

AFRICAN CENTRE FOR STATISTICS (ACS)

BACK TO OFFICE REPORT

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Division: African Centre for Statistics	Other mission members: None
Mission date: 6 - 7 November 2025	Travel itinerary: Addis - Tokyo - Kitakyushu - Tokyo - Addis

PURPOSE OF MISSION

To participate in, and contribute to, discussions held in the various sessions of the sixteenth meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs), convened in person from 5 - 7 November 2025 in Kitakyushu, Japan.

OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the 16th IAEG-SDGs meeting was to advance the IAEG-SDGs mandate and annual work programme for the global SDG indicator framework by convening members and stakeholders to support implementation, review methodological and metadata issues, address data disaggregation, coordinate working groups and task teams, and agree on the workplan and next steps, including preparations for UNSC 57.

- Review the 2025 SDG reporting landscape and key monitoring challenges.
- Consider indicator maintenance items, including data availability reviews, tier reclassifications, refinements, and metadata/methodology update requests.
- Receive updates and align follow-up actions from IAEG-SDGs Working Groups/Task Teams (Geospatial Information, SDMX, and Lessons Learned).
- Exchange experiences on implementation, disaggregation and inclusive data, communication of SDG data, and emerging innovations including AI.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF WORK ACCOMPLISHED

PARTICIPATION

The conference was attended by participants from Member States and international agencies from around the world, including policymakers, statisticians and data scientists, as well as representatives of the private sector and civil society organizations. In total, participants came from 40 countries and 23 agencies.

African participation included IAEG-SDGs member countries (Burkina Faso, Equatorial Guinea, Mozambique and Tunisia) and observer countries (Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi and Nigeria). In total, nine African countries attended the meeting.

The sixteenth meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) was held in person from 5 - 7 November 2025 in Kitakyushu, Japan. The meeting followed the usual format of a members-only day on 5 November and open plenary sessions on 6 - 7 November, with wider participation and recorded sessions. For the plenary sessions, non-IAEG members and international and regional agencies, including ECA, as well as other stakeholders attended the event.

The plenary sessions took place over two days (6 - 7 November 2025) and were open to non-IAEG members and other stakeholders.

During the plenary, participants reviewed the 2025 SDG reporting landscape using key global and regional SDG reporting products, and received updates from core IAEG-SDGs mechanisms, including the Working Group on SDMX (reporting progress such as Comprehensive Review-related structure updates and that over 45% of the global dataset is now reported to UNSD as SDMX) and the Working Group on Geospatial Information, which shared its 2026 work plan to strengthen coordination and support geospatially enabled SDG monitoring.

A major piece of work accomplished was the annual "maintenance" of the SDG indicator framework through a data availability, tier classification and refinements review, including recommendations for tier upgrades and reclassifications (for example, proposals affecting indicators such as 5.b.1 and 5.c.1, and multi-tier considerations for others) and a status update showing that 232 of 234 unique indicators had data in the global database as of 19 September 2025, with custodian timelines shared for the remaining gaps.

The meeting also reviewed a metadata and methodology update request for Indicator 17.14.1, aimed at harmonizing UNEP and OECD data collection through a joint questionnaire, revising the method of computation, and updating global monitoring responsibility to include OECD alongside UNEP.

In addition, the meeting ran thematic and parallel exchanges (including implementation across levels, AI and data innovation, disaggregation and inclusive data, communication and use of SDG data, citizen data, climate and environment data, capacity building and partnerships, and financing for data) and held an interactive session on lessons learned to capture practical country and stakeholder inputs for the Task Team's ongoing work, with an option for written submissions open until 14 November 2025.

The meeting concluded by aligning on workplan themes and next steps toward UNSC 57, including continued methodology review, continued work of the SDMX and geospatial working groups and the lessons-learned task team, improved dialogue with custodian

agencies, and planning for bi-annual open meetings, including the 17th IAEG-SDGs meeting in Q4 2026.

RECOMMENDATIONS / ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN AND IMPLICATIONS FOR UNECA/ACS

UNECA/ACS should engage proactively with the SDMX workstream and align UNECA/ACS regional reporting with the Regional Commission (RC) SDMX dataflow approach in order to streamline regional and subregional SDG data exchange. UNECA/ACS should support countries to adopt the global SDG Data Structure Definition (DSD) consistently and publish SDG datasets via APIs to strengthen "single source of truth" practices. Building on the completed Africa initiative led by UNECA (with AfDB, UNSD and ONS), ACS should expand technical support to additional countries to map national data to the global SDG DSD and publish machine-readable SDG datasets through APIs. UNECA/ACS should keep its regional SDG databases and dashboards continuously updated and communicate global "maintenance" items clearly to African NSOs, including a short note summarizing what tier changes and refinements mean in practice for national reporting, regional aggregation, reporting tools and metadata requirements. UNECA/ACS should also feed Africa's lessons learned into post-2030 monitoring discussions by consolidating an Africa-focused synthesis (what worked and what did not), especially on data gaps, disaggregation, capacity and resource constraints, governance and coordination, partnerships and communication. Using UNECA's convening role, ACS should collect inputs systematically (for example through a questionnaire or regional workshop) and submit Africa's contributions into the IAEG-SDGs lessons learned process, including the planned regional and national focus in 2026/27. In parallel, UNECA/ACS should help countries anticipate and implement methodology transitions discussed at the meeting (for example the proposed update to Indicator 17.14.1) to support consistent reporting across the region.

LIST OF HARD COPY ATTACHMENTS AND WEB ADDRESSES, IF ANY

Meeting webpage: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/meetings/iaeg-sdgs-meeting-16/>