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## Statistical Commission

### Fifty-fifth session

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Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda\*

### Items for discussion and decision: Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

## Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### *Summary*

The present report, which was prepared in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2023/325 and past practices, details critical developments and initiatives in the context of the thirtieth anniversary of the endorsement by the Statistical Commission of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the tenth anniversary of their approval by the General Assembly. Central to the present report is the establishment of an independent advisory board on the fundamental principles of official statistics (see annex, containing the Board's terms of reference) and the modernization of the implementation guidelines for the Fundamental Principles, a response to evolving challenges in the statistical landscape, presented in annotated outlines as background documents.

The Commission is invited to consider the following points for discussion and decision: (a) to reaffirm its support, expressed at its fifty-fourth session, for the establishment of an independent advisory board; (b) To express its views on and approve the terms of reference of the Independent Advisory Board (see annex); (c) to approve the preparation of two sets of implementation guidelines for distinct audiences and express its views on the annotated outlines contained in the background document; and (d) to entrust the Bureau of the Commission to oversee and follow up on the implementation of the decisions related to the present report.

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\* E/CN.3/2024/1.



## I. Introduction

1. Official statistics are indispensable tools in shaping public policy and governance. They provide critical economic, social and environmental data, guiding nations and international bodies in decision-making. As the backbone of information systems for Governments and the public, official statistics offer insights into demographic trends, the state of the environment, economic conditions and social dynamics, playing a pivotal role in driving sustainable development and maintaining societal peace and security.
2. Official statistics uniquely serve the broader interests of society, distinguishing themselves from data collected for specific administrative, managerial, surveillance, commercial or regulatory purposes. Their critical objective is to provide invaluable insights into the societal, economic and environmental state. This role is vital in informing the society at large, including Governments, businesses, civil society and the public. Official statistics are compiled and disseminated impartially, ensuring unbiased and equitable information access, fundamental to informed decision-making and societal awareness.
3. The need for well-ordered, trustworthy and transparent official statistics led to the development of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. Initially formulated by the Conference of European Statisticians in 1991 and adopted at the ministerial level by the Economic Commission for Europe in 1992, these principles were quickly recognized for their global applicability. The Statistical Commission adopted the Fundamental Principles in 1994 with a revised preamble, marking a crucial step in the evolution of international statistics. This global recognition was further solidified when the General Assembly endorsed the principles in 2014 (resolution [68/261](#)), underlining their importance beyond the strict community of official statisticians.
4. The Fundamental Principles set a standard for integrity, transparency and accountability in collecting data and compiling and disseminating official statistics. They emphasize the need for statistical data to be objective and reliable and produced independently of external interferences. This ensures that official statistics serve society at large, providing unbiased information essential for informed policymaking and public discourse. The Principles also highlight the role of official statistics in fostering mutual understanding among nations and peoples, emphasizing the significance of public trust in these data.
5. In the global effort to monitor and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the Fundamental Principles are more relevant than ever. They provide the professional framework for producing the quantitative evidence needed to assess progress, identify areas requiring specific attention and shape informed policy decisions at the local, national and international levels. The integrity, accuracy, granularity, relevance and timeliness of these statistics are paramount. By upholding the Principles, statistical agencies not only contribute to a detailed understanding of our progress towards the Goals but also highlight the areas where concerted action is needed, guiding international and national efforts towards a sustainable future, leaving no one behind.
6. In 2017, the General Assembly, in resolution [71/313](#) on the work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recalled that all activities of the global statistical system must be conducted in full adherence to the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. In September 2020, the General Assembly, in adopting the omnibus resolution on a comprehensive and coordinated response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) (resolution [74/306](#)), made implicit reference to principles 8, on national coordination, and 10, on international cooperation, by calling for concerted action to further digital governance

and economy, scientific research, emerging technologies and new data sources, emphasizing the need to develop resilient, inclusive and integrated data and statistical systems led by national statistical offices.

## II. Considerations and decisions of the Commission at its fifty-fourth session

7. At its fifty-fourth session, in 2023, the Commission discussed the Fundamental Principles in anticipation of the 2024 anniversaries of their adoption. The Commission welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the Principles (E/CN.3/2023/12). It took note of the proposed activities for the 2024 commemoration outlined in the report, including global and regional workshops and the modernization of the existing implementation guidelines for the Principles. In addition, the Commission considered the proposal of establishing an independent advisory board accountable to the Commission (see E/2023/24-E/CN.3/2023/37, decision 54/111), with a focus on strengthening their implementation and addressing insufficient implementation and non-compliance with the Principles.

