



**ARAB CONFERENCE:
TRANSFORMATIVE AGENDA FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS**

5-7 April 2016

Ankara, Turkey

Co-organized by:

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)

Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC)

Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)

Statistical Centre for the Cooperation Council for the Arab Countries of the Gulf (GCC-Stat)

Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics (AITRS)

**BREAK OUT SESSIONS:
MODALITIES AND QUESTIONS**

MODALITIES FOR THE BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Sessions I-IV are organised according to the 5 thematic areas of the Transformative Agenda, identified in the concept note of the regional conferences, as follows:

- For each session, 2 contributors will make a short presentation of 15-20 minutes in plenary on the respective thematic areas. These presentations are focusing on the major challenges, opportunities, issues, priorities and good practices identified at national and (sub-) regional level.
For the preparation of their presentations, the contributors are guided by the questions related to each of the thematic areas hereunder and the concept note. These contributions can also build on the conclusions and recommendations from the [African Conference](#).
- Presentations will be followed by 15 minutes of questions for clarification and answers by the contributors. These discussions will be moderated by a facilitator.
- After the questions and answers for clarification, participants will be split in 4 groups. These groups remain the same for the 4 breakout sessions (see table hereunder).
- For each breakout session, groups will have 50 minutes to discuss a specific set of 2 questions prepared in advance. Each group will nominate a rapporteur to summarize the breakout discussion for further discussion in plenary sessions. The rapporteur can be the same for the 4 breakout sessions or different.
- The rapporteur of each group will have 5-10 minutes to present back in plenary the outcome and conclusions of the discussions in the breakout sessions, followed by 20 minutes of general discussions. Presentations by the rapporteurs and the plenary discussion will be moderated by the same facilitator of each session.
- Participants from bilateral and multilateral partner organisations and other stakeholders may decide in which group they wish to participate.

The Conference will conclude (session V) with the presentation of the outcome and conclusions of sessions I-IV of the conference with contribution of panellists. The first panel will be composed of representatives from four Arab countries and the second one with representatives from the co-organising institutions. The aim of session V is to propose specific programmatic guidance and related actions in support of formulating a regional strategy and roadmap for the implementation of the transformation of national statistical systems in Arab states.

Group 1	Group 2
Egypt Jordan Morocco Saudi Arabia Tunisia	Libya Mauritania Palestine Saudi Arabia Somalia Sudan

QUESTIONS FOR THE BREAKOUT SESSIONS

SESSION I: Coordination at and between the global, (sub-) regional and National Statistical Systems (*Thematic 1*) and Communication and Advocacy (*Thematic 2*)

Group 1 Drivers and Challenges (*Thematic 1 and 2*)

- What are the main drivers of the transformation and modernization of national statistical systems in the Arab countries? Are there specific demands faced by the management of national statistical institutions in Arab countries that require modernizing official statistics?
- How can Arab countries address the challenge of transforming and modernizing the statistical system with due consideration of the implementation of their National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS)?

Group 1 Coordination Mechanisms (*Thematic 1*)

- How could statistical institutions at the global, regional and national level address statistical programming issues in a coordinated and collaborative way to develop operational work plans for the transformation and modernization of statistics?
- How can an efficient coordination mechanism within the national statistical system contribute to the process of modernization of statistics? What kinds of interaction can be established with data providers, national planning and development authorities and other stakeholders to ensure optimal resource allocation for the transformation of official statistics?

Group 2 Partnerships (*Thematic 1*)

- What partnership arrangements could be develop between statistical institutions at global, regional and national level to enable the review and assessment of institutional, organisational and financial frameworks; data assets and gaps; and production processes with the objective to support the transformation of official statistics in Arab countries?
- How can international and regional statistical agencies and development partners assist the national statistical institutions in developing road maps, tools, governance arrangements and other instruments of statistical modernization?

Group 2 Communication and Advocacy (*Thematic 2*)

- What are the characteristics of a successful and modern communication strategy that could convey statistical information to all users, decision makers and stakeholders in a timely and efficient way ensuring the correct and easy interpretation of the disseminated data? What concrete measures need to be implemented in the short and medium term that could efficiently communicate the value of official statistics and generate support?
- What are the key elements and themes to be advanced in the communication and advocacy strategy in Arab countries to promote the transformation and modernization of the national statistics systems?

