

Workshop Report

PARIS21/UNESCAP Sub-Regional Workshop on National Strategies for the Development of Statistics in South Asia

13-15 December 2005, Colombo, Sri Lanka

A. Background and Objectives

1. At the Second International Roundtable on Managing for Development Results held in Marrakech in 2004, aid recipients and donors renewed their cognizance of the crucial role that statistics play in supporting development policies and measuring the impact of interventions. The Roundtable recommended mainstreaming strategic planning of statistical systems and, towards this end, recommended further that developing countries prepare National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS). In line with these recommendations, the UNDP approved a project supporting the holding of a series of four sub-regional workshops in Asia. This South Asia workshop is the first of the series.

2. The specific objectives of the South Asia workshop were to assess the current status of strategic statistical planning in the participating countries, to identify the successes and constraints being experienced in implementing existing plans, and to consider solutions to those constraints. Towards the end of the workshop, the participants were asked to identify the steps that their respective countries may wish to take in the next twelve months in order to advance work on their national statistics strategies, as well as to list actions beyond twelve months in connection with implementation of the strategies (see Annex 3).

3. The workshop was organized by UNESCAP and PARIS21 in collaboration with the Department of Census of Statistics (DCS) of the Government of Sri Lanka. The DCS assumed responsibility for all local arrangements and provided secretariat support for the duration of the workshop. Financial support was provided by the UNDP–managed Japan Human Resource Development Fund.

4. The workshop was attended by 42 participants, observers and resource persons from nine South Asian countries, Australia, UNDP, UNFPA, UNESCO, UNESCAP and PARIS21. Four participants (called country teams) were invited from each of the eight participating South Asian countries, with India as an observer country. The complete list of participants and observers together with their affiliations and contact addresses is given in Annex 1. The three-day workshop agenda is given in Annex 2.

B. Opening Addresses

5. Director General A.G.W. Nanayakkara of DCS expressed appreciation for the opportunity to host the workshop. He noted that exchange of experiences between countries often leads to improvements. He offered as examples of good practice the work of DCS in (a) using small area estimation techniques and geographic information system

software to produce user-friendly poverty maps and (b) timely estimation and reporting on the impact of the December 26, 2004 tsunami presented in an easily understood format. Reports from these two activities were exhibited throughout the duration of the workshop. In preparing statistical strategies, Mr. Nanayakkara mentioned the importance of keeping in mind that what users say they want is greater than their real needs and that what the national statistical service can deliver depends on the level of resources given to it.

6. Ms. Haishan Fu, Chief of UNESCAP's Statistical Development Section, mentioned that helping its member countries strengthen their statistical systems, and for the strengthening to be guided by comprehensive national statistical development plans, has been in her agency's work program long before Marrakech or PARIS21. However, with the Marrakech Roundtable providing definite milestones and targets, and with active PARIS21 collaboration, ESCAP is confident its effort in this area will now get a much needed boost.

7. Mr. Tony Williams briefly traced the origins of PARIS21 where he serves as Senior Advisor. A consortium of countries and multilateral development agencies, PARIS21 acts as catalyst for promoting a culture of evidence-based policy-making and monitoring. It aims to promote more effective dialogue among statistics producers and users through facilitating international events, such as the present workshop. PARIS21 has developed NSDS guidelines and advocacy materials to support countries that need and want to develop NSDSs. The guidelines were key items in the workshop's agenda and discussions.

C. Baseline Assessment of Strategic Statistical Planning in South Asian Countries

8. ESCAP and PARIS21 prepared briefs on the baseline situation in each participating country, which were sent to each country team for review, revision and updating before the workshop. These formed the basis for presenting and discussing the current status of statistical development planning in the participating countries. This was needed to assess how much more could be done and the kind of assistance that individual countries might need in order to have NSDSs by the end of 2006.

Countries with Statistical Master Plans (SMP)

9. Afghanistan has a comprehensive SMP with 130+ pages of text and 10 pages of executive summary. It was prepared by a World Bank-led multi-agency mission in 2004 and was subsequently approved by the Government. The SMP is relatively new, so that an assessment of the implementation status may be too early; however, there seem to be uncertainties on the sources for the estimated \$7.1 million cost of implementing the plan, as well as on the funding needed to sustain it after implementation.

10. Nepal has a Consolidated National Statistical Plan (CNSP) prepared with assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). It was accepted by the government, with an intended implementation period from 2001-2007. The Nepal country team informed the

workshop that the implementation slowed or stalled for reasons that can be traced, among others, to lack of political commitment. For example, the National Statistics Council was reconstituted as proposed in the CNSP; however, no act or law was enacted to provide it with legal basis to function effectively. Conduct of major surveys and censuses and surveys tend to be dependent on foreign assistance. This has implications both on successful implementation of the CNSP and on sustainability of whatever would be built thereafter.

Countries in Varying Stages of Preparing Statistical Development Strategies

11. These are Bhutan, India, Iran, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The countries use different approaches. The India and Pakistan initiatives are strongly domestically driven, seeking donor assistance only for components where local authorities determined that they needed such assistance. This indicates strong political commitment to long-term efforts to improve the national statistical system.