8. The Commission acknowledged the vital role of the Friends of the Chair groups in promoting and monitoring the implementation of the Fundamental Principles. These groups, comprising high-level experts, have provided essential guidance on best practices and addressed challenges in implementing the Principles, significantly enhancing the global understanding and application of the Principles. The Commission also noted that the implementation guidelines for the Principles, developed and updated by the successive Friends of the Chair groups, have become extensive and less user-friendly over time. Originally concise, they have expanded to cover specific applications in various contexts, increasing their complexity and making navigation more challenging for users.

9. The Commission acknowledged the ongoing discussion about non-compliance with the Fundamental Principles and recognized the need for global institutional arrangements for monitoring, guiding and addressing non-compliance and thus viewed the proposal to create an independent advisory board as a positive step.

10. Conclusively, at its fifty-fourth session, in the light of the report of the Secretary-General and further considerations, the Commission:

(a) Endorsed the principle of establishing an independent advisory board, accountable to the Commission, to address non-implementation and non-compliance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. The Commission requested that the Board's terms of reference be submitted for final endorsement at its fifty-fifth session, in 2024. The Commission underscored that the terms of reference should be focused on the Board's functions in awareness-raising, communication and promotion of the Principles;

(b) Welcomed the initiative to review and refine the implementation guidelines for the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics for greater clarity and focus and recognized the need for initiating targeted actions within and beyond statistical communities for improved compliance as part of the upcoming 2024 commemoration of the adoption of the Principles;

(c) Emphasized that all activities planned in the context of the 2024 celebration, including discussions of the Board's terms of reference and the refinement of the implementation guidelines, should be inclusive and cater to a broad audience. The Commission requested that these activities, comprising global and regional workshops, consultations and other events, be organized in collaboration with regional commissions, as well as other global, regional and national bodies and

professional associations, to ensure a comprehensive and multifaceted approach to promoting the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, fostering engagement and participation at all levels.

### **III. Consultations paving the road to the 2024 celebration of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics**

#### **A. Events and initiatives by the Statistics Division**

11. As requested by the Commission, throughout 2023, the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs embarked on a significant initiative, to continue in early 2024, to enhance the adoption and implementation of the Fundamental Principles. To facilitate this, the Department engaged a broad spectrum of stakeholders globally through various platforms, including consultations, webinars and interactive workshops. Simultaneously, strategic awareness-raising initiatives were launched to commemorate the anniversaries of the Principles. These initiatives spanned a wide range of activities, including organizing and participating in high-profile international conferences to shed light on the role of the Principles in shaping global statistical practices, and regional seminars and webinars to deepen understanding of the Principles among practitioners and stakeholders.

12. Collaborations with educational institutions such as the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics, the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries and the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific were also strengthened, with a focus on integrating the Fundamental Principles into statistical education and training.

13. The main outcomes and insights from these events through various platforms, including consultations, webinars and interactive workshops, are further elaborated in subsections B and C below. Section B deals with challenges and opportunities in official statistics and section C discusses the role and significance of the Fundamental Principles for national statistical systems in the evolving data ecosystem.

14. At the time of drafting the present report, additional events were in preparation or scheduled, including a high-level webinar, “Advancing official statistics: celebrating milestones and shaping the future of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics”, to be held on 18 January 2024. This webinar is intended to inform participants and discuss the present report and the concrete submission thereof. Also scheduled to be held on the Monday afternoon preceding the opening of the fifty-fifth session of the Commission is a high-level forum on empowering official statistics: upholding the Fundamental Principles to stay relevant.

15. A comprehensive list of main events and consultation rounds contributing to the present report is available as a background document.

#### **B. Challenges and opportunities in official statistics**

16. In the present era of unprecedented technological advancements and diverse data sources, official statistics are at a crucial juncture, facing challenges and embracing transformative opportunities. Adapting to novel data types and rapid technological changes is vital, alongside managing competition from various data communities. This competition highlights the need for official statistics to maintain their distinctiveness, achieved through steadfast adherence to the Fundamental Principles, ensuring reliability, accuracy and impartiality.

17. At the same time, integrating non-traditional data sources, such as administrative records, the Internet of things, mobile telephone data and geospatial information offers significant opportunities. This shift can lead to more efficient data collection, reducing reliance on extensive surveys and censuses and producing richer, more detailed statistical outputs for nuanced policy decisions.

