by promoting a strong link between globally agreed indicators and their national adaptations and ensuring that these are fed into national plans to monitor the SDGs (Target 1.3);

(c) Produce technical notes and methodologies for integrating data from different sources, anchoring with statistical registers, population censuses and other key administrative and survey data sources, based on adaptation of existing guidelines, countries' needs, capacities and expertise (Targets 2.1 and 2.2);

(d) Contribute regional experiences and perspectives in development of statistical definitions and methodologies at the global level and disseminate these and other international statistical guidelines. These include, among others, the development and dissemination of methodologies related to the use of electronic devices in 2020 population and housing censuses; data disaggregation by disability, migration and other relevant population characteristics (Targets 2.1-2.3);

(e) Support regional and sub-regional thematic user-producer dialogues on population and social statistics and the SDGs, including periodic regional multi-stakeholder meetings (Targets 3.1- 3.3);

(f) Support the analysis and interpretation of micro-data at the national level (Target 3.3);

(g) Facilitate South-South cooperation to support sub-regional and national processes, including through the establishment of a roster of thematic consultants and experts on population and social statistics (all Targets);

(h) Facilitate the sharing of good practices within regions and promote South-South cooperation on improving the production,

dissemination and use of the core set of population and social statistics (all Targets);

(i) Develop partnerships with all actors, including civil society organizations, to support advances in population and social statistics and to ensure coordination of all regional and sub-regional plans and activities related to the core set of population and social statistics (all Targets).

46. Commitment and collaboration among development partners will be pursued to provide the support described above.

E. Planning for subsequent implementation (2019 onwards)

47. National action plans for the improvement of population and social statistics will constitute the anchor for the implementation of the Regional Strategy from 2019 through 2030.

48. To facilitate the coordination of support by development partners for national implementation of the Regional Strategy, the secretariat will prepare a regional synthesis by December 2017, which will contain analysis of capacity constraints and needs for external support for national implementation.

49. The synthesis will thus establish the basis for coordinating and leveraging development assistance for national and international resources towards effective implementation of the Regional Strategy. The synthesis report will be circulated to member States as well as development partners. The development partners will be encouraged to utilize the results to coordinate the efficient use of international development resources to support national statistical capacity strengthening.

50. The Steering Group will review the development of the synthesis report and recommend priority actions of regional support for 2018 and beyond.

VII. Resource requirements

51. Implementation of the Regional Strategy will require substantial efforts and investment across a range of development actors. Resource mobilization at the national and regional levels is necessary.

52. Subject to the endorsement by the Committee of the proposed Implementation Plan, the secretariat will work with the Steering Group to analyze the resource requirements for the Implementation Plan and develop a resource mobilization strategy in 2017-18 for consideration by the Committee and potential donors.

VIII. Monitoring and review

53. In years where the Committee meets, a regional assessment of progress towards achieving the goals and targets of the Regional Strategy, upon approval by the Steering Group, will be submitted to the Committee for guidance. In inter-session years, briefing notes on major activities will be shared with the Bureau of the Committee.

54. The monitoring of progress in the implementation of the Regional Strategy will be mainly at about the goals and targets, which focus on improvements at the national level. The monitoring of goals and targets of the Regional Strategy will be harmonized with that of the other reporting requirements, including regional collective vision and framework of action,

other regional statistical development initiatives, as well as the two targets on statistical capacity development of the global SDG agenda (namely Targets 17.18 and 17.19).

55. The secretariat will prepare an analysis by December 2017 of the adequacy of existing monitoring frameworks of statistical capacity in capturing the required improvements to achieve the goals and targets of the Regional Strategy. The Steering Group will review the analysis and recommend ways forward in meaningful monitoring and reporting of progress towards the goals and targets of the Regional Strategy.

56. Regional-level monitoring can be complemented by country reviews, whereby member States will closely examine the process of their implementation in the production, dissemination and use of the 11 domains of the core set, and identify solutions to overcome existing hurdles. Country reviews will be supported by teams of senior experts from other countries and development partners. Countries will be invited to volunteer for undertaking such reviews, with support prioritized for the least developed countries, land-locked countries and small island developing states.

Annex I

Terms of reference for Regional Steering Group on Population and Social Statistics

I. Introduction

1. The ESCAP Committee on Statistics in 2011 established a Technical Advisory Group to provide recommendations on the strategic directions as well as substantive and methodological guidelines regarding strengthening national capacity to provide an agreed range of population and social statistics. The Group developed a core set of population and social statistics which the Committee endorsed on its third session in December 2012^a and subsequently by Commission through its resolution 69/16 as a regional guideline for national capacity development.