12. In India a National Statistics Commission was created to perform an expert review of the statistical system. Five statistical development subprojects have been identified: (i) All India, (ii) States, (iii) Business register construction, (iv) Strengthening service sector data collection system, and (v) developing statistical capacity in the private sector. Detailed feasibility studies are being done or are planned. The finished product of these careful and deliberate activities will be a comprehensive statistical system development project proposal that will be used to seek funding from donors.

13. The Pakistan country team reported that work on their statistical strategic plan is almost complete, with the following key components: (i) Enact a law to merge the Federal Bureau of Statistics, Population Census Commission and Agriculture Census Commission into one autonomous body. The law will also create tenured, high paying senior positions to attract the best and brightest statisticians. (ii) Capacity building of the statistics cadre through a strengthened Training Institute. (iii) Raise capacity in the provinces and line ministries. (iv) Construct a business register. (v) Encourage private sector participation in statistics production and use.

14. A draft statistics act and a long-term statistical development strategy (with an embedded three-year action plan) for Bhutan have been prepared with ADB assistance in late 2005. Passage of a Statistics Act is a crucial first step towards systematic and phased development of the country's statistical system that is characterized by very limited human resource capacity; diffuse assignment of statistical activities to different government units; small population scattered in an extremely rugged terrain; and until recently, use of unconventional concepts and definitions (e.g. of population size, hence of population size related statistics and indicators). An NSDS for Bhutan should strike a balance between the capacity building and data production.

15. Guided by its National Development Plan, Iran has started work on a Statistical Development Plan in 2005. The plan needs to address critical challenges and constraints faced by the statistical system, such as myriad agencies producing their own data contrary

to High Statistics Council regulations, many agencies not using the official statistics produced by the Statistics Center of Iran, over reliance on sample surveys, and low use of statistics in the country in general.

16. Sri Lanka is one of seven pilot countries listed as eligible for a loan from the World Bank's statistical capacity building lending facility (STATCAP). A report entitled "Building Durable Capacity in the Sri Lankan National Statistical System" was prepared in 2004. Negotiations are currently under way to upgrade the report into a Statistical Master Plan (SMP) for submission as a STATCAP proposal.

Countries with No Definite Plans to Prepare Statistical Development Strategies

17. Bangladesh has annual and long-term programs for specific statistical activities. The country subscribes to IMF-GDDS and has produced a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) with the World Bank, a Poverty Partnership Agreement (PPA) with ADB, and a MDG and Poverty report with donor assistance. However, there is no comprehensive statistical strategy covering the national statistical system and there is no plan to prepare one in the near future.

18. In the Maldives, a National Statistical Coordinating Committee established recently has made a positive impact. While the Maldives does not have a statistics act, a Statistical Regulation has been in effect since 2000. There is no plan to prepare a statistical development strategy in the near future.

Additional Feedback from the Country Teams

19. In addition to the revisions to the briefs made by individual country teams in advance of the workshop, further comments and observations were made during the workshop discussions. Some country teams pointed out that the statistical capacity scores that the World Bank made for each country and published in its website (www.worldbank.org) needed sharpening or updating to reflect current situations. In particular, the 23% overall score for Afghanistan (out of a 100% maximum) may be on the low side. The zero score given to Bhutan for data collection capacity does not reflect that country's recent experiences gained from conducting a population census, living standard survey, household income and expenditure survey and labor force survey.

20. In some countries there is significant duplication of data collection activities, often among the national statistics office, central bank and central ministries. This leads to national databases characterized by data multiplicities on the one hand, and gaps on the other hand. Low use of official statistics was reported by a number of countries. These problems point to the need for statistical development strategies that emphasize a clear allocation of statistical responsibilities among the units comprising the national statistical system, supported by legislation and strong coordination required to enforce the assigned allocations, as well as for measures that strengthen the relationships between data producers and users.

21. The Indian delegate reported on the moves by the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) towards cooperation in statistics among Members States. A statistics group called SAARCSTAT was formed within which technical subgroups were created to work on specific tasks, such as development of a SAARCSTAT Action Plan, capacity building, informal sector and health statistics, SAARC Yearbook and website, and harmonized socio-economic classifications.

D. Why Statistics? Why NSDS?

22. This was the first of a series of presentations by the PARIS21 delegation. Tony Williams and Eric Bensele presented the case for statistics and the role of strategic planning for strengthening national statistical systems.

23. While the need for statistics is certainly not new, there has been growing recognition of the need for more and better statistics than before, for a number of reasons. Firstly, there is greater emphasis on evidence-based policy and decision-making – and much of the evidence needed will be statistics. Secondly, the rapid development of more technically sophisticated and data-demanding methods of policy analysis provide new challenges to national statistical systems, which may be unable to provide the statistics needed and new demands may crowd out traditional statistics. Thirdly, advances in information and communication technology have increased the pressure for evidence-based policy-making as governments are drawn into a broader and more intense dialogue with the private sector and civil society, and are increasingly challenged to explain and justify their actions. And fourthly, costs of making faulty policy decisions have increased as higher levels of foreign aid are being directed towards budget support rather than to specific projects, which make it more important that the policy decisions be under-pinned by good statistics and analysis.

24. Statistical development plans may take on many forms and other names, e.g. statistical master plan or strategy, statistical action plan, statistical capacity building strategy, or national strategy for the development of statistics (NSDS). An NSDS is an approach to statistical capacity building which covers the whole statistical system, encompassing data production, analysis and use, and all actors in the system, including line ministries. Compared to other approaches, it adds more value to the statistical capacity building process in the sense that, it integrates statistical development into national development policy and strategy processes, it follows best practice in organisational development and management, and it builds from earlier as well as existing statistical capacity processes, including implementation successes and constraints.