18. Crucially, leveraging these innovative data sources enhances the ability of national statistical offices to monitor progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. With access to more granular, timely data, statistical agencies can better track and report on the diverse range of Goal indicators, providing critical insights into areas of progress and those requiring special attention. Using these innovative data sources becomes invaluable in addressing real-time data needs related to sanitary crises, natural disasters and climate change. In such scenarios, rapid, accurate and detailed data are paramount.

19. As national statistical offices adapt to this changing landscape, they must evolve into trusted centres of excellence in technology and skill development. However, this transition poses significant challenges for the national statistical systems of developing countries, in particular those with limited human and financial resources. These nations may struggle to access the technology and expertise required to leverage these new data sources effectively. In response, collaborative strategies such as resource pooling emerge as vital solutions. Smaller nations, such as small island developing States, could benefit immensely from pooled resources and collective expertise, enabling them to overcome technological and financial barriers. This collaborative approach could not only enhance their statistical capabilities but also support a more equitable representation in the global data ecosystem.

20. The rapid evolution of the data landscape necessitates an enhanced focus on data literacy. As data become more integrated into our daily lives, it is increasingly essential for the public to understand and effectively utilize statistical information. Statistical agencies are thus called upon to develop educational initiatives and outreach programmes to improve data literacy among users, including the general population.

21. The global statistical community can strive towards a more inclusive and comprehensive adaptation to the evolving data landscape by fostering collaboration and support, in particular for resource-constrained nations. This approach will enable all countries to leverage advanced data integration benefits fully, ensuring that official statistics remain a global cornerstone of informed decision-making and governance.

### **C. The Role and expansion of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics in the evolving data ecosystem**

22. The regional consultations and initiatives led by the Statistics Division have underscored the critical role of the Fundamental Principles in guiding the evolution of official statistics amid rapid technological changes and data proliferation. While the Principles are firmly rooted in the realm of official statistics, their applicability to the broader national data ecosystem beyond the national statistical systems was the subject of extensive discussion.

23. It was recognized that, although the Fundamental Principles cannot be directly extended to the entire data ecosystem, they are crucial for guiding national statistical offices in their partnerships and consultations with respondents, data providers and users, especially in integrating non-traditional data sources. As national statistical offices evolve to encompass broader roles in data governance and stewardship, applying the Principles becomes increasingly important. This expanded role involves addressing challenges related to transparency, privacy and ethical data use. Upholding

the Principles enables statistical agencies to navigate the complexities of the modern data landscape effectively. This includes ensuring the ethical use of big data, social media analytics and other emerging data sources while maintaining the public's trust in official statistics. As statistical agencies take on the role of data stewards, their commitment to the Principles helps to foster a culture of integrity, transparency and collaboration across various sectors and data communities.

24. The ongoing commitment to the Fundamental Principles is crucial for statistical agencies to navigate and thrive effectively in the rapidly evolving data ecosystem. Adherence to the Principles reinforces the credibility of official statistics and fosters a culture of ethical data use and collaboration, which is essential for ensuring data integrity and reliability. This approach not only enhances the impact and effectiveness of official statistics but also contributes to informed decision-making processes at the local, regional and international levels. Furthermore, a robust legislative framework and organizational restructuring are necessary to ensure adherence to the Principles and provide national statistical offices with the autonomy and authority needed for innovation and adaptability to meet evolving demands, thereby ensuring that official statistics continue to be a reliable and impactful tool for society.

25. In the light of the considerations regarding challenges and opportunities in official statistics and the role of the Fundamental Principles in promoting and supporting the transformation of national statistical systems, a broad consensus emerged on two key points:

(a) The establishment of an independent advisory board was determined to be essential. This Board, to be founded on the principles of independence and accountability, should have the mandate of guiding, advocating and raising awareness to foster a supportive and collaborative atmosphere while avoiding a too-inquisitorial approach;

(b) There is an urgent need to revitalize the existing implementation guidelines for the Fundamental Principles. Further to that, it was proposed to plan for the creation of not just one but two sets of guidelines. The first set to be developed will serve as a comprehensive toolkit for strategic planning and daily operations of official statistics. Meanwhile, the second set will be aimed at policymakers, with a view to establishing and safeguarding a favourable institutional environment for trusted and high-quality official statistics.

