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## Statistical Commission

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**Items for discussion and decision: governance,  
peace and security statistics**

## Report of the Praia Group on Governance Statistics

### Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2021/224 and past practices, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the Statistical Commission the report of the Praia Group on Governance Statistics. In its report, the Group provides a summary of its recent activities and of the future direction of the work. The Commission is invited to endorse the Group's 2020–2025 workplan and the three pillars on which the workplan rests – methodological work, capacity development and advocacy – and to express its views on the plan of work of the Group's task teams, including the task team on non-discrimination and equality and the task team on participation in political and public affairs, both of which were formed in 2021.

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\* [E/CN.3/2022/1](#).



## Report of the Praia Group on Governance Statistics

### I. Background

1. The report on governance, peace and security statistics ([E/CN.3/2015/17](#)), submitted to the Statistical Commission at its forty-sixth session, contained a proposal to establish the Praia Group on Governance Statistics. At that session, the Commission endorsed the creation of the Group (see [E/2015/24](#), decision 46/111). The Group has subsequently submitted reports to the Commission at its forty-seventh (2016), forty-ninth (2018) and fifty-first (2020) sessions. The present report is for submission to the Commission at its fifty-third session, to be held in 2022.

2. At its forty-seventh session, the Commission (see [E/2016/24-E/CN.3/2016/34](#)) expressed its appreciation to the Praia Group for its report ([E/CN.3/2016/16](#)). In that report, the Praia Group set out its 2016–2020 road map, including priority activities and rough deadlines for the development of a handbook on governance statistics for national statistical offices, which was the longer-term task of the Group in its first term. The Commission welcomed and expressed its support for the proposed road map. At its forty-ninth session (see [E/2018/24-E/CN.3/2018/37](#)), the Commission took note of the report of the Praia Group ([E/CN.3/2018/34](#)). In that report, the Praia Group described the progress in the implementation of the activities in the 2016–2020 road map and the actions taken to develop the handbook on governance statistics.

3. At its fifty-first session (see [E/2020/24-E/CN.3/2020/37](#)), the Commission endorsed the handbook on governance statistics, to be used by Member States as practical guidance in the compilation and dissemination of governance statistics, recognizing that the handbook encouraged the monitoring and implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 16. The Commission supported the continuation of the Praia Group and its work under the proposed revised terms of reference, while requesting that the Group further develop conceptualization of governance statistics, further improve methodology and standardization, add practical experiences, including experience in Africa, review the use of administrative data and develop a strategy for capacity development in that statistical area.

4. In the present report, the Praia Group outlines the future direction of the work it is to undertake and provides a summary of its recent activities, including the publication of a guidance note on governance statistics in the era of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) (2020), the creation of two task teams in 2021, one on the measurement of non-discrimination and equality and one on participation in political and public affairs, and the contribution of the Praia Group to the development of Sustainable Development Goal 16 survey led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Finally, the Group sets out the activities it intends to undertake in its second term.

### II. 2020–2025 workplan

5. The Praia Group has based the new plan of work for its second term (2020–2025) on the results of an extensive consultation of its members and of leading actors in the field of governance statistics. In total, 24 organizations were consulted, including national statistical offices, research organizations, United Nations system agencies, international organizations, regional organizations and other relevant working groups under the Commission. Preliminary findings were presented at the third meeting of the Praia Group, held online on 11 November 2020 and attended by 97 participants, including national statistical offices from all regions, government

agencies, international and regional organizations, research institutes, civil society organizations and independent experts. The feedback that participants gave at the meeting informed the workplan, as did the results of a short survey that they completed.

6. In line with the request made by the Commission at its fifty-first session and consistent with the demand expressed by members and other stakeholders during the consultation, the aims pursued with the new workplan are to further improve methodologies and standardization and to support national statistical offices around the world in implementing those methodologies. The workplan rests on has three pillars: methodological work (first pillar), capacity development (second pillar) and community-building (third pillar).

7. Under the first pillar of its workplan (methodological work), the Praia Group proposes to build on the recommendations made in the handbook to further develop international statistical guidance, standards and instruments for measuring eight dimensions of governance – non-discrimination and equality, participation, openness, access to and quality of justice, responsiveness, absence of corruption, trust, and safety and security – in particular with regard to dimensions for which methodologies are less developed. While the handbook was intended to contribute to the development of international guidelines, recommendations and standards on governance statistics, its purpose was not to promulgate them. As was recognized at the time methodological development is a more substantial endeavour that requires extensive testing and in-depth examination of the validity and reliability of proposed standardized methodologies across time and space, and as such requires a longer time frame (see [E/CN.3/2020/19](#)).

