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Item 3 (h) of the provisional agenda

Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission, including the work of the ESCAP regional institutions: Statistics

Report of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on its seventh session

Summary

At its seventh session, the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific reviewed the implementation of the work plan of the Institute since its sixth session, as well as the administrative and financial status of the Institute in 2011. The Council endorsed the proposed work plan of the Institute for the academic year 2012.

The Council made several recommendations regarding the long-term financial viability of the Institute and the relevance of its training content as well as the modalities that should be adopted in the implementation of its work programme in the future.

The Council identified a number of innovative options for addressing the challenges faced by the Institute that were supported with inputs from member States as well as from observers attending the session.

To ensure the financial sustainability of the Institute, the Council decided to assume a leadership role and to take action proactively for the purpose of increasing cash and in kind contributions.

The Council expressed gratitude to the host Government, Japan, for its generous financial and institutional support. In addition, the Council acknowledged with appreciation the members and associate members that had made cash contributions, through which they had demonstrated a sense of ownership over the Institute's activities.

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I. Matters calling for action by the Commission or brought to its attention

A. Recommendations

1. Matters arising from the sixth session of the Governing Council

1. Considering the diversity of statistical capacity and, hence, of training needs in the Asia-Pacific region, the Governing Council recommends that the major gaps in the national statistical systems (NSSs) of developing members be mapped. This would enable SIAP to provide more relevant and targeted responses to the needs of members.

2. The Council suggests that SIAP expand its training activities to meet the needs of senior-level statisticians with regard to addressing emerging issues and issues related to leadership and advocacy. It recommends that SIAP consider more fully the training needs of NSS institutions beyond NSOs.

3. The Council commends the actions taken by SIAP towards increasing financial support, addressing the training needs of NSSs, enhancing partnership collaboration with United Nations agencies and

international organizations, and implementing the recommendations contained in the report on the evaluation of SIAP in 2010.¹

2. Implementation of the work plan of SIAP for 2011

4. The Governing Council recommends increasing subregional, country and short-term Tokyo Metropolitan Area (TMA)-based courses, pursuing a more decentralized approach for increased cost-effectiveness and relevance.

5. Noting that the Statistics Division of ESCAP delivers advisory services to members, the Council holds the view that these services should be increasingly utilized to meet country training needs.

6. The Council recommends the continued strengthening of partnership collaboration with training and academic institutions in the region and with United Nations agencies and international organizations; the subregional offices of ESCAP should also be considered for delivery of SIAP training.

7. The Council welcomes the proposal of SIAP to conduct the next training needs survey in 2012 in order to prepare the work plan of the Institute for the next three-year cycle commencing in the academic year 2013.

3. Strengthening the financial viability of SIAP

8. Recognizing the financial challenge that the Institute has been facing – experiencing a significant shortfall in income over expenditure mainly due to the substantial increase in staff costs as a result of continuous currency fluctuations – the Governing Council, having considered the strategy proposed by SIAP for balancing income and expenditure, endorses the following:

(a) Reduction of expenditure through the following:

(i) The reduction of staff costs by temporarily freezing three posts: two P-3 Lecturer/Statisticians beginning in January 2012, and one G-5 Staff Assistant beginning 1 May 2013. The Council advises SIAP to maintain the level of service provided to member States, among other things, by exploring the delivery of training using innovative modalities, by partnering with other training institutions, such as the University of the South Pacific, and by exploiting teaching resources available outside SIAP;

(ii) The continuation of cost-reducing measures that have been in practice since 2008, which include using economy class air travel for all missions, using excursion air tickets with fixed departure/return dates if possible, shortening the duration of, and assigning less staff to, field study trips of TMA-based courses and reducing telephone costs by utilizing email communications.

(b) Increasing cash and in kind contributions through:

(iii) Institutional strengthening for resource mobilization:

¹ E/ESCAP/66/19/Add.1.