#### **IV. Terms of reference for the Independent Advisory Board on the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics**

26. In 2023, the Commission, at its fifty-fourth session, marked a pivotal moment by directing the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to draft terms of reference for the Independent Advisory Board on the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. This decision reflected the significant commitment of the Commission to enhancing the compliance, relevance and integrity of official statistics globally, acknowledging the indispensable role of the Fundamental Principles in ensuring high-quality, timely and granular statistics crucial for evidence-based decision-making, monitoring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and effective crisis response.

27. In developing the terms of reference, the Department engaged with a wide range of statistical experts and managers across multiple global forums, capturing diverse perspectives and insights. Consultations at global and regional events were extended to include detailed interactions with experts, directors of statistics from United Nations regional commissions and other international organizations and members of

professional associations. The consultation process culminated in focused sessions organized under the auspices of the 2023 International Association for Official Statistics-International Statistical Institute Conference, held in Zambia, on the future of the Fundamental Principles and their applicability in a rapidly evolving technological and data landscape. These discussions, enriched by the collective expertise and experiences of a broad range of participants, were instrumental in shaping the terms of reference. In October 2023, the draft terms of reference were shared with the Bureau of the Commission for comments and suggestions.

28. The terms of reference (see annex) which were presented to the Commission at its fifty-fifth session for approval, reflect the synthesis of these global and regional insights. They contain an outline of the Board's role as a monitoring entity and a proactive body for advocacy, guidance and awareness-raising in official statistics. In the terms of reference, there is an emphasis on the principles of independence and accountability, and the Board is envisaged as fostering a supportive and collaborative environment.

29. The envisaged composition of the Board is both balanced and diverse, comprising former national chief statisticians, senior statisticians and experts from related fields such as law and ethics. This diversity is intended to bring a rich array of perspectives and experiences to the Board's deliberations, enhancing its effectiveness and relevance. The Director of the Statistics Division participates in the Board's meetings and undertakings as an ex officio member.

30. The Board's operational structure is designed for continuing engagement, with regular meetings conducted preferably remotely, with the option of holding them in person, back-to-back with major statistical events. These meetings are set to address emerging statistical issues, review compliance with the Fundamental Principles and decide on necessary actions. In its initial phase, the Statistics Division will provide the Board with ad hoc operational support, as well as promote sustainable financial mechanisms for the Board's long-term activities.

31. The Board's accountability structure involves submitting an annual report to the Commission outlining its activities, findings recommendations and actions. The report, to be made public, is a critical element in ensuring transparency and knowledge-sharing, contributing significantly to the global efforts to strengthen the implementation of the Fundamental Principles. In its oversight role, the Commission will review the Board's performance and effectiveness, supporting its impact on national and regional compliance with the Principles. This oversight is crucial for maintaining the momentum in enhancing the application of the Principles across Member States.

32. The establishment of the Independent Advisory Board on the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, anticipated for final approval at the fifty-fifth session of the Commission, marks a significant advancement in the governance of official statistics. This Board is set to become a beacon of guidance and advocacy in the statistical community, focusing on strategic support and global awareness of the Principles. Its diverse composition and broad mandate underscore the importance of maintaining statistical integrity and fostering a culture of excellence and ethical practice in official statistics worldwide.

33. The initial list of proposed Board members is submitted to the Commission for information in a background document. In this context, the Commission is invited to entrust its Bureau to oversee and follow up on the implementation of all decisions related to the present report, as stated under section VI, Action to be taken by the Statistical Commission. To expedite the establishment of the Board and initiate its activities without delay, the Bureau will then decide on the endorsement of the

proposed Board members in the first year. In 2025, the Commission will be asked to confirm the endorsement of the Board.

## V. Implementation guidelines for the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

34. In response to the request of the Commission at its fifty-fourth session, in 2023, the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs embarked on a comprehensive initiative to modernize the implementation guidelines for the Fundamental Principles. This endeavour, influenced by extensive global and regional consultations, workshops and strategic initiatives, led to the conceptualization of two distinct sets of guidelines, each tailored to the unique needs of different audiences within and outside national statistical systems:

(a) The first set, designed for statisticians and practitioners, will provide actionable advice and practical tools, focused on applying the Fundamental Principles at the strategic, managerial and operational levels. This set is aimed at addressing the modern challenges within the data ecosystem, instilling trust in official statistics and ensuring the delivery of fit-for-purpose statistics. A structured approach to statistical processes will be pursued with internationally endorsed frameworks such as the Generic Statistical Business Process Model and the Generic Activity Model for Statistical Organizations;

(b) The second set, crafted for policymakers and stakeholders, will contain an emphasis on the importance of supporting and advocating for the Fundamental Principles. It is aimed at fostering an institutional environment, including regulatory frameworks, conducive to transparency, accountability and informed decision-making, enhancing the understanding of these groups in the principles of official statistics within their domains.

