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PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

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Update on the Governance of FAO's statistical data and other data activities and their alignment with cross cutting policies on Protection of Data and Intellectual Property Rights

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Programme Committee, at its 133rd Session, reviewed the document CL 170/18 “Governance of FAO’s statistical and other data activities and their alignment with the cross-cutting FAO policies on Protection of Data and Intellectual Property Rights - Proposal for an improved internal coordination and its alignment with corporate policies on Data Protection and Intellectual Property Rights”.
- After welcoming the report, the Committee “*recommended that the linkages between the internal structure addressing data protection, data and statistics governance and data in general be clarified with particular regard to programmatic considerations*” and “*encouraged Management to continue improving internal coordination of FAO statistical activities, and to update Members regularly*” (paragraph 12 d) and f) of its 133rd Session Report).
- In its 170th Session, the Council echoed the Committee’s recommendations, requesting “*that Management continue improving its activities on governance of FAO’s statistical and other data activities, continue to improve internal coordination of FAO statistical activities, and clarify the linkages between the internal structures addressing data protection, data and statistics governance and data in general*” and “*an update on the alignment of FAO’s statistical activities with FAO’s corporate policies on data protection, once these have been promulgated*” (paragraphs 38 a) and b) of its 170th Session Report).
- The present document summarizes the progress made in improving FAO’s governance of FAO’s statistical and other data activities, clarifies the linkages between the internal structures addressing data protection, data and statistics governance and provides an update on the alignment of FAO’s statistical activities with FAO’s corporate policies on data protection.
- Significant progress has been made in improving the internal coordination and management of data for statistics and statistics. The Data Coordination Group (DCG) was created and held two meetings in July and September 2022. During these meetings, the group discussed the implementation of the Data Protection Policy and the programme of work of the renewed Inter-departmental Working Group on Data and Statistics (IDWG). The review of existing policies and procedures related to FAO statistics, private sector engagements, and science and innovation to ensure that they are fully aligned with the Data Protection Policy has also progressed. At the time of preparation of this document, it was confirmed that most statistical principles and guidelines (on data dissemination and data confidentiality) are already aligned with the Policy, additional work still needs to be done to ensure full and exhaustive compliance.

GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

- The Programme Committee is invited to take note of the update provided in this document.

Draft Advice

The Committee:

- **noted with appreciation the progress made on the implementation of the improved internal coordination of FAO’s statistical data and other data activities, and steps taken to ensure their alignment with the cross cutting Data Protection Policy; and**
- **welcomed the creation of the Data Coordination Group and the Inter-departmental Working Group on Data and Statistics, and looked forward to receiving regular updates on the implementation of their respective programmes of work.**

I. Background

1. In its 133rd Session, the Committee reviewed the document CL 170/18 *Governance of FAO's statistical and other data activities and their alignment with the cross-cutting FAO policies on Protection of Data and Intellectual Property Rights - Proposal for an improved internal coordination and its alignment with corporate policies on Data Protection and Intellectual Property Rights*. This document provided additional clarifications to the improved internal coordination of FAO statistical activities and other data for statistics proposed in document PC 132/5 *Proposal for improved governance of FAO statistical activities*, and to its alignment with FAO's corporate policies on data protection and intellectual property rights.

2. After welcoming the clarifications made in the report, the Committee “recommended that the linkages between the internal structure addressing data protection, data and statistics governance and data in general be clarified with particular regard to programmatic considerations” and “encouraged Management to continue improving internal coordination of FAO statistical activities, and to update Members regularly” (paragraph 12 d) and f) of its 133rd Session Report).

3. In its 170th session, the Council echoed the Committee's recommendations, requesting “that Management continue improving its activities on governance of FAO's statistical and other data activities, continue to improve internal coordination of FAO statistical activities, and clarify the linkages between the internal structures addressing data protection, data and statistics governance and data in general” and “an update on the alignment of FAO's statistical activities with FAO's corporate policies on data protection, once these have been promulgated” (paragraphs 38 a) and b) of its 170th Session Report).

4. The present document aims to summarize the progress made in improving FAO's governance of FAO's statistical and other data activities, clarify the linkages between the internal structures addressing data protection, data and statistics governance and data, and provide an update on the alignment of FAO's statistical activities with FAO's corporate policies on data protection.

II. Update on the implementation of FAO's improved internal coordination of its statistical and other data activities related to statistics

5. At its 132nd and 133rd Sessions, the Committee welcomed the proposal to strengthen and integrate the internal coordination and management of statistics and data for statistics centered on the creation of a Data Coordination Group (DCG), the nomination of an Executive Data Champion and a renewed Inter-departmental Working Group (IDWG) on Data and Statistics.