- a. The Council assumes a leadership role and takes proactive actions aimed at increasing cash and in kind contributions;
 - b. ESCAP promotes and seeks resources for SIAP;
- (iv) Ensuring continued cash and in kind contributions from the host Government;
- (v) Revising modalities for cash and in kind contributions from States members of ESCAP through:
- a. Re-establishing a minimum cash contribution of \$5,000.00 per annum;
 - b. Introducing a mandatory, incremental increase in cash contributions of 5 per cent or more per annum;
 - c. Increasing cash contributions substantially, possibly doubling contributions by member States;
 - d. Increasing in kind contributions from member States for short-term TMA-based courses and the outreach programme of SIAP;
- (vi) Increasing efforts to mobilize special funds from United Nations agencies and international organizations;
- (vii) Increasing efforts to attract resource personnel from the host Government, other member States, United Nations agencies and international organizations in order to complement SIAP staff;
- (viii) Seeking cash contributions from the private sector and civil society;
- (ix) Focusing training programmes to better exploit the distinct advantages of SIAP through:
- a. *High demand for the Institute's training.* Member States have consistently emphasized the importance of SIAP activities, requesting that it intensify its efforts to build statistical capacity in Asia and the Pacific at the annual sessions of ESCAP and the United Nations Statistical Commission;
 - b. Recognition of the SIAP "brand". The Institute has trained several generations of official statisticians in the developing countries of Asia and the Pacific during the four decades of its existence;²
 - c. Strong support from the host Government. The continuing support of the Government of Japan for SIAP has been providing stability and momentum to the training capabilities of NSOs in Asia and the Pacific since 1970;
 - d. Strong support from other member States;
 - e. Highly qualified and dedicated staff members at SIAP;

² "The levels to which many of them have risen in their countries and internationally attest to the quality of the SIAP training they received." (Report on the evaluation of SIAP (E/ESCAP/66/19/Add.1), sect. 11.

f. Strong partnerships and collaboration with other agencies of the United Nations and other international organizations.

4. Other matters

9. The Council decides to meet informally in New York in February 2012 to review the financial situation and discuss possible strategies to ensure the financial viability of the Institute. The Council agrees that no documentation specially prepared by the secretariat is needed for that meeting.

10. The Council decides that its eighth session will be held back-to-back with the third session of the Committee on Statistics, which is scheduled to be held in Bangkok in December 2012.

5. Work plan of SIAP for the academic year 2012

11. The Governing Council endorses the work plan of the Institute for the academic year 2012, as contained in E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC(7)/4.

B. Acknowledgements

12. The Governing Council expresses deep appreciation for the contributions of the following:

(a) The Government of Japan for its continuing generous support, both in cash and in kind through its Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, and for providing 91 fellowships for the SIAP-Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) TMA-based courses through JICA for the academic year 2011;

(b) The contributing members and associate members for their cash contributions, through which they have demonstrated a sense of ownership over the Institute's activities;

(c) The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for its continued support to SIAP, and especially for the funds it provided for the ESCAP/UNFPA project on "Statistical capacity-building for undertaking the 2010 Round Population and Housing Census integrated with gender concerns";

(d) The Governments of India and the Republic of Korea for hosting regional courses and for providing board and lodging to the participants/resource persons;

(e) The Governments of Bangladesh and Mongolia for hosting subregional courses;

(f) Training institutes and universities: National Academy of Statistical Administration (India); Statistical Training Institute (Republic of Korea); the University of the South Pacific (Fiji); and universities in Japan;

(g) The Australian Bureau of Statistics, BPS-Statistics Indonesia, the National Statistics Office of the Philippines, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications of the Government of Japan for providing resource support for SIAP training courses and workshops utilizing their experts;

(h) Asian Development Bank (ADB); Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre – Population Division (Economic

Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean) (CELADE-ECLAC); Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); International Labour Organization-Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (ILO-SIMPOC); International Monetary Fund (IMF); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization-Institute for Statistics (UNESCO-IS); and the World Bank.

II. Summary of proceedings

A. Matters arising from the sixth session of the Governing Council

13. The Governing Council had before it a note by the secretariat on matters arising from the sixth session of the Governing Council (E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC(7)/2) and the first interim meeting of the Council, held in New York in February 2011. The recommendations of the Council had encompassed: (a) increasing financial support; (b) addressing training needs of national statistical systems; (c) partnership collaboration with United Nations agencies and international organizations; and (d) management responses to the recommendations made by the evaluator.

14. Subsequent to details provided by SIAP, based on the issues raised at the previous meetings, a discussion on the efforts of many countries to increase cash contributions for SIAP was held, and the Council acknowledged those efforts and emphasized the need for countries to do more. The need to have an obligatory minimum level of contributions and a gradual upward annual revision of contributions was discussed and it was decided to deliberate that further under the topic of financial matters in agenda item 3.