25. In the discussion that followed, it was emphasized that statistics are for the country primarily, and for servicing international commitments secondarily. However, there were situations when this did not seem to be the case, such as when the international agencies made good use of the data, while domestic use of the same data was low; and when much of the basic data collection was still dependent on foreign funding, which sometimes gave the perception that international agencies were more keen than the government to have

the data. Some of the suggestions mentioned to remedy the situation are summarized below.

- Include strengthening of local data analytic capacity as an integral part of the statistical development strategy.
- Improve access to data and improve the way statistics and indicators are presented.
- The official statisticians should keep abreast of changing information requirements. They should invite subject matter specialists to work towards sharpening concepts and methods behind data collection and statistics production, in a way that the end results are more relevant to current domestic needs and readily understood by policy and decision makers. The specific examples cited were on (low female) labour force participation and poverty statistics.
- Encourage other data producers – including non-government organizations – to use nationally recommended concepts and definitions; and in cases that they did not, convince them to publish their sources, concepts and methods along with the data.
- Sensitize politicians and policy makers on the advantages of having an autonomous national statistics office that is highly placed in the government hierarchy; placing it under the President’s or Prime Minister’s office had been mentioned.

26. All the above recommendations can be helped by, or incorporated in, a well conceived NSDS.

E. The Role of Advocacy: What has worked in countries?

27. The participants were divided into four groups and each group was asked to brainstorm the above-mentioned subject. Countries confirmed that political commitment is a critical success factor for building support for statistics and for the preparation and, more importantly, implementation of NSDS. The groups’ comments and suggestions on how to build political commitment are summarized below.

- Political commitment is earned through products that are timely, accurate, easily understood and relevant to the current information requirements of politicians and bureaucrats. The participants had seen displays of two excellent examples from the host country, namely small area poverty estimates and tsunami information system presented through maps.
- Political commitment is not earned overnight but gradually, such as when the statistical system is continuously on the lookout for opportunities to provide useful products and services in support of burning issues like good governance; improving gender statistics; evidence-based planning and adjustments in plans; and monitoring quality of life, including poverty.
- Official statisticians should move beyond mere provision of data, to analyzing and interpreting the data, as well as involvement in the use of the data, as in policy dialogues and planning.
- The head of the national statistical system should command respect from professional peers and possess such stature that (s)he has access to politicians and policy makers.

This implies that the main statistical agency is high enough in the government hierarchy to make its top post attractive to highly qualified statisticians/managers.

- The National Statistics Board or Council should be headed by a Minister. A balancing act is needed for the remaining members: while they should be senior enough (e.g. Secretary, Additional Secretary or Director), they should not be too high and too busy in the government hierarchy that it might be difficult to form a quorum for meetings.
- Enact a Statistics Act (for countries that have not got one). The Act should have provisions for political commitment by the government.
- Encourage the use of official data by the private sector, government and donors. If the official data are good, positive feedback by these users to the political hierarchy would lead to heightened political commitment to the statistical system.

F. Key Components of an NSDS

28. Frances Harper and Eric Bensel of the PARIS21 Secretariat presented an overview of key steps in strategic planning, and of the NSDS roll-out, based on the guidelines and advocacy materials describing the framework, essentials steps and enabling environments for the preparation and implementation of an NSDS. Hard copies of these were distributed to the participants, including “A Guide to Designing a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics” and “Measuring Up to the Measurement Problem: The Role of Statistics in Evidence-Based Policy-making”; soft copies may be accessed in www.paris21.org.

29. Two necessary conditions for NSDS to succeed, or any statistical development plan for that matter, are high-level political support or commitment by the government and effective leadership of the national statistical system. With these in place, work on the components or steps in preparing an NSDS may proceed. Some of the principles of an NSDS include:

- Drawing a well planned process (“road map”) to NSDS design
- Identifying user needs, data gaps and weaknesses
- Reviewing existing statistical production and analysis; capacity, legal and institutional framework and coordination arrangements
- Agreeing on desired results, building on what already exists or is in progress
- Setting priorities and strategies
- Determining necessary change in the management processes of the system
- Engaging and motivating staff.

30. The cost of implementing NSDS must be estimated. In doing so, it should be kept in mind that the total cost estimate needs to take account of continuing of the existing activities and services of the national statistical system and of the expenses incurred from new activities proposed in the NSDS. The funding sources should also be identified. Last but not least, the process followed in preparing the NSDS should engender a high sense of ownership of the end-product by the government.

31. How does one know when a high enough level political support necessary to launch a NSDS successfully has been achieved? While no hard and fast rules can be devised, the discussion mentioned as important indicators the statistical system's share in the national budget, as well as the government's share in the statistical system budget (i.e. net of donors' contributions). Moreover, increasing trends in the shares in recent years would be strong indications of growing and sustained political support.

32. A uniform understanding by all stakeholders of words and phrases used to describe statistical activities is important in setting priorities and deciding on programs to be included in the NSDS. Some examples cited during the discussion included statistical training and statistical methodology research which in the context of government statistics work mean something substantially different from the perspective of social scientists and academics.