6. Following the endorsement of the recommendations on FAO's improved internal coordination for statistics and data for statistics by the Council during its 170th Session, the Chief Economist, henceforth designated as FAO's Executive Data Champion, organized the first meeting of the DCG. The agenda of the meeting, held on 14 July, aimed to review and endorse the terms of reference of the DCG and IDWG, confirm the membership of the DCG and discuss its programme of work for the biennium 2022-23.

7. In establishing the terms of reference of the two groups, the linkages between the internal structures addressing data protection, data and statistics governance and data in general were examined (see Annex 1 for more details).

8. First, as stated in document CL 170/18 and reiterated in the terms of reference of the two groups, the scope of the DCG and IDWG only concerns statistics and data for statistical purposes generated under FAO's mandate, in line with Article I of the FAO Constitution, and excludes any other kind of data (for example, human resources, administrative or project implementation data). As a result, the DCG and IDWG are expected to comply and coordinate with relevant internal coordination bodies for the implementation of policies, principles and initiatives applying to a broader range of data processed by FAO.

9. In its terms of reference, the DCG was identified as the highest corporate decision-making body for data for statistics and statistics matters, with its main purposes being to endorse and

promulgate internal policies, processes and standards for statistics and data for statistical purposes; provide oversight on data- and statistics-related strategic priorities that will benefit the Organization and its stakeholders; and ensure that their implementation is coherent with applicable overarching data policies, principles and UN initiatives, as well as FAO's overall programmatic priorities. It was also agreed that the DCG will coordinate regularly and as needed with the Data Protection Oversight Committee on data protection matters. This echoes paragraph 44 of FAO's Data Protection Policy: "*Matters that are raised in the Data Coordination Group (DCG), chaired by the Chief Economist, or by another internal body, which have data protection implications shall be referred to the Data Protection Oversight Committee for guidance*".

10. Similarly, the IDWG was mandated to identify and recommend common standards, methods, frameworks and innovations to improve the quality, efficiency and coherence of FAO's data and statistical products, processes and programmes, in accordance with the overarching principles and policies governing statistics and data, both internationally and within the Organization.

11. During its first meeting, the DCG confirmed the composition of its permanent members. They consist of the Chief Economist (Chair and Executive Data Champion), the Chief Scientist (Alternate Chair), the Chief Statistician (Secretary), the Heads of FAO's five Regional Offices and the Directors of the Statistics Division (ESS), the Division of Digitalization and Informatics (CSI), the Forestry Division (NFO), the Division of Fisheries and Aquaculture (NFI), the Division of Land and Water (NSL) and the Office of Emergency and Resilience (OER). The group also appointed the Directors of the Markets and Trade Division (EST) and the Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment (OCB) as DCG members for an initial period of two years.

12. DCG members agreed on six priorities for its programme of work 2022-2023:

- a) Ensuring the implementation of FAO Policies on Data protection and Intellectual Property Rights for FAO's statistics and data for statistics;
- b) Establishing strategic orientations for better delivering on data as one FAO (i.e. across FAO headquarters and Decentralized Offices);
- c) Assessing and increasing the contribution of data as an accelerator for the implementation of FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 and the 20 Programme Priority Areas (PPAs);
- d) Supporting the modernization of FAO information technology (IT) infrastructure related to data and statistics;
- e) Reviewing FAO Statistics and Data Quality Assurance framework, in particular the quality assurance and quality control mechanisms in place for the use of geospatial data and big data for statistical purposes; and
- f) Addressing specific coordination issues in the production of statistics and data for statistics (e.g. the dissemination of inconsistent estimates for the same or for similar indicators).

13. A second meeting of the DCG took place on 9 September 2022. During this meeting, the DCG first examined the compliance of FAO statistics and data for statistics work with the Data Protection Policy and possible way forward to address non-compliance. Recommendations of the group have been submitted to the Data Protection Oversight Committee for considerations. The group also discussed and agreed on a tentative programme of work for the IDWG. The latter served as a basis to guide the nominations of IDWG members by relevant heads of units. The first meeting of the IDWG is expected to take place in the last quarter of 2022.

III. Update on the alignment of implementation of FAO's improved internal coordination of its statistical and other data activities related to statistics

14. Existing policies and procedures related to FAO statistics, private sector engagements, and science and innovation are being reviewed to ensure that they are fully aligned with the Data Protection Policy. At the time of preparation of this document, it was confirmed that most statistical principles and guidelines (on data dissemination and data confidentiality) are already aligned with the

Data Protection Policy, but additional work needs to be done to ensure full and exhaustive compliance.

15. As agreed during the 170th Session of the Council, FAO established an inventory of its data sharing agreements. It was presented to Members on 16 September, 2022 in an informal consultation on redress mechanisms for the Data Protection Policy.

16. A similar report on the implementation of the FAO policy on intellectual property rights in statistics policies and guidelines and correspondent identification of current areas of non-compliance will be prepared once the policy is promulgated.