15. While many countries commended the work done by SIAP, a few members inquired whether some of the TMA-based courses could be conducted in other countries/subregions as a cost reduction strategy and whether the long-term training courses provided in Tokyo should be redesigned to focus on senior levels rather than junior/middle levels. Supplementing the issue raised in the Council on the evaluation of the trainees of SIAP courses, the Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCAP mentioned the need to improve the SIAP alumni database to include updated information on ex-participants, rather than simply giving the number of participants. He explained that, not only would it be a way to showcase the achievements of SIAP, but it would also give SIAP a branding that would serve as an advocate in and of itself; it would also assist ESCAP in canvassing support for the Institute. In response to a request by the Chair for the views of Council members regarding the concerns addressed, a number of countries expressed a preference for the continued focus on junior level statisticians (Core Skills levels 2 and 3). The representative of Japan explained the effectiveness of the training modalities of SIAP consisting of various formats, such as SIAP-JICA TMA-based courses, TMA-based short-term courses, the outreach programme conducted outside Japan and distance training/e-learning. The representative expressed confidence that those training modalities would continue to be effective in building statistical capability in Asia and the Pacific. The Council finally agreed that conducting the core courses in Tokyo would have many advantages owing to the location in Japan, a country with a sound statistical information system, the ability to use SIAP facilities, professional expertise and the full resources of the host Government for the benefit of the participants. The Council also agreed that course content needed to be reviewed in order to include more

emerging issues encompassing the NSSs of the countries and to identify and understand the training needs of countries that could not provide training themselves or acquire it from institutions within their subregion.

B. Report of the Director of the Institute

16. The Governing Council had before it the report of the Director of SIAP (E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC(7)/3). The Director highlighted the key results achieved, new initiatives implemented, and a summary of SIAP activities in the reporting period and institutional matters, including the administrative and financial status of SIAP for the period since the sixth session of the Governing Council, which had been held in December 2010.

17. In the reporting period, the Institute had conducted nine TMA-based courses, nine regional/subregional/country courses under the outreach programme, one research-based training programme, and four distance/e-learning/training courses. A total of 403 participants from 45 countries enhanced their knowledge and developed skills with a view to improve official statistics in their countries.

18. In its endeavour to reach a wider audience through e-training, SIAP had adopted several strategies: enhancing its distance training using the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency's (JAXA) Wideband InterNetworking engineering test and Demonstration Satellite (WINDS) through the University of Tokushima; collaborating with the World Bank on the use of their Virtual Statistical System (VSS) to develop and upload training materials that would facilitate e-learning with increased access to a range of sources of information and educational programmes, international contacts and discussions with individuals and institutions in other countries.

19. SIAP also provided an account of the number of trainees outside the national statistics office (NSO) who had taken its short-term TMA-based courses and undergone the outreach training programme during 2011. The Director noted that SIAP had reached a wider audience encompassing NSSs made up of line ministries and civil society organizations, stressing that capacity-building activities had focused on the needs of the entire NSS rather than solely on the needs of the NSO. The report spelled out the key factors that had facilitated the smooth implementation of planned activities by SIAP in the reporting period. Mention was made of: (a) the strong support of the host Government and the increased support from other member States; (b) the close collaboration with United Nations agencies and international organizations; and (c) an extensive network of alumni and institutional contacts. The report showed that the training programmes remained demand-driven and linked to national and international capacity-building initiatives by focusing on the expected accomplishments of the ESCAP statistics subprogramme.

20. The Director reported that SIAP had revised its core training programme to address the contemporary capability-building needs of government officials/statisticians with regard to the Millennium Development Goals, economic statistics and the use of information and communications technology for official statistics.

21. During the four-month TMA-based SIAP-JICA flagship course, experts from ESCAP, ILO-SIMPOC, UNESCO, the World Bank and Japan had been engaged to provide deeper regional insights into the practical

issues surrounding the adoption of international statistical standards. A key addition to the programme was the demonstration survey, which enabled participants to experience practical challenges in the collection of data from respondents through the Internet. In 2011, the participants had approached 200 SIAP alumni to request their cooperation in conducting the demonstration survey. Studying the principles of microdata management and dissemination and the use of the appropriate software, such as the Census and Survey Processing System (CSPRO), RETRIEVAL OF DATA for small Areas by Microcomputer (REDATAM) and Stata for data processing, analysis and dissemination, had enabled the participants to acquire relevant skills.