G. NSDS in Practice

33. Frances Harper of the PARIS21 Secretariat made a presentation on the key stages of strategic planning. It will seldom be the case that an NSDS will be started from scratch. Many countries will have some statistical development plan covering certain sectors or ministries if not the entire statistical system. Some are participants in the IMF's GDDS (e.g. India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka) and a few in SDDS (examples can be found in Southeast Asia); the majority has prepared Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, Poverty Partnership Agreements and Poverty or MDG Reports in cooperation with the World Bank, ADB and UNDP respectively; and some have been/are recipients of statistical technical assistance from donors like bilaterals, UN bodies, ADB and World Bank. The point is that all the above-mentioned activities involved a review and assessment of the statistical systems and services in the partner countries, or at least some subsets of the national statistical database. These can be springboards for the preparation of an NSDS, the difference being that the latter comprehensively covers the entire national statistical system.

34. Ideally, before a decision whether or not to proceed with preparing an NSDS is reached, an assessment of the level of political commitment to developing the national statistical system is first made. If the assessment is favourable, a systematic approach to preparing the NSDS components (see section E above) follows. More particularly, the exercise includes assessing the quality of the existing statistical production vis-à-vis user needs; visioning, i.e. where the system is now and where it should be after NSDS implementation; planning and sequencing of actions, e.g. of the statistical capacity building activities; estimating costs and identifying sources of funds; and monitoring and evaluation of the implementation.

35. While an NSDS should be a nationally-owned strategic plan with most of the funding provided by the government, a good strategic plan should also encourage donors to contribute to certain components of the plan. This is one area where PARIS21 with its advocacy tools (guidelines, workshops, country visits) and close association with donors such as OECD/DAC, World Bank, IMF and UN bodies (including ESCAP) can play an effective and useful role.

36. In the discussion, it was pointed out that NSDS needed a champion or champions who continuously worked for support from the government, donors and users. In some countries, particularly in Africa where there is a longer collaboration with PARIS21 and hence more experience with NSDS than in Asia, the role of champion is usually filled by a minister who heads the national statistics council or national statistical coordinating agency, or by the head of the national statistics office.

H. Lessons Learned from Countries' Experiences with Strategic Plans

37. The Afghanistan and Nepal plans, which shared many similar characteristics, were highlighted in the presentation.

- They were developed with heavy expatriate consultants' inputs. In fact, the plans were written by a team of consultants after consultations with stakeholders in government, donors and the private sector. It is the usual case that the consultants' draft is then discussed with government towards the end of the formers' stay in the country, and a revised draft based on the discussion is produced -- also by the consultants.
- They are very detailed or comprehensive, and the implementation period of 5-10 years may be described as medium- to long-term.
- They were prepared in a relatively short time, since the consultants' terms for these types of assignment typically last no more than a few weeks or months.
- The plans include implementation costs; however, the sources of funding are not assured nor identified.

38. The workshop was informed that implementation of the Nepal plan is stalled due to lack of political commitment and funding. The Afghanistan country team also expressed the need for foreign funding for most of the activities listed in the country's plan; hence the likelihood of delays in implementation is high. These raise a number of issues or questions. Will a plan written essentially by consultants in a relatively short time earn the required level of commitment to, and ownership of, it by the government? Are there other ways of preparing strategic statistical development plans that are less dependent on consultants? The ongoing work in India and Pakistan points to a positive answer. In these two countries the local experts are in the drivers' seats and they prepare the plans themselves, thereby ensuring ownership. Moreover, the plans are taking much longer to prepare, which give ample time for wider consultation and to gain political commitment.

39. It has been pointed out that strategic planning is a dynamic process. Therefore, a long-term and very detailed action plan is neither practical nor realistic. What might be more practical is a phased strategy consisting of a detailed short-term action plan in which support and funding for the activities are more or less assured; and the succeeding stages have fewer details and are subject to revisions or refinements that reflect new realities or changed environments in which the statistical system operates, all within the context of a medium- to long-term strategic planning framework.

I. Key Next Steps In Improving Strategic Statistical Planning

40. Country teams were asked to ponder the following questions: In order to advance your national statistics strategy, what steps or action will you undertake in the next 12 months and beyond? For each action, what sort of support does your organization require? Where will this support come from? The teams presented their respective proposals, as follows:

- Draft or amend statistics act and obtain approval from government. This was proposed by Afghanistan, Bhutan (beyond 12 months), Iran, Nepal and Pakistan.
- Strengthen producer-user linkages, such as by arranging producer-user workshops.
- Develop databanks and websites.
- Conduct or continue preparations for programmed data collection activities, such as censuses of population and housing and the regular sample surveys. Secure government financing for these activities.
- Seek donor assistance for activities that entail foreign exchange costs, such as training requiring expatriate experts or travel outside country; expatriate consultants for planning and implementation of some sample surveys.
- Regarding donor assistance, suggestion to explore South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and similar south-south cooperation, including bilateral arrangements.

41. The individual country teams' proposals are reproduced in Annex 3. UNESCAP/PARIS21 plan to send these to the countries as part of the workshop follow-up activities.

