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TERMS OF REFERENCE OF A TASK FORCE ON REPORTING SDG INDICATORS USING NATIONAL REPORTING PLATFORMS

Prepared by the CES Steering Group on Statistics for SDGs

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*This document presents the terms of reference for a Task Force on Reporting SDG indicators using National Reporting Platforms, to be established under the CES Steering Group on statistics for SDGs. **The Bureau discussed and approved the terms of reference for the Task Force.***

I.   BACKGROUND

1.   In September 2015, the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by the UN General Assembly. A core element of this Agenda is the agreement by all UN member countries to achieve 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 associated targets. In March 2016 UNSC endorsed the 230 indicators proposed by its Interagency and Expert Group on SDGs.

2.   Global indicators will provide the framework of monitoring progress towards the SDGs. As recognized in the 2030 Agenda, the achievement of the global goals and provision of data to measure their progress will be country-led. National statistical offices will be responsible, in conjunction with policy leadership and stakeholder engagement, to provide statistics that conform with the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. At the same time, it is recognized that providing these statistics will require collaboration across countries, international organizations, and other partnerships.

3.   In February 2016, the CES Bureau set up a Steering Group on statistics for SDGs (ECE/CES/BUR/2016/FEB/5), with the following objectives: (i) to prepare a road map for developing official statistics for SDGs under CES. The road map will provide a strategy on how to implement a monitoring system for SDGs under CES, and guide the CES members in implementing the Declaration adopted by the Conference in 2015; and (b) to follow up on the implementation of the road map. Its mandate indicates that the Steering Group "may identify concrete tasks or activities to support its work that could be undertaken by groups of experts (Task Forces). In such cases, after having verified the interest by a sufficient number of CES member countries and the availability of resources, the Steering Group will submit proposals to the CES Bureau for review and approval".

4.   Beginning in June 2016, several of the Steering Group's member countries and other CES members have discussed national reporting platforms as a means to report national statistics for the global SDG indicators. It is envisioned that these platforms would promote transparency and access to national statistics, interoperability of data, and efficiency of

information systems. To date, these countries have collaborated informally, sharing expertise and good practices. Given the growing interest of CES member countries and organizations, the present terms of reference aim to propose concrete activities for this collaboration, under the umbrella of a Task Force on National Reporting Platforms.

II.   MANDATE

5.   The work of the proposed Task Force will be conducted within the framework of CES and its Bureau. The Task Force will be created for 2016-2018 to work in two phases. The first phase, to be completed by October 2017, will document key (and/or desirable) features of several national reporting platforms (NRPs) and will consider conditions for developing NRPs. The second phase will consist of assisting other CES countries in replicating best practices identified in the first phase. The activities of the first phase will end by December 2017.

III.   OBJECTIVE

6.   The objective of the Task Force will be to facilitate the country decision about national reporting mechanism regarding SDG indicators, specifically about the development of National Reporting Platforms (NRPs).

7.   For purposes of this Task Force, a "**platform**" refers to an integrated web site, databases, and associated IT infrastructure to gather, host, secure, and display quantitative information and related metadata and documentation on SDG indicators.

IV.   PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

8.   The Task Force will undertake work in **two phases**:

Phase 1:
   (a)   documenting key features across several existing NRPs, including basic web content (e.g., main goals/indicators page, UN SDG documentation, About/News/Events), ways of data gathering, secure data entry/protection procedures (e.g., account creation and log in procedures for data providers), data/metadata verification procedures, software/open source tools, data visualization and download capabilities, and long-term development plans; and
   (b)   providing countries with guidelines when to develop a NRP (set of arguments for and against);

Phase 2: assisting other countries replicating best practices identified in the first phase.

   (a)   Summarizing best practices for (i) **planning and implementing** national reporting platforms for SDGs, including options for platform **development and hosting**; (ii) **statistical and policy review**; identifying and training **data providers** (e.g., national/local agencies; research organizations; NGOs); (iii) **coordinating NRP launch** with relevant national agencies and national/international organizations; and (iv) **maintaining** the platform;
   (b)   Summarizing software/open sources features and tools that can be recommended to interested countries;
   (c)   Documenting data and metadata **templates** used to collate national indicators that support requested global SDG indicators (e.g., data/graphics/metadata labels,

methodology, and related information); clear indication on how global indicators are distinguished from national indicators in NRPs;

(d) Documenting links between NPRs and existing databases;

(e) Describe briefly **SDMX features** for purposes of SDG NRPs

(f) Suggesting best practices for **data and metadata verification**

(g) Describe basic **data visualization and download capabilities**

(h) Suggest features for **long-term development** of NRPs (e.g. analytical capabilities; accessing and collating NRP data from more multiple countries)

(i) Identify arguments for and against the development of NRPs

(j) Define guidelines for examination the usefulness of NRPs.

9.   After the completion of the first phase, the Task Force will prepare a work plan and proposal for the second phase of the work focusing on countries planning or initiating their own SDGs NRPs as well as areas requiring more support to achieve better interoperability across platforms.

V.   TIMETABLE

10.   The activities of the **first phase** are planned for the period from autumn 2016 to October 2017. The **second phase** would be completed by October 2018. The following table shows a tentative timetable.

October- November 2016	**Deliberate and agree** on a work plan with activities, timing and division of work. **Possible structure for distribution of tasks and subsequent summary report**: 1) platform components (web sites; databases; IT infrastructure); 2) platform functionality (gathering, hosting, securing, and displaying quantitative information, metadata, and documentation) 3) consistency with international and national statistical standards (e.g., SDMX; national statistical directives; international statistical manuals)
November 2016	Start **implementing** member-specific tasks
November 2016 - January 2017	Defining **priority intermediate milestones**
May 2017	Prepare **a draft report** documenting key features and best practices across existing SDG NRPs.
June 2017	Present the results achieved to the CES plenary session
October 2017	Report to CES Bureau, develop a work **plan for the second stage** of the work.

VI.   METHODS OF WORK

11.   The Task Force will work primarily via e-mail and telephone/video conferences. Face-to-face meetings may be organized for events attended by a significant number of its members.

12.   The Task Force may take advantage of the wiki infrastructure available at UNECE Statistical Division for carrying out its activities.

VII.   MEMBERSHIP

13.   The following countries and international organisations have expressed interest to be members of Task Force: Poland (chair), Canada, Germany, Mexico, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States. Other countries are welcome to participate.

14.   UNECE will act as Secretariat to the Task Force.

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