22. It was also reported that collaboration with member States and partners, including United Nations agencies and international organizations, had played an important role in implementing the annual work plan of the Institute in an extensive and coordinated manner during the reporting period.

23. The report provided details of the administrative and financial status of the Institute in 2011.

24. The key issues that arose during the presentation of the report of the Director were divided into three topics: implementation of the work plan; financial issues; and cost reduction measures. Some of the issues discussed under the “matters arising” section were further deliberated in relation to the above three topics.

1. Implementation of the work plan for 2011

25. Under the implementation of the work plan for 2011, the discussion focused mainly on how to sustain relevance and how to carry out activities more efficiently using the limited resources available.

26. SIAP reported that action had been taken and was being taken with regard to all recommendations emanating from the external evaluation of SIAP, with the exception of the recommendation relating to the daily commute by participants from the JICA Tokyo International Centre to the SIAP premises, which was not considered feasible.

27. The issue of the duration of the core courses emerged during the discussion. After hearing the views of several representatives, the representative of Japan explained that, in 2009, SIAP had conducted a training needs survey involving 54 countries of Asia and the Pacific and, based on the information obtained, had made decisions regarding the duration of the courses. In particular, the six-month course had been shortened to four months on the basis of the survey.

28. The representative of Japan informed the Council that, in 2012, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and JICA were scheduled to conduct a review to determine whether the three TMA-based courses conducted jointly with JICA should be continued after the Japanese fiscal year 2012. Decisions regarding renewal and continuity of the three courses would be based on the results of the survey and its reflection of countries' needs. The representative of Japan requested that NSOs express their training needs regarding TMA-based courses by working closely with the agency in their respective countries that partnered with JICA.

29. Another issue raised by the Council revolved around course content. Members inquired about the SIAP strategy for sustaining the relevance of its courses and meeting the diverse training needs of the countries of the region. SIAP explained the various modalities of course evaluations employed to assess the effectiveness of its courses. Participants' topic-wise assessments, action plans for post-training activities and the responses of the heads of NSOs, both formally and informally, as well as course evaluations done by JICA were introduced as guiding factors for the content of SIAP courses. SIAP explained that the training needs survey had been conducted on the NSOs and that the results had been used to prepare the long-term work plan under the strategic plan endorsed by the Council in 2008.³ SIAP also reported its intention to conduct a similar survey in 2012.

2. Financial issues

30. The Director of SIAP provided an overview of the financial situation of the Institute.

31. The Governing Council was informed that the host Government had made a cash contribution of \$1,676,400 in 2011. That constituted approximately 83 per cent of the total cash contributions received by the Institute that year. In addition, the host Government had provided in kind contributions of \$2,056,747, including 91 fellowships for TMA-based courses through JICA. The cash contributions received from the other 20 contributing member States in 2011, as of 6 December, amounted to \$353,198. UNFPA had provided funding support in the amount of US\$211,012 for a special project.

32. The Council noted that SIAP had received in kind contributions from the following member States towards the implementation of its training programme: (a) Australia, Indonesia and the Philippines (provision of resource persons); (b) Bangladesh and Mongolia (hosting of subregional courses); (c) India (hosting of regional courses and provision of board/lodging for participants and consultants); and (d) the Republic of Korea (hosting of regional training courses and provision of board/lodging for participants).

33. The Council noted the financial challenge that the Institute was facing as a result of the continued depreciation of the United States dollar against the Japanese yen. That had resulted in a sharp increase in staff costs due to rising post adjustments at the duty station. The total institutional operational costs of the Institute in 2011 mainly consisted of staff costs (87 per cent) and programme support costs (12 per cent). All related training costs were absorbed by special projects, in kind contributions from member States, United Nations and international agencies and other funding sources.

34. The Council was informed that the imbalance between income and expenditure that had prevailed in recent years had taken a heavy toll on the Institute's reserve. Unless drastic measures were taken, it was projected that the reserve would incur a deficit of over \$832,000 by the end of fiscal year 2014.

35. A resource mobilization strategy to address the financial crisis by balancing income and expenditure was proposed by the Director of SIAP for

³ See E/ESCAP/65/26, Sect. III and IV.

the consideration of the Governing Council. The strategy would: (a) reduce expenditure by temporarily freezing two Professional and one General Service posts in 2012 and 2013, respectively; (b) increase cash and in kind contributions; and (c) enforce continued economy measures.