35. Building upon the outcome of the extensive global and regional consultations, workshops and strategic initiatives, the proposed annotated outlines are a synthesis of existing materials. These include the current implementation guidelines, regional codes of good practices, the national quality assurance frameworks and scholarly articles from statistical associations. This comprehensive approach ensures that the annotated outlines, available as background documents, will constitute the foundation upon which the final guidelines are built, crafted through extensive consultations and feedback at both the global and regional levels. Both sets – one serving as a comprehensive toolkit for strategic planning and daily operations of official statistics and the other aimed at policymakers to develop and safeguard a favourable institutional environment for trusted and high-quality official statistics – are scheduled for submission to the Commission at its fifty-sixth session, in 2025. This process guarantees that the resulting guidelines are cohesive and relevant and serve as a practical guide for the official statistics community and its main stakeholders.

36. These guidelines, once established, will be regularly updated under the guidance of the Independent Advisory Board to ensure that they remain relevant amid the evolving challenges of the modern data ecosystem. This proactive and continuing initiative to revise the implementation guidelines for the Fundamental Principles demonstrates a commitment to maintaining the relevance and effectiveness of the Principles. Such a dedicated approach is crucial in shaping the future of official statistics worldwide, ensuring that they continue to serve as a reliable foundation for evidence-based decision-making and policy formulation.



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## **VI. Action to be taken by the Statistical Commission**

**37. The Statistical Commission is invited:**

**(a) To reaffirm its support, expressed at the fifty-fourth session, for the establishment of an Independent Advisory Board on the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics;**

**(b) To express its views on and approve the terms of reference of the Independent Advisory Board (see annex);**

**(c) To approve the preparation of two sets of implementation guidelines for distinct audiences and express its views on the annotated outlines contained in the background document;**

**(d) To entrust the Bureau of the Commission to oversee and follow up on the implementation of the decisions related to the present report.**

## Annex

### **Independent Advisory Board on the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics**

#### **Proposed terms of reference**

##### **1. Overview**

The Independent Advisory Board on the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (the Board) is an impartial entity committed to promoting, enhancing and safeguarding implementation and compliance with the Fundamental Principles. The Board is mandated to raise awareness among stakeholders and identify, address and respond to incomplete implementation and possible infringements of the Fundamental Principles. The Board advises national authorities, including statistical authorities, the Statistical Commission (the Commission) and the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

##### **2. Key responsibilities**

(a) **Awareness-raising and advocacy.** The Board shall seek to raise awareness about the Fundamental Principles among relevant stakeholders and advocate for their consistent implementation. This includes proposing awareness campaigns, webinars and dialogue sessions with national statistical offices, policymakers, data users and other key stakeholders, as well as advising Member States on measures and initiatives to enhance or rebuild trust in official statistics;

(b) **Supporting compliance.** The Board shall identify and promote best practices to improve and support compliance with the Fundamental Principles. This includes aiding countries in integrating the Principles into national legislation and statistical procedures and fostering a culture of compliance with the Principles. The Board shall periodically review and update these best practices;

(c) **Identification of non-compliance.** The Board, in collaboration with the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, shall develop a working framework, including mechanisms to monitor and identify possible or actual non-compliance with the Fundamental Principles. This includes establishing facilities to receive and assess reports of possible non-compliance and incomplete implementation and conducting due diligence when necessary. The Board shall determine the frequency of reviewing and adjusting these mechanisms;

(d) **Addressing cases of non-compliance.** Upon identification of severe non-compliance with the Fundamental Principles, the Board shall propose appropriate corrective actions to the relevant national authorities, considering the nature and extent of each case. This may include guiding changes to statistical legislation and statistical practices, offering technical assistance for capacity-building or bringing the issue to the attention of relevant national authorities;

(e) **Updating implementation guidelines.** The Board, jointly with the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, shall ensure that the implementation guidelines for the Fundamental Principles are regularly updated to reflect the recommendations of the Board;

(f) **Reporting and communication.** The Board shall regularly communicate its activities, findings and recommendations to the Commission. The Board shall actively engage in dialogue with relevant national and regional stakeholders to foster a collaborative approach to implementing and upholding the Fundamental Principles.