J. Roundtable on international initiatives and the country perspective

42. Participants representing bilateral and international agencies made short presentations about their programmes in relation to the sub-region and Sri Lanka presented a country perspective on donor coordination and harmonization. Dr Yogi, from India, spoke about the International Comparison Programme. Other speakers included UNESCO and the Australian Bureau of Statistics; while ESCAP spoke about MDG country reports and UNDP's statistical literacy programme as well as their own programmes; and the PARIS21 Secretariat spoke about components of the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics and about the Health Metrics Network, as well as about its own advocacy, knowledge development and donor collaboration programmes.

43. An earlier presentation ("Why statistics?, Why NSDS?") briefed participants on collective donor commitments on coordination, harmonization and alignment made in 2005 in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. The Sri Lankan speaker explained that their country receives US\$900 million per year from 9 multilateral and 16 bilateral donors. Government priorities and individual donor priorities are not always harmonized: in some areas donors duplicate or overlap with each other, while some Government priorities are not priorities for any donors. Action is required on both sides to review coordination and harmonization, as well as to improve transparency and accountability.

The Sri Lankan speaker concluded that the best way to succeed is to fit donor assistance into Government national priorities, putting Government in the driving seat.

K. Closing Remarks

44. At the close of the workshop, the UNESCAP/PARIS21 delegation thanked all the participants for coming to the workshop. The delegation was joined by the rest of the participants in expressing sincere appreciation to the gracious hospitality and excellent workshop arrangements made possible by the host, the Department of Census and Statistics of Sri Lanka.

Annex 1. List of Participants

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. Azizullah Faqiri, Head of Economic Statistics Department, Central Statistics Office, Kabul

Mr. Ghulam Mustafa, Head of Coordination and Planning Strategy Department, Central Statistics Office, Kabul

Mr. Mohammad Sami Nabi, President of Executive Department, Central Statistics Office, Kabul

Mr. Esmatuilah Ramzi, Statistical Affairs Advisor, Central Statistics Office, Kabul

AUSTRALIA

Ms Teresa Dickinson, Head, Policy Secretariat Branch, Australian Bureau of Statistics,

BANGLADESH

Ms Akhter Zahan, Deputy Director, Statistics Division, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Dhaka

Mr. Israil Hossain Sikder, Regional Statistical Officer, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Dhaka

Mr. Asaduzzaman, Deputy Secretary, Planning Division, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Planning, Dhaka

Mr. N.K. Nizamuddin Chowdhury, Assistant Secretary, Planning Division, Ministry of Planning, Dhaka

BHUTAN

Mr. Karma Weezir, Joint Director, Planning Division, National Statistical Bureau, Thimphu

Mr. Sonam Laendup, Statistical Officer, National Statistical Bureau, Thimphu

Mr. Karma Lhendup, Statistical Officer, National Statistical Bureau, Thimphu

IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF)

Mr. Seyed Nematollah Mirfallah Nasiri, Director General, Department of Manufacturing, Mining & Environment Statistics, Tehran

Ms Fereshteh Talesh Ensandoust, Deputy Director, Statistics & Information, Management & Planning Organization of Gilan, Tehran

Mr. Nader Hakimipour, Head of Planning, Statistics & Information, Management & Planning Organization of Gilan, Tehran

Mr. Mohammad Hashemi, Counsellor Expert of UNESCAP, Department for International Economic Affairs, Tehran

MALDIVES

Ms Aishath Saadh, Assistant Director, Ministry of Planning and National Development, Male

Mr. Fuwad Thowfeeq, Assistant Director General, Ministry of Planning and National Development, Male

Ms Fathmath Manal Ali, Community Health Worker, Department of Public Health, Male

Mr. Ibarahim Mohamed, Planning Officer (Trainee), Ministry of Planning and National Development, Male

NEPAL

Dr Narayanhari Gajuryal, Deputy Director, Central Bureau of Statistics, Kathmandu

Mr. Kamalakanta Lamichhane, Deputy Director, Central Bureau of Statistics, Kathmandu

Mr. Rabi Shanker Sainju, Programme Director, National Planning Commission Secretariat, Kathmandu

Mr. Revati Raj Kafle, Joint Secretary, National Planning Commission Secretariat, Kathmandu

PAKISTAN

Mr. Asad Elahi, Secretary, Statistics Division, Ministry of Economic Affairs & Statistics, Islamabad

Mr. Abdul Hakeem Makhdoom, Deputy Director General, Federal Bureau of Statistics, Islamabad

SRI LANKA

Mr. A.G. Wimal Nanayakkara, Director General, Department of Census and Statistics, Colombo

Dr Gamini de Silva, Director, Department of Census and Statistics, Colombo

Mr A.M.D. Bandusena, Director, Economic Infrastructure Division, Department of National Planning, Colombo

Ms R.V. Nanayakkara, Additional Director General, Department of National Planning, Colombo

Dr A.J. Satharasinghe, Deputy Director, GIS and Information Dissemination Division, Department of Census and Statistics, Colombo

Mr. G. Munasinghe, Deputy Director, Trade and Industry Division, Department of Census and Statistics, Colombo

Mr Malabage Chandeeema Perera, Research Analyst, National Council for Economic Development, Colombo

RESOURCE PERSON

Mr. Isidoro P David, ESCAP Consultant, 16 Whitefield, White Plains, Quezon City 1110, Philippines

UNITED NATIONS BODIES

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Mr. Rafiqul Huda Chaudhury, Bashundhara R/A, CST SAWA, Kathmandu