8. During its second term, the Praia Group envisions launching a consultation of experts in that regard. In its new plan of work, the Group proposes to establish dimension-specific task teams to carry out that methodological work. Each task team will be co-chaired by national statistical offices and will be supported by international organizations with relevant expertise in the thematic area. Task team members will include national statistical offices and other national data producers, as well as data experts from international and regional organizations, civil society organizations, academia and research institutions active in the field of governance statistics.

9. More specifically, each dimension-specific task team will be asked to develop two products, namely:

(a) A short survey module for the dimension of interest that national statistical offices could readily attach to a suitable household or population survey, and that could serve as a basis for producing globally comparable statistics on that dimension;

(b) A guidance document on the collection of administrative data for the production of statistics on the dimension of interest with recommendations on quality assurance, data recording, linking with other sources, calculating indicators and the like.

10. Overall, it is envisioned that task teams will be constituted for 18 months, during which they meet virtually five times. The Praia Group aims to submit to the Commission a compilation of dimension-specific harmonized survey modules and guidance documents on the collection of administrative data for the production of statistics on specific dimensions of governance at its fifty-sixth session, in 2025.

11. Under the second pillar of its workplan (capacity development), the Praia Group aims to strengthen the capacities of national statistical offices, relevant ministries and relevant agencies to produce robust governance statistics by means of:

(a) A series of dimension-specific webinars to discuss the key recommendations made in the handbook and to learn from the experience of those national statistical offices that are already producing statistics on various dimensions of governance;

(b) A repository of resources related to governance statistics categorized by, among other things, dimension of governance, language and type of resource; the aim is to make national, regional and international resources more readily available and easy to find;

(c) Support for national statistical offices volunteering to pilot prototypes of survey questionnaires to be developed by task teams and for administrative data producers contributing to the development of guidance on the use of administrative data in producing statistics on various dimensions of governance;

(d) Peer learning among the countries and other stakeholders that are members of each task team by letting them share experiences.

12. Under the third pillar of its workplan (advocacy), the Praia Group envisions increasing the demand for governance statistics among policymakers at all levels and to help to mobilize national in international resources for their production by showcasing their value for policymaking. In its plan of work, the Group identifies two main activities to that end:

(a) Compiling stories that illustrate how governance statistics are being used in countries with experience in producing them, by various actors across a diversity of contexts, and how those statistics affect those countries' national policymaking, so as to address common concerns related to their production and dissemination;

(b) Building a strong community of producers and users of governance statistics by issuing a regular newsletter to keep members and other interested stakeholders informed of newly released methodological instruments or guidance that can be used at the country level, relevant activities undertaken by peers and other new developments in the field of governance statistics. The newsletter will help to enhance the Group's visibility and its engagement with the broader community of governance data stakeholders.

### **III. Recent activities**

#### **A. Guidance note on governance statistics in the era of the coronavirus disease**

13. In 2020, under the overall coordination of the Praia Group, the co-authors of the handbook have produced a guidance note on governance statistics in the era of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in a collaborative effort, with additional input from a range of national statistical offices with diverse backgrounds, including Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Egypt, Hungary, Mauritius, Mexico, Spain and Turkey, as well as Eurostat.

14. Published only six months after the start of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the guidance note was a rapid response from the Praia Group to early indications that the pandemic was, in part, a governance crisis with devastating spillover effects around the world. For example, civil unrest erupted in reaction to the stark inequalities laid bare by the crisis, gender-based and domestic violence spiked during the lockdowns, and trust in government declined as many considered the use of emergency powers to be a form of overreach and saw security responses as heavy-handed. Policymakers looking for ways to apply the principles of equality, accountability and participation

to their COVID-19 response needed timely and sound data to know how well they were succeeding in doing so, and the Praia Group quickly mobilized a drafting team to assist national statistical offices and other governance data producers in meeting that demand at such a critical time.

15. The guidance note builds on the main recommendations made in the handbook on governance statistics for eight dimensions of governance. This time, however, those dimensions are examined from the perspective of COVID-19 and key recommendations are distilled accordingly. The measurement guidance compiled in the form of briefs is applicable not only to the current pandemic but also to other multidimensional crises that may arise in the future and that will require a similarly robust governance response.

