

Excellences,

Good afternoon to all and thanks to the Rapporteur for the opportunity to take the floor to introduce this Open-ended working group to the objectives, functions and activities of the United Nations Statistical Commission and its Committee of Experts on food security, agricultural and rural statistics. More importantly, it is for us an opportunity to give this group some guidelines on how the UNSC can help the CFS in developing the policy recommendations for strengthening FSN data collection and analysis tools, and how the UNSC can also work as an amplifier of the decisions taken by the CFS on the policy recommendation document and, more in general, on the data workstream.

Let me start explaining that the United Nations Statistical Commission, established in 1947 by the Economic and Social Council, is the highest body of the global statistical system bringing together the Chief Statisticians from member states from around the world. It is the highest decision making body for international statistical activities, responsible for promoting and coordinating the development of national statistics and data-related system, discussing and endorsing international standards and the development of concepts and methods, including their implementation at the national and international level. The UNSC meets every year at the end of February-beginning of March and its report and therefore decisions are endorsed by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) each summer

Recently, in June 2022, the ECOSOC reaffirmed the Statistical Commission as the primary body for the coordination of the global statistical programmes in general and of the United Nations statistical and data-related system. In particular, in its resolution 3, the ECOSOC recognized that the field of statistics and data must be adaptive to the changing statistical and data ecosystem and called upon the United Nations statistical system to report on work on statistics and data within all domains to the Commission, in order to enable the Commission to fulfil its main function as the primary body responsible for the management of statistical information and governance of statistics and data. This resolution should therefore be taken into account in the CFS policy recommendations related to FSN data.

In terms of working modalities, the Statistical Commission operates under various groups with specific mandates and multi-year work programmes. At its 43rd session in 2012, the Statistical Commission approved the creation of the Inter-Agency Expert Group on food security, agricultural and rural statistics (which was later renamed as the UN Committee of Experts on food security, agricultural and rural

statistics). The UN-CEAG, as we call it, aims to develop and document good practices and guidelines on concepts, methods and statistical standards for food security, sustainable agriculture and rural development statistics. It is formed by experts from national statistical offices, ministries of agriculture and international organizations and currently chaired by Susana Perez Cadena, of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico.

FAO reports to the UNSC every two years on topics relevant to food security, agricultural and rural statistics, including on the work of the UN-CEAG. This report is an opportunity for UNSC members to stay informed of recent developments related to food security, agricultural and rural statistics, endorse international standards and provide recommendations to UNSC members.

Now, let me refer to the point on how can the UNSC can help the CFS in developing the policy recommendations for strengthening FSN data collection and analysis tools?.

1. First, UNSC members can be consulted by their national CFS representatives directly for feedback;
2. Second, considering its mandate, the UN-CEAG under the UNSC could be a good mechanism for technical discussion and decisions on the standardization and harmonization of FSN data
3. Third, the UN-CEAG could also be a good mechanism for producing guidelines on the essential FSN data to be produced. These decisions could be reported to the Statistical Commission and also to the CFS.

It is worthy to say, that on the coming meeting of the UNSC, country members will be informed about the HLPE report and the CFS policy recommendations process during a side event under the umbrella of the Stats Com schedule to take place on February 16th.

Finally, I am convinced that the UNSC can serve as an amplifier of the decisions of the CFS. As explained, FAO reports to the UNSC every two years. The next time FAO has to report is in 2024, where UNSC members could be officially informed of the CFS policy converge process on data and invited to implement specific recommendations under their mandate. Furthermore, guided by recommendations of the CFS, UNSC members could decide to mandate the UN-CEAG with a specific role in setting standards, for instance in producing guidelines on essential FSN data, or for harmonizing FSN datasets.

Excellences, FAO as Secretariat of the UN-CEAG and also as the UN organization that reports to the UN Statistical Commission on topics relevant to food security stands ready to serve as a bridge between the CFS and the Commission. In this way, our participation in the Open ended working group would be aim to ensure that there is such link with the UNSC, and that the policy recommendations are in line with the current thinking of the statistical community.