36. The following member States expressed a desire to increase cash contributions to SIAP as indicated: (a) Australia (to increase from the current level of A\$50,000 to A\$100,000 from 2012); (b) Bangladesh (resumed contributions in 2011 and would contribute more in the future); (c) Indonesia (increased from \$20,000 in 2010 to \$30,000 in 2011); (d) the Lao People's Democratic Republic (intended to increase annual contributions from \$1,000 to \$2,000); and (e) Malaysia (planned to increase its contribution, but not earlier than 2013).

37. Several member States expressed the view that since most countries were beneficiaries of SIAP training, it would be easier for the NSOs and their counterparts in the finance ministries to allocate funds for SIAP if such action was mandatory. After considering different proposals, the Council decided to recommend seeking increased cash contributions on the basis of a structure employing two different strata since a flat rate of increase or a common threshold could not be applied to varying levels of contributions. The consensus was for a threshold of \$5,000 for marginally or non-contributing member States and a gradual rate of increase of at least 5 per cent, for countries that were already contributing over \$5,000.

38. The Council recognized that ESCAP would play an important role in promoting and seeking resources for SIAP in view of the status of the Institute as a regional institution of ESCAP.

39. The Council recognized that its role was to assume leadership and take proactive steps towards increasing cash and in kind contributions. It acknowledged the inevitable need for staff reduction in the short-term, but stressed the importance of maintaining the quality of its training services.

40. The Council was of the view that a more long-term strategy in addressing the financial sustainability of SIAP was required. In that context, it agreed to hold a special meeting to discuss that important issue on the occasion of the forty-third session of the United Nations Statistical Commission, which would be held in New York from 28 February to 2 March 2012.

41. In response to a query made by one member, the representative of the ESCAP secretariat informed the Council that the percentage of programme support costs was being reviewed and that the outcome of that review would be shared with Council members in early 2012.

42. Among other strategies discussed were to promote SIAP at various forums in order to secure funds for its training activities, including special project funds, and to seek cash contributions from the private sector and civil society. The Deputy Executive Secretary mentioned that such attempts should be made within the rules and regulations governing the United Nations and its regional institutions. As many representatives of member States, United Nations agencies and other international organizations pledged support for SIAP by way of in kind contributions, it was recommended that ways be sought to increase the number of experts from those sources.

3. Cost reduction measures

43. In its presentation on its financial status, SIAP proposed a reduction of staff as a short-term measure under a strategy to balance expenditure and income. It proposed many other measures, such as restricting overseas travel to economy class, reducing the number of accompanying staff on field tours within Japan and reducing stationery costs. Council members expressed concern over the quantity and the quality of the work that the Institute could deliver in the absence of a full staff. The Council noted that the need to train more officials encompassing NSSs instead of NSOs, and that the growing need for diversified and emerging fields of study had increased the demand for the Institute's services. Japan took the view that the temporary freezing of lecturer posts was inevitable and that support from member States, including Japan, and international agencies in providing resource persons to cover lecture sessions would be essential. SIAP stated that, with strong support from the Government of the host country and other member States in the form of resource persons and other facilities, it could deliver the expected services without compromising its standards.

44. The Council agreed that the situation needed to be considered carefully and reviewed at the next informal meeting, which would be held in New York in February 2012.

C. Work plan of the Institute for the academic year 2012

45. The Governing Council had before it the document entitled "Work plan of the Institute for the academic year 2012" (E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC(7)/4).

46. The draft work plan of the Institute for the academic year 2012 covered the period from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013. It had been developed in the context of the proposed five-year long-term work plan of the Institute for the academic years 2010 to 2014 and took into account the direction and priorities outlined in the ESCAP strategic framework for the period 2012-2013.⁴

47. The Director of SIAP informed the Council that the purpose of the programme was to deliver training under two specific output criteria developed according to the long-term work plan proposed for the five-year period 2010-2014, namely: (a) increased knowledge and skills of national statistical staff; and (b) increased number of statisticians with the ability to impart new knowledge to other statisticians at the country level.

48. With an understanding of the financial constraints on the Institute, the Council examined the details of the proposed plan and deliberated on the modalities through which countries and training institutions could contribute towards the outreach component of the work plan. Several members held the view that it was important to conduct outreach activities using the training facilities available in some countries in order to address the training needs of other countries at the subregional level. Offers to conduct outreach training were made by Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Philippines, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community. Many members also held the view that, in addition to conducting its current TMA-based courses and outreach training activities,

⁴ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/65/6/Rev.1), Programme 15.*

SIAP should organize more short-term courses and increase the number of activities under its outreach programme. The Council advised SIAP to explore more partnerships with training institutions in the region and with international organizations. ADB, FAO, ILO and the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC) expressed their willingness to extend cooperation in capacity-building activities in the future.