16. First and foremost, the aim of the guidance note is to assist national statistical offices and other governance data producers in meeting the governance information needs most likely to arise during the pandemic or in similar crises, while keeping in mind the operational and financial constraints placed on traditional field-based operations. It contains practical measurement advice and some recommended indicators – including relevant indicators for Sustainable Development Goal 16. In addition, users of governance statistics, notably national policymakers, media, researchers, national oversight institutions and civil society groups, can use the guidance note to demand more governance statistics and to hold Governments to account for their response plans and recovery strategies at a time when many normal oversight and accountability processes can be severely disrupted.

17. Each thematic brief in the guidance note – one for each of the eight dimensions of governance covered in the handbook – is intentionally selective and focused on likely priority needs for governance data that national actors in a crisis setting such as COVID-19 may have. Practical measurement guidance is provided to assist in generating the information needed to respond to such needs, including from readily available national, regional or international data sources that could be considered when time is of the essence and options to collect new data at country level are limited. Each brief opens with illustrative priority policy questions and closes with several recommended indicators for those questions.

18. The guidance note was presented at the eleventh meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, held from 3 to 5 November 2020, at the third meeting of the Praia Group and at a side event to the Commission's fifty-second session, hosted by the Group on 23 February 2021. It is available in English, French and Spanish.

## **B. Establishment of the first two task teams on specific dimensions of governance**

19. In November 2021, the Praia Group launched two task teams under the first pillar of its new plan of work, one on participation in political and public affairs and one on non-discrimination and equality. These two dimensions were prioritized because statistical methodologies for them were less advanced than others and because a survey conducted by the Group's secretariat in May 2021 had shown that members of the Group had a strong interest in joining task teams on them.

20. The task team on participation in political and public affairs is co-chaired by the national statistical offices of Norway and Tunisia and supported by UNDP and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). It was launched on 17 November 2021 at a virtual meeting attended by more than 50 representatives of statistical offices in all regions, international and

regional organizations, civil society organizations and research organizations. Its members include 31 national statistical offices, as well as several international organizations and research institutions.

21. Ongoing efforts by Governments across the world to enhance the inclusiveness and responsiveness of public decision-making make it increasingly important to produce high-quality, comparable statistics on participation in political and public affairs. Subdimensions that are of interest to the task team include the following: participation in electoral processes and referendums, and other forms of participation in political and civic life, such as membership in political parties and other organizations whose aim is to influence the conduct of political and public affairs, and participation – online and offline – in campaign activities, rallies, demonstrations and protests; representation in political office, in judicial bodies, in the public service and in informal local governance bodies; and the enabling environment in which participation takes place, which is determined by, among other factors, the degree of safety experienced by candidates standing for election or by holders of political or public office, the perceived levels of freedom of expression and association, and the level of stereotyping attitudes and values affecting the participation of certain population groups in political and public affairs.

22. The task team on non-discrimination and equality, for its part, is co-chaired by the national statistical offices of Finland and Peru and is supported by UNDP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). It held its first meeting on 24 November 2021, which was attended by more than 70 representatives. Members of this team include 43 national statistical offices and several international organizations and research institutions.

23. When they adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Heads of State and Government made a strong commitment to eliminate discriminatory laws, policies and practices and all forms of discrimination, and committed to the principle of leaving no one behind. Yet the lack of sound statistics on discrimination limits our understanding of the extent to which discrimination affects everyday life and the best ways to tackle it. Subdimensions of interest to the task team include experiences and observations of discrimination across areas of life and across prohibited grounds, for discrimination as set out in international human rights standards, the prevalence of hate crimes and hate speech, public reporting on and sentencing for discrimination and hate crimes, public attitudes towards minority groups and the effectiveness of national efforts to promote non-discrimination and equality.

24. At each task team's meeting, members were informed of the objectives and the two methodological products to be developed, namely a short survey module and a guidance document on the collection of administrative data for the production of statistics on participation and on discrimination. More specifically, members welcomed the proposed approach of developing both a short and a long form of the harmonized survey questionnaire. As envisioned, each core survey module will consist of several recommended core questions to be asked periodically as part of larger surveys to enable regular monitoring of key indicators at minimal cost. In addition, a more comprehensive questionnaire is planned that will cover a broader range of aspects of each dimension and could be implemented by interested statistical offices as a specialized survey.