2. The Technical Advisory Group further developed the Regional Strategy to Improve Population and Social Statistics in Asia and the Pacific which the Committee endorsed on its fourth session in March 2015. At the same time, the Committee requested the Bureau to establish a Steering Group to oversee implementation of the Regional Strategy.^b

II. Roles and responsibilities

3. The Steering Group will oversee the implementation of the Regional Strategy to achieve its vision.

4. More specifically, the Steering Group shall:

(a) Provide strategic and technical guidance on the implementation of the Regional Strategy, including through advocacy, resource mobilization, facilitating regional and subregional cooperation, and developing and disseminating relevant methodological guidelines;

(b) In consultation with the secretariat, identify short-term and long-term priorities and establish milestones for the implementation plan, monitor progress and propose any adjustments to the implementation plan as the needs arise;

(c) Provide strategic and technical guidance to the secretariat on the day-to-day management of the implementation activities.

III. Composition

5. The composition of the Steering Group shall take into consideration the responsibilities which focus on strong and effective strategic and technical leadership, advocacy and coordination as well as the collaboration among a wide range of stakeholders.

6. Therefore, the Steering Group shall consist of representatives with senior management and technical responsibilities in population and social statistics from:

^a *Core set of population and social statistics for Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/CST(3)/5/Add.1)*, available from www.unescap.org/stat/cst/3/CST3-5AE1.pdf.

^b Report of the Committee on Statistics on its fourth session (E/ESCAP/CST(4)/14), available from: www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/pre-ods/CST4_14_Report-of-the-CST4_English.pdf.

- National statistical systems, including national statistical offices
- National government bodies responsible for social inclusion policies and programmes as key users of population and social statistics
- International, regional, sub-regional and bilateral organizations whose mandate includes supporting improvements in the production, dissemination and user of population and social statistics

7. The size of the Steering Group shall be decided by the Bureau and may be changed as needed to ensure that the Group continues to effectively and efficiently performs its functions.

IV. Selection of members

8. Members of the former Technical Advisory Group on Population and Social Statistics shall be invited to the Steering Group.

9. The Bureau shall, with assistance by the secretariat, issue invitations to ESCAP regional members and associate members as well as to relevant development partners to express interest in joining the Steering Group. The Bureau shall decide on the composition on the basis of the qualifications of nominees, the need for balanced representation, as well as the need for efficient and effective functioning of the Steering Group.

10. The Steering Group members shall be appointed for a period of two years. All members shall be eligible for re-appointments. Upon departure of an appointed member, the remaining Steering Group members shall recommend the most appropriate replacement for consideration and approval by the Bureau.

Members of the Steering Group shall commit to devoting the time necessary for adequate discharge of their duties. Members of the Steering Group will not be considered staff members of the United Nations; hence, will not be entitled to the privileges and immunities accorded to staff members of the United Nations.

V. Functioning

11. It is envisaged that the Steering Group shall review most issues by electronic means.

12. The Steering Group shall decide at its first meeting the periodicity of its gatherings. It shall aim to meet regularly, either in person or per videoconferencing.

13. The Steering Group may decide to invite the participation of experts and/or form sub-groups for specific tasks.

VI. Reporting

14. The Steering Group shall submit a written and, if requested, oral report for the information of the Committee on Statistics on each of its formal sessions on progress in the implementation of the Regional Strategy.

15. The Steering Group shall report on regular basis to the Bureau through the ESCAP secretariat.

VII. Chair

16. One member shall act as the Chair of the Steering Group, who will guide its work. The Chair will serve for a period of two years after which s/he will be eligible for re-appointment.

VIII. Secretariat

17. The Statistics Division of ESCAP will serve as the secretariat and support the Steering Group in carrying out its responsibilities.

IX. Review of the terms of reference

18. The Steering Group shall, in consultation with the secretariat, review its Terms of Reference every two years to ensure that it has the necessary mandates to effectively and efficiently perform its functions. The revisions shall be subject to approval by the Bureau of the Committee on Statistics.

X. Sunset clause

19. The Steering Group shall be in place for the duration of the Regional Strategy to ensure continuity in its implementation.

20. Unless the Committee on Statistics or its Bureau decides otherwise, the Steering Group shall expire at the end of 2030.