SESSION II: Integrated statistical systems: data collection, processing and dissemination of integrated statistics (*Thematic 3*)

Group 1 Implementing Integrated Systems of Statistics

- How can the national statistical institutions of Arab countries adapt their institutional arrangements, governance and management mechanism to integrate statistical systems? What are the practices and experience of Arab countries?
- What are the specific characteristics of the road map for achieving integration of the statistical production process that could be adopted in the context of Arab countries? What benefits are expected from implementing integrated systems of statistics? How do integrated statistics contribute to the transformation of official statistics?

Group 1 Statistical Production Process

- What kinds of institutional changes are needed to establish harmonized and common statistical services in all phases of statistical production to realize an integrated national statistical system?
- What could be an adequate approach and mechanism that would ensure better alignment of the delivery of statistical products and services with the demand (i.e. in terms of disaggregation, coverage, timeliness) from the different communities of users, including the public at large?

Group 2 Use of Administrative Data

- What is the current state of development and future possibilities of the use of administrative data for the production of official statistics? What are the primary challenges and major barriers of access to administrative data?
- What initiatives could be taken at the regional and sub-regional level to facilitate standardization and harmonization of administrative data and metadata, transmission protocols and nomenclatures in Arab countries (e.g. metadata registers and catalogues)?

Group 2 Relationship with Data Communities

- What role and responsibilities do national statistical institutions have towards establishing and maintaining partnerships with the data communities, users and other stakeholders to advance the modernisation and integration of official statistics? When it comes to alternative data sources for official statistics what are the specific challenges to Arab countries in terms of the use of big data?
- How could the data communities at regional, sub-regional and country level be mobilised to secure access to administrative information for the production of official statistics and ultimately to promote the open data initiative?

SESSION III: Innovation and Modernisation through Standard-based Statistical Business Architecture (*Thematic 4*)

Group 1 Common Statistical Production Architecture

- What are the challenges in introducing common statistical production architecture to take forward the modernisation of official statistics in Arab countries and how does it depend on the level of maturity of the national statistical systems?
- What are the priorities for revamping methodological guidelines, classifications and standards for business, environmental, demographic and social statistics that could support the modernisation and integration of statistical business architecture? To what extent has geospatial information management been incorporated in the mandates of the national statistical offices?

Group 1 Standard Based Tools and Applications

- To what extent have Arab countries developed standard based tools and applications in their national statistical systems? What directions of future development are envisioned?
- How can the standard-based statistical business architecture enhance the capacity and efficiency of the national statistical institution to quickly adapt to the evolving demand for statistical information?

Group 2 Innovative Technology

- Are there innovative technological tools and advancement in IT applications that are specific to national statistical systems of the Arab countries and could be promoted as good practices at the regional and sub-regional level?
- How does the wide access to the internet, mobile devices and cloud technology motivate investing in new online national data repository and innovative dissemination technologies such as social media or mobile applications? What is the experience of the Arab counties?

Group 2 Technology Transfer

- What kind of coordination/cooperation mechanism would be needed to foster development of standard IT architecture and technologies, and their transfer across the Arab countries?
- How can the transfer of technical skills in modern and innovative data collection, production and dissemination technology and tools be better coordinated at the sub-regional, regional and global level?

SESSION IV : Capacity Building (*thematic 5a*) and Training (*thematic 5b*)

Group 1 Needs for Training and Capacity Building (*Thematic 5a/b*)

- What forms of training and technical capacity building are most relevant and could work best at the different levels of maturity of the statistical system? How could e-learning and other technology driven training programmes be incorporated?
- Is it possible to identify statistical domains for which substantial increase in capacity has been achieved as a result of training and why was such advancement possible? Could this experience be successfully applied to other statistical domains?

Group 1 Skills Development (*Thematic 5b*)

- What are the characteristics of a highly qualified, efficient work force to support the modernization of the statistical system?
- How can national statistical offices motivate their employees to embrace institutional, organizational and technological changes that are necessary for the modernization of official statistics?

Group 2 Technical and Management Training (*Thematic 5b*)

- What are the most pressing technical and management training needs in order to prepare national statistical institutions of Arab countries for the transformation of official statistics?
- Besides developing technical and managerial skills, what culture shifts are required within national statistical offices to implement the transformation, integration and modernization of the statistical production process?

Group 2 Partnership and Cooperation in Capacity Building (*Thematic 5a*)

- How could global, regional, sub-regional and national level cooperation support a demand driven and nationally owned capacity building programme? How would knowledge transfer and cooperation in technical capacity building work among Arab countries? Are there existing good practices to build on?
- What is the role of the Arab statistical training institutions in advancing technical, organisation and management skills?