25. The members agreed with the proposal to develop guidance on the use of administrative data for producing statistics on participation and on discrimination, which will consist of two sets of recommendations. The first will be focused on cross-cutting issues common to all data sources relevant to the dimension in question, such as challenges related to institutional coordination, or fostering collaboration and trust between statistical offices and relevant data producers. The second set of

recommendations will concern issues specific to individual data sources or to particular measurement areas under that dimension.

26. Finally, the members discussed a preliminary conceptual and measurement framework to guide the methodological work to be undertaken for each dimension. Members were requested to provide feedback and suggestions that the Co-Chairs of each task team could subsequently integrate into their team's workplan. The focus of the coming meetings of each task teams will be on the sharing of national experiences with regard to specific subdimensions of interest, and on the review of the global mapping of relevant international, regional and national survey sources and survey questions to be used as a starting point for the design of harmonized survey modules.

### **C. Contribution made by the Praia Group to the survey on Sustainable Development Goal 16**

27. As mentioned in its report to the Commission at its fifty-first session (E/CN.3/2020/19), in 2019, the Praia Group started to contribute to an initiative coordinated by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), UNDP and OHCHR, to support all Member States in reporting on the survey-based global indicators for Sustainable Development Goal 16. The overall objective of survey initiative regarding Goal 16 was to develop and test a quality tool that would enable the production of nationally representative and internationally comparable statistics for monitoring progress on Goal 16. Specifically, the aim was to develop a survey module that could be included by national statistical offices in ongoing household surveys for regular reporting on survey-based indicators for Goal 16.

28. The Goal 16 survey questionnaire consists of six modules on dimensions and subdimensions of governance that are central to the work of the Praia Group and that are well-covered in its handbook on governance statistics: access to justice, discrimination, corruption, governance, trafficking in persons and violence. The questionnaire has gone through several rounds of testing, including quality assessment by experts, cognitive testing and pilot testing in eight countries across regions and development contexts whose experiences have contributed to refining the instrument. In 2020 and 2021, three national statistical offices that are members of the Praia Group – those of Cabo Verde, Kenya and Tunisia – contributed to the initiative by conducting a cognitive test of the questionnaire and by piloting the survey in their national settings.

29. The survey questionnaire has now been finalized and has been submitted to the Commission at its fifty-third session in the report by UNODC and the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico (INEGI) on crime and criminal justice statistics. The Praia Group recognizes that the survey provides a high-quality, well-tested tool that countries can use to measure progress on many of the survey-based indicators for Goal 16, and encourages national statistical offices to use it. The Praia Group will continue to promote the use of the survey by raising awareness of it among its membership and by considering the methodology used as part of the methodological work undertaken by its task teams.

## **IV. Future activities of the Praia Group**

30. In 2022, the Praia Group will continue the seminal methodological work initiated by the two recently formed task teams on, respectively, participation in political and public affairs, and non-discrimination and equality. In view of the high interest those first two task teams have generated, the Group will explore opportunities to create further task teams on other dimensions of governance for

which internationally recognized statistical methodologies are not yet available, as outlined under the first pillar of the Group's workplan.

31. Now that the members have drawn up and adopted a new plan of work for the Group's second term, it is critical that the Group mobilize sufficient resources to effectively implement the three pillars on which it rests. Financial, technical and other in-kind resources are required, notably to support the piloting, at the country level, of the new methodological instruments to be developed by task teams, to strengthen the capacities of national statistical offices to use those instruments, and to expand advocacy activities and community-building among members of the Group and, beyond, with the broader community of governance data stakeholders. The effective implementation of the Group's new plan of work hinges on the success of that resource mobilization effort.

32. UNDP, which was appointed in 2015 by the Commission as the supporting United Nations agency responsible for providing technical and financial support to the Praia Group, continues to provide close support to the Group's secretariat. In 2020, UNDP supported the strategic planning exercise that led to the adoption of a new plan of work by Praia Group members, and served as the lead editor of the guidance note on governance statistics in the COVID-19 era. In 2021, UNDP worked closely with the Group's secretariat in coordinating the launch of the task team on participation and the task team on discrimination. UNDP remains committed to supporting the Praia Group into its second term, in close collaboration with other members of the Group's steering committee.

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

33. **The Commission is invited:**

(a) **To acknowledge and support the work of the Praia Group on Governance Statistics delivered thus far;**

(b) **To support the workplan of the Praia Group for the period 2020–2025 and its three pillars: methodological work, capacity development and advocacy;**

(c) **To express its views on the plan of work of the Praia Group task teams, including the task teams on non-discrimination and equality, and on participation in political and public affairs, both of which were formed in 2021.**