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Mr. Abu Y.M. Selim, Country Director, Colombo
Ms. Janette Moritz, Senior Programme Advisor
Colombo, Sri Lanka

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Mr. Peter Leth, Field M&E Officer
Colombo, Sri Lanka

United Nations Educational Scientific & Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics Mr. Ko-Chih Tung, UIS Regional Advisor
Bangkok, Thailand

SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

PARIS21

Mr. Eric Bense, Project Officer, Paris

Ms Frances Harper, Statistical Advisor, Paris

Mr Tony Williams, Senior Policy Advisor, Paris

OBSERVERS

Dr Ananda Kumara Yogi, Deputy Director General, NSSO, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, New Delhi, India

Mr. Alex Korn, Independent Consultant, Indonesia

ESCAP SECRETARIAT

Ms Haishan Fu, Chief, Statistics Development Section, Statistics Division

Mr. Wei Liu, Associate Statistician, Statistics Development Section,
Statistics Division

Annex 2. Agenda

PARIS21/ESCAP Workshop for South Asia
on National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS)

Tuesday, 13 December 2005									
<i>Session 1</i>									
<i>Theme: Opening Session</i>									
<i>Chair: Mr A. G. W. Nanayakkara, Sri Lanka</i>									
<i>Start</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Presenter</i>						
8:45	9:30	<i>Registration</i>							
9:30	10:15	Opening address <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Department of Census and Statistics of Sri Lanka ▪ UNESCAP ▪ PARIS21 							
10:15	10:30	Objectives of the workshop	PARIS21						
10:30	11:00	<i>Coffee/tea Break</i>							
11:00	11:30	Presentation: Results of the baseline assessment	Facilitator						
11:30	13:00	Tour de Table (by country): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comments on baseline assessment ▪ Identification of gaps and key constraints 	Country teams						
13:00	14:15	<i>Lunch Break</i>							
<i>Session 2</i>									
<i>Theme: Making the Case for Strategic Statistical Planning</i>									
<i>Chair: Ms Haishan Fu, UNESCAP</i>									
14:15	15:00	Presentations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why statistics? Why NSDS? • Advocacy - audiences and tools 	PARIS21						
15:00	15:30	Discussion							
15:30	15:45	<i>Coffee/tea Break</i>							
15:45	17:00	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> Group work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How to build political commitment? </td> <td style="width: 5%; text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">}</td> <td style="width: 45%; padding: 5px;"> The role of advocacy: what has worked in countries? </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How to integrate statistical capacity building into national development policy? </td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Group work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How to build political commitment? 	}	The role of advocacy: what has worked in countries?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How to integrate statistical capacity building into national development policy? 			Country Teams
Group work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How to build political commitment? 	}	The role of advocacy: what has worked in countries?							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How to integrate statistical capacity building into national development policy? 									
17:00		Administration Issues	UNESCAP						
19:00		Welcome reception							

Wednesday, 14 December 2005

Session 2 (continued)/ Session 3
Theme: Strategic Planning
Chair: Mr. Abu Y. M. Selim, UNDP

<i>Start</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Presenter</i>
9:00	10:00	Feedback from session 2 groups	Facilitator
10:00	10:30	Session 3 Presentation: The key components of an NSDS - An overview	PARIS21
10:30	10:45	<i>Coffee/tea Break</i>	
10:45	11:15	Presentation: Lessons learned from existing strategic plans	Facilitator
11:15	11:45	Discussion	
11:45	12:15	Presentation: NSDS roll-out, how can PARIS21 help?	PARIS21
12:15	13:00	Discussion	
13:00	14:30	<i>Lunch Break</i>	

Session 4
Theme: Improving Strategic Statistical Planning at Country Level
Chair: Ms. Teresa Dickinson, Australian Bureau of Statistics

14:30	15:15	Presentation: NSDS in practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Political commitment ▪ Assessment and meeting user needs ▪ Vision ▪ Action planning ▪ Funding ▪ Implementation and M&E 	PARIS21
15:15	15:30	<i>Coffee/tea Break</i>	
15:30	16:00	Discussion	
16:00	17:00	Group work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improving strategic statistical planning – key next steps? 	Country teams

Thursday, 15 December 2005

Session 4 (continued)/ Session 5
Theme: International Initiatives
Chair: Ms. Frances Harper, PARIS21

<i>Start</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Presenter</i>
09:00	10:00	Session 4 Group work (continued)	Country teams
10:00	10:45	Session 4 Feedback and discussion	Country teams
10:45	11:00	<i>Coffee/tea Break</i>	
11:00	11:45	Session 4 Feedback and discussion (continued)	Country teams
11:45	12:30	Session 5 Round Table Discussion on International initiatives	Internationals
12:30	13:00	Presentation: Donor coordination and aid harmonization, the country perspective	Sri Lanka
13:00	14:15	<i>Lunch Break</i>	
<i>Session 5 (continued)/ Session 6</i> Theme: Conclusions and Recommendations Chair: Ms Haishan Fu, UNESCAP			
14:15	15:00	Session 5 Discussion	
15:00	15:30	Workshop conclusions and next steps	Facilitator
15:30	15:45	<i>Coffee/tea Break</i>	
15:45	16:45	Discussion	
16:45	17:00	Closing remarks	UNESCAP PARIS21 Sri Lanka