49. Most of the representatives expressed agreement with the proposed TMA-based component covering both SIAP-JICA courses and short-term courses. A few representatives stated that more emerging needs as well as the training of trainers needed to be incorporated into the programme. The representative of the Philippines praised the research-based training programme while emphasizing the need to help participants choose topics wisely so that their work could make an effective contribution to the development of their respective countries. SIAP assured the Council that, in addition to what had been proposed, it would be vigilant on the emerging needs of NSSs of countries in the region. The representative of the ESCAP secretariat suggested taking action to extend the training to other countries in the region that had potential for collaboration under the auspices of SIAP, but with a properly established certification system for qualitative assurance. The representative of Japan stated that it was important for SIAP to conduct the training programmes for statistical officers and trainers alike, on the basis of training needs.

50. The Council endorsed the work plan for academic year 2012 subject to financial capacity and advised SIAP to take into consideration the concerns raised during the deliberations regarding the content of training and the need to accommodate the collaborative offers made by country partner institutes and international agencies.

D. Items for the information of the Governing Council

1. Report on the meeting of the Working Group on the Regional Coordination of Statistical Training held in New Delhi on 10 and 11 October 2011

51. The Governing Council had before it the draft report of the meeting of the Working Group on the Regional Coordination of Statistical Training, which had been held in New Delhi on 10 and 11 October 2011 (E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC(7)/INF/4).

52. The Council noted the report, and a brief explanation of the work in progress was made by SIAP.

2. Commission resolution on the revision of the statute of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific

53. The Governing Council had before it the text of Commission resolution 67/13 on the revision of the statute of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC(7)/INF/5).⁵

⁵ See also *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2011, Supplement No. 19* (E/2011/39-E/ESCAP/67/23).

54. It was pointed out that the current membership period had been restricted to three years from the former five. Members inquired whether there was any restriction preventing a country from being re-elected. It was indicated that no such restriction existed, but, despite the absence of such a restriction, a few members expressed concern that the resolution might not serve the intended purpose of expanding the ownership of countries through election to the Council. It was agreed that the matter would be discussed at the next Council session.

E. Other matters

55. The Governing Council expressed deep appreciation and gratitude to the Chair, Mr. Trevor Sutton of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, for successfully conducting the seventh session of the Council.

56. The representative of Japan, the host country, commented on the excellence of the proceedings and expressed gratitude to the Chair for deftly bringing the Council session to a successful conclusion. He also thanked representatives of member countries and observers for the contributions and valuable comments that had been made. He made a special mention regarding the attendance of the Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCAP and thanked the Director of SIAP and her staff for their dedication to the success of the session.

57. The Governing Council decided that its eighth session would be held in Bangkok, back to back with the third session of Committee on Statistics, in December 2012.

F. Adoption of the report

58. On 9 December 2011, the Governing Council adopted the recommendations for the report on its seventh session.

III. Organization

A. Opening of the session

59. The seventh session of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) was held in Chiba, Japan, on 8 and 9 December 2011.

60. The Chair of the sixth session of the Governing Council, Mr. Ismail bin Yusoff of Malaysia, welcomed all participants.

61. On behalf of the Executive Secretary of ESCAP, the Deputy Executive Secretary welcomed all participants to the seventh session of the Governing Council. He thanked the representatives of member States, United Nations specialized agencies and other organizations for their presence, which signified the importance of their partnership with SIAP, and their commitment to further strengthening cooperation and coordination in providing relevant, coherent and effective statistical training in the region.

62. He expressed appreciation for the approach adopted by SIAP of training the trainers in an effort to promote the improvement of economic statistics, including the implementation of the System of National Accounts, the production of relevant indicators for assessing progress towards the

Millennium Development Goals, and the incorporation of gender perspectives in census undertakings. The Deputy Executive Secretary noted with satisfaction the recent progress made in the area of distance training and e-learning, and expressed appreciation for the close cooperation between SIAP, JAXA and Tokushima University in that increasingly important area of the work of SIAP.