### **3. Composition**

The Board shall be composed of a diverse group of members, each possessing a deep understanding of official statistics and the value of the Fundamental Principles, consisting of former national chief statisticians and former senior statisticians at both the national and international levels, as well as individuals with significant expertise in official statistics, law, professional ethics and related fields. The Director of the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs shall serve as an ex officio member of the Board. The selection of Board members shall take account of geographical and gender balance. Board members shall uphold the principles of professional independence and act consistently to promote and safeguard the Principles.

### **4. Appointment of Board members and term of service**

Members of the Board are appointed by the Commission, upon the proposal of its Bureau, for a term of four years, with the possibility of a single renewal. The Board shall not exceed 15 members, including the ex officio member. Should Board members resign, their positions shall be filled subsequently at the following Commission session. Board members shall elect a Chair from among themselves for a two-year term. The position of the Chair is not consecutively renewable, and an ex officio member shall not serve in this capacity. The Chair shall preside over the Board's meetings and represent the Board in external communications and liaisons.

### **5. Conflict of interest**

Upon recognizing a potential conflict of interest related to an issue under the Board's consideration, Board members must declare their interest at the outset of such deliberations and recuse themselves from the pertinent discussion. Any such declaration shall be formally documented in the minutes of the Board and appropriately reflected in the annual reports to the Commission.

### **6. Resources and operational support**

The Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs will serve as the secretariat for the Board, supporting its activities and facilitating its operations by providing necessary human and financial resources upon the Board's request and as resources permit. The Board and the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs shall work collaboratively on establishing sustainable financial mechanisms to support the Board's mandate and activities.

### **7. Consultation and interaction with global and regional United Nations and non-United Nations organizations and professional associations**

The Board shall actively collaborate with the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Regional Commissions and United Nations resident coordinator offices to assess the implementation of the Fundamental Principles in their respective regions and countries. Furthermore, the Board is encouraged to engage in consultations and interactions with other global and regional United Nations and non-United Nations organizations active in the realm of data and statistics, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, as well as professional associations specializing in official statistics, such as the International Statistical Institute and the International Association for Official Statistics. This engagement shall foster global cooperation and alignment with international best practices, where applicable, in compliance with the principle of subsidiarity.

### **8. Meetings**

The Board shall regularly hold meetings to discuss emerging issues, review possible infringements of the Fundamental Principles and decide its actions. These meetings

should primarily be conducted remotely, utilizing virtual platforms and teleconferencing to ensure the efficient and cost-effective participation of Board members worldwide. The Board shall determine the frequency of meetings.

**9. Confidentiality**

Given the sensitive nature of its work, the Board shall strictly uphold confidentiality with respect to private sources of information on possible non-compliance and breaches of the Fundamental Principles. All investigations and deliberations shall be conducted with discretion, respecting the rights and privacy of all parties involved.

**10. Independence and accountability**

While the Board operates independently, it is accountable to the Commission. It shall maintain transparency in its operations and decision-making processes, in the interest of upholding the Fundamental Principles.

**11. Decision-making**

The Board shall operate collegially and endeavour to reach decisions by consensus among its members. In cases where unanimity cannot be achieved after a good-faith effort to find an agreement, a decision may be made by a qualified majority of two thirds of the members. The ex officio member does not have the right to vote on Board decisions. The annual reports provided by the Board to the Commission shall indicate which decisions were made by a qualified majority.

**12. Annual report and recommendations**

The Board shall provide the Commission with a concise annual report of its activities. The report shall include an overview of the Board's activities, significant findings and recommendations for further actions. The Board may propose measures to be implemented by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations regional commissions, United Nations resident coordinator offices and other stakeholders, to ensure adherence to the Fundamental Principles. The annual reports shall be made public on the Commission website.

**13. Member State engagement and right to reply**

Statistical authorities of Member States shall be promptly informed and consulted when a review by the Board is initiated regarding their countries. They shall receive the Board's annual report one month before its dissemination on the Commission website and are entitled to provide a reply within two weeks to comment on findings and recommendations directed at their respective national statistical systems. These replies shall be considered an integral part of the annual report of the Board to the Commission and shall be made public concurrently.

**14. Review of the Board**

The Commission shall be responsible for reviewing the performance and effectiveness of the Board. The first review will take place two years after the establishment of the Board, and subsequent reviews will be conducted every fourth year. This shall include an assessment of the Board's impact on the observance and implementation of the Fundamental Principles, as well as its actions of advocating for these principles and addressing non-compliance. The review process shall help identify areas for improvement and guide the future direction of the Board's activities, including revising its terms of reference.