Annex 3. Steps to be Undertaken in the Next 12 Months, Beyond 12 Months, and Funding Source, as Proposed by the Individual Countries

AFGHANISTAN

According to the Statistical Master Plan approved by the government, the following steps are to be taken in the next 12 months:

Activity	Support Required	Support
Get approval of new statistical act	--	--
Formation of statistical council (proposal has already been made to the government)	--	--
Conducting various training activities for upgrading skills	technical and financial	Global
Establishing communication network between center and the provinces	Technical	--
Collection, compilation and publication of price statistics on a monthly basis	Financial	Global
Continuation of census preparatory work	technical & financial	Global
Data processing, analysis and dissemination of National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) survey	financial & technical	Global
Development of an interactive website for the CSO	technical global	

The following actions are to be taken in the years to come:

Activity	Support Required	Support
Conducting various training activities (general stat., national accounts, sampling methods, survey methods, agricultural stat., information technology, demographic and social analysis, etc.)	Financial	global, regional
Conducting a population and housing census	technical and financial	Global
Conducting surveys of economic activities (agriculture, manufacturing, transport, retail and wholesale prices, etc.)	financial and technical	Global

Activity	Support Required	Support
Upgrade analytical capacity of staff	financial and technical	global, regional
Development of statistics for small areas	Technical	global
Development of standards and classifications	technical, financial	global
Development of household sampling frame	Technical	global
Investment in physical infrastructure and equipment	Financial	global

BANGLADESH

Next 12 months:

1. Political Commitment. For improving our strategic planning we will organize dialogue between the users and the agency which will create demand for good statistics.
2. Assessment and meeting users needs. To identify the users needs to achieve the desired level of demand, we will arrange discussion and exchange of views
3. Our vision will be to introduce good statistics for good governance which will contribute to the improvement of life.

Action Planning

4. We have to set strategic objectives or goals and then determine the strategies which will make the road map for future development of statistics.

Fund

5. We shall identify sector of funding by priority basis keeping harmony with the PRSP related sectors which should be given priority. In case of prioritized projects, we shall use both national and donor funding. What types of donations should be taken will be determined through discussion with the donor. National budget can be changed through selling publication and other related documents.
6. Once policies are being executed, information is required by policy makers to monitor inputs, outputs and outcomes associated with the policies. For successful implementation we will engage experts in statistics and planning. It will developed management capacity through communicating with stake – holders, creating awareness and maintaining external and internal supports. Financial management and procurement will be transparent. We will ensure that the stated goals are being achieved and also track input activities and outputs.
At the mid-point of the action plan we will evaluate the significant constraints, the successful activities and to assess how the strategy will be set.

BEYOND THE NEXT 12 MONTHS WE WILL:

- Beyond the next 12 months high level government official involved in statistics and policy making will discussed with policy makers to convince them for political commitments.
- Through discussion with the users we will assess the prioritized sectors formulating strategies for meeting their demands.
- We will ensure the accuracy and transparency in prioritized sector.
- For action planning we will have to prepare training schedule / questionnaire, training materials etc.
- For prioritized sectors we will ask the government to allocate necessary funds in national budgets. For donor we will ask government to initiate fruitful discussion with the donors.
- A monitoring committee will be set up to examine the implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes associated with the policies.

SUPPORTS THAT OUR ORGANISATIONS REQUIRES AND THE SOURCES OF SUPPORTS FOR EACH ACTION PLAN:

- ❖ Government officials will convince the policy makers for political commitments.
- ❖ Only national support is sufficient.
- ❖ For assessment of meeting of user needs higher administrative and expertise support is required.
- ❖ It will be born from national sources.
- ❖ To materialize the vision, strong supervision and accountability is needed.
- ❖ It will be provided nationally.
- ❖ National and regional experts are required.
- ❖ It will be provided nationally and from regional sources also.
- ❖ Projects will be conducted under national budgets.
- ❖ Regional and global funds will also be required.
- ❖ For implementation, monitoring and evaluation steps.
- ❖ National and regional experts are required.

BHUTAN

Next 12 months:

1. Situational analysis
2. Sensitisation
3. Brainstorming
4. Submission to Board Members
5. Submission to CCM (Core Council of Ministers)

Beyond 12 months:

1. Enact Act
2. Infrastructure development
3. Strengthen capacity
4. Build network
5. Design website

INDIA

In the next 12 months, we will:

- Complete Tier-I of ISSP (India Strategic Statistical Plan)
- Complete the preliminary work on 3 sub-groups on SAARC STAT
- Complete processing of 5th Economic Census through ICR Technology
- Annual Action Plan for MOS&PI Statistical Activities for 2006–2007
- All other normal functions / activities / programmes to continue

Beyond the next 12 months, we will:

- Implementation of ISSP
- Carry on strengthening initiatives for stronger partnerships in SAARC region
- Carry on the efforts for stronger ties with international arena.

For each action, what sort of support does your organisation require?