63. The Deputy Executive Secretary stated that partnership and cooperation with international agencies, such as ADB, the Asia and the Pacific Regional Office of UNFPA, ILO, IMF, the United Nations Statistics Division and the World Bank, and with country partner institutes, such as Statistics Korea and the National Academy of Statistical Administration of India in conducting many training programmes were critical for the success of SIAP in terms of expanding the scope and coverage of training that the Institute could offer and ensuring the effectiveness and long-term sustainability of such training.

64. Singling out the generous contributions of the Government of Japan, the Deputy Executive Secretary stated that all were truly grateful to Japan, which had been facing the enormous challenge of reconstruction following the massive damage and loss caused by the unprecedented tsunami earlier in 2011. He expressed the view that the unwavering financial and logistic support of the Government of Japan had enabled SIAP to deliver all of its training activities as planned, despite all the difficulties associated with the disaster.

65. While urging member States and development partners to seriously consider increasing cash and in kind contributions to SIAP, the Deputy Executive Secretary stated that they needed to recognize the importance of gaining a full understanding of the unique role of SIAP as a regional institution and of establishing a clear vision and new strategic direction for the Institute for the decades to come.

66. The Deputy Executive Secretary emphasized the importance of the Council arriving at concrete recommendations regarding which process should be put into place to support the development and implementation of a new strategic programme for the Institute, including an innovative financing strategy. He stated that the Council's recommendations would also guide the ESCAP secretariat in better supporting SIAP.

B. Attendance

67. The session was attended by representatives of the host Government, Japan, and all eight elected members of the Governing Council: Australia; China; India; Indonesia; Malaysia; Pakistan; Republic of Korea; and Thailand.

68. Representatives of the following 18 members and associate members attended the session as observers: Bangladesh; Cambodia; Fiji; Georgia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Lao People's Democratic Republic; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nauru; New Zealand; Papua New Guinea; Philippines; Samoa; Sri Lanka; Timor-Leste; Vanuatu; Viet Nam; and Hong Kong, China.

69. Representatives of the following United Nations specialized agencies participated as observers: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); and International Labour Organization (ILO).

70. Representatives of the following organizations also participated as observers: Asian Development Bank (ADB); International Statistical Institute (ISI); Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development; Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21); Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC); and the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC).

C. Election of officers

71. The Governing Council elected the following officers by acclamation:

- (a) Chair: Mr. Trevor Sutton (Australia)
- (b) Vice-Chair: Mr. Takao Itou (Japan)

72. The representative of Japan, welcoming the convening of the Governing Council at its seventh session, expressed his country's gratitude for the warm support and solidarity extended to Japan by NSOs, alumni of SIAP and many other people in the region since the Great East Japan Earthquake had struck Japan.

D. Agenda

73. The Governing Council adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session:
 - (a) Opening addresses;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Matters arising from the sixth session of the Governing Council and its interim meeting.
3. Report of the Director of the Institute:
 - (a) Progress in the implementation of the work plan since the sixth session of the Governing Council;
 - (b) Administrative and financial status;
 - (c) Follow-up to Governing Council interim meeting recommendation 2011/2 on the mobilization of financial resources for 2011-2013;
 - (d) Progress in the implementation of the recommendations from the evaluation of the Institute;
 - (e) Acknowledgements.
4. Items for review and guidance:
 - (a) Work plan of the Institute for the academic year 2012;
 - (b) Draft annual report of the Institute to the Commission.
5. Items for information:
 - (a) Report on the meeting of the Working group on the Regional Coordination of Statistical Training held in New Delhi on 10 and 11 October 2011;

- (b) Commission resolution on the revision of the statute of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific.
- 6. Other matters.
- 7. Adoption of the report.

Annex**List of documents**

Document symbol	Title	Agenda item
E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC(7)/1	Annotated provisional agenda	1c
E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC(7)/2	Matters arising from the sixth session of the Governing Council	2
E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC(7)/3	Report of the Director of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific	3
E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC(7)/4	Work plan of the Institute for the academic year 2012	4a
E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC(7)/5	Draft report of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific to the Commission	4b
E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC(7)/INF/1	Information for participants	
E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC(7)/INF/2	Provisional list of participants	
E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC(7)/INF/3	Tentative programme	
E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC(7)/INF/4	Report on the meeting of the Working Group on the Regional Coordination of Statistical Training held in New Delhi on 10 and 11 October 2011	5a
E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC(7)/INF/5	Commission resolution 67/13 on the revision of the statute of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific	5b