- For ISSP, World Bank financing is proposed to be taken
- For other two, no assistance is yet thought of. However, SAARC countries would welcome financial support for this endeavour from ESCAP, ADB, and PARIS21 for building and strengthening South East Asia statistical works

IRAN

To overcome the existing challenges and reach the ideal statistical system, it is necessary to provide a plan and method of implementation the main measures and activities of the plan and other classified as below:

National strategy	12 months	Beyond 12 months	Sort of support	
			National	Intl
1. To coordinate and increase the competence of the national statistical systems components (capacity building)				
1.1 The act of NSO should be reviewed with an emphasis on goals, duties, and position of the NSO, HCS and the statistical unit of Gove 8.	Review and preparation of the new act of statistics	Approval by Gove 8 parliament	Gove 8 parliament	Experiences of R8G
1.2 The NSO offices as well as statistical units in GA should be restructured and reorganized	Review of org. of statistical units in the Gov 8 and designing new chart	--	Approval of gov. parliament	--
2. To conduct projects required for data production program, improving data comparability and data quality				

2.1 statistical surveys should be designed and implemented in different fields (gaps and priorities should be identified)	Design the survey and field operation	Data processing and dissemination	Sufficient budget allocation	Tech support
2.2 statistical definitions, concepts, classification and other standards should be provided by the NSO in cooperation with the other Gov. A and UN agencies	Gradually	Developed	Cooperation of related GA	Consultancy
3. to expedite, facilitate, and integrate the production and dissemination of official statistics				
3.1 the NSO should establish the national statistical data	Designing database	Providing updated data	Budget	Template for

base and should be responsible for its continuous updating				consultancy
3.2 through continuous study of the needs of the statistical users and the extent they are pleased with the statistical services, NSO will take measures to develop comprehensive and effective information service based on ICT	Recognition of needs of users	Developing information system	Professional human resources	Training of trainers

MALDIVES

Next 12 months:

1. Conduct population and housing census 2006 (GoM budget allocations made and staff at statistical section trained)
2. Complete processing and publication of census tables (GoM budget allocated and statistical staff trained)
3. Develop and publish the statistical yearbook 2006 (GoM budget allocations)
4. Easy access of data and in a user friendly format (national and international)

Beyond next 12 months:

1. Analysis of census 2006 (advisory services of regional organizations would help in carrying this out successfully)
2. Upgrade the statistical regulations to an Act (a UN or a regional organisation's declaration would help)
3. Place statistical officers at Atoll level (international and regional organisations can provide advisory and financial assistance, in training these officers in the 20 administrative atolls)
4. Strengthen line ministry's statistical sections (international and regional assistance)
5. Strengthen the role of the National Statistical Coordinating Committee to increase cooperation and efficiency (national)

NEPAL

Next 12 months:

1. Review the existing organizational structure
2. Prepare directives for generation of statistical information
3. Develop linkages with various organizations
4. Necessary amendment in national Statistical Act for professional autonomy in statistical activities
5. Generation of demand for data
6. Develop advocacy method.

(No external assistance required for these)

Beyond next 12 months:

1. Improve quality of data (with national and donor assistance)
2. Creation of data bank for different users (national and donor)
3. Increase the coverage of statistical data as per need of various users (national and donor)
4. Improve the capacity building of statistical organization and selective agencies (national and donor)
5. Develop long term schedule for various data collection (CBS)
6. Prepare cost recovery plan for sustainability of organization (CBS)

PAKISTAN

In the next 12 months, we will:

- Finalize details of the plan and obtain approval of the govt (N)
- Draft the law for implementation of restructured org and seek approval of the government legislature (N)
- Set up a cell for monitoring and implementation of plan (N)
- Appoint a project manager to oversee development of the plan (N/I)
- Advertise the tenure posts, formation of committee for taking interviews of candidates and making appointments (N)
- Seek donor/government funding for implementation of the project (N/I)
- Pursue the training programmes for middle and lower level statisticians (N/I)

Beyond the next 12 months

- Arrange users workshop to assess the needed amendment in the existing survey programmes and to draft survey programmes for next year (N/I)

- Set up a committee to evaluate the existing staff strength for dispensing with the dead wood (N)
- Prepare an annual report of restructured statistics division's performance for submission to the President of Pakistan
- Donor agencies will be requested to provide experts to impart training in the areas for improving
 - Data quality
 - Data analysis
 - Censuses and surveys
 - Econometrics models and forecasting
 - Education, health, demographic and labor force and industrial statistics (I)

SRI LANKA¹

The government and the World Bank have started discussions on a possible loan from the STATCAP. The DCS will take the lead in the preparation of a Statistical Master Plan (SMP) in a format suitable as a loan proposal document. A 2004 document, "Building Durable Capacity in the Sri Lankan Statistical System," will serve as reference in identifying the main components of the SMP. In particular, the government attaches highest priority to two components:

- A building to house all central units of DCS that are currently spread in several locations in the Greater Colombo area.
- Establishment of a Research and Training Institute in DCS that will spearhead capacity building in official statistics methodology research and training of the national statistics cadre.

Other important themes include:

- improving the timeliness of data
- improving coordination
- increased focus on demand-driven data
- staff motivation
- training in management

It is hoped that the SMP will be completed in the next twelve months and approval of the loan follows thereafter. Implementation of such loan typically ranges between 5 - 10 years.

¹ This entry was not written by the Sri Lanka country team. It is based on the UNESCAP/PARIS21 team's recollection of the Sri Lanka oral presentation of the plans of the Department of Census and Statistics (DCS), particularly in relation to the possibility of applying for a loan from the World Bank's STATCAP facility.