COMMITTEE ON STATISTICS, NINTH SESSION (CST9)
11 - 13 DECEMBER 2024

INTERVENTION NOTE MALAYSIA

Agenda Item	**ESCAP**/CST(9)/3 Emerging issue: agile statistical systems that are fit for the future

Issues for consideration by the Committee	
Draft Decision (DD)	
DD1.	The Committee on Statistics decides that building agile statistical systems should be among the priorities of its work. It requests the bureau to propose, with support from the secretariat and in consultation with member States and development partners, draft recommendations to that end for consideration by the Committee, while bearing in mind the need to stay within existing regular budget resources.

1. Malaysia would like to extend our appreciation to the Secretariat, with the support of the Bureau members, for developing this comprehensive paper and presenting its recommendations, accompanied by relevant examples for the Committee's consideration.

2. Malaysia fully supports the Secretariat's initiative to build agile statistical systems. These systems are critical in leveraging technological advancements and developing the necessary skills for modernization—a path that many countries, including Malaysia, are currently pursuing. However, we acknowledge the challenges in aligning national efforts with global requirements, particularly in terms of financial constraints and limited human resource capacity**.**

3. At the global level, various platforms have been established to enhance capacity and support the transition towards agile organizations. It is essential for national statistical systems to seize these opportunities, leveraging existing frameworks and resources to strengthen their capabilities. We encourage member states to explore these avenues and advocate for their implementation at the national level to ensure statistical systems remain resilient, responsive, and aligned with international standards.

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4. In Malaysia, the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) has actively embraced agile principles by fostering some key initiatives such as:

(i) **Agile in Statistics**

DOSM remains committed to responsiveness and flexibility, continuously adapting to changing data demands. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, DOSM quickly transitioned to online surveys and leveraged administrative records to ensure the provision of critical data.

(ii) **Cross-Functional Collaboration**

Placing preliminary Chief Data Officers (CDOs) in ministries and agencies to enhance analytic expertise in the civil service aimed to strengthen centralized data governance, implement advanced technologies and foster data-sharing initiatives. Currently, a CDO is assigned to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security to support the Agricultural Census 2024.

Establishing the National Statistics and Data Council (NSDC), the highest advisory body on national data and analysis, chaired by the Prime Minister. The Council, comprising Cabinet members, the Chief Secretary, Chief Statistician, technocrats, academicians, and private sector representatives, is supported by an Executive Committee with four clusters, and plans are underway to form state and district-level councils to advance its agenda nationwide.

These initiatives demonstrate Malaysia's commitment to fostering an agile, innovative, and future-ready statistical system. We encourage other member states to adopt similar practices to enhance their statistical capabilities and strengthen regional and global collaborations.

(iii) **Early Warning Systems**

DOSM supports the Government by providing proactive inputs, such as Advance Estimates of GDP and projections for the Aging Population and Decent Cost of Living. These insights are crucial for timely and effective policy formulation.

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(iv) **Enhancing Human Capabilities**

DOSM has strengthened its recruitment and talent acquisition processes by collaborating with the Public Service Commission (PSC) on eligibility, training, and assessments to secure highly skilled personnel. Since 2008, the statistics profession has been reclassified under the Economic Service (E) Scheme, with upgraded qualifications for Statisticians to meet evolving demands.

Newly appointed DOSM officers are required to complete the Statistical Competencies Development Programme (SCDP), a 3-month intensive training designed to equip them with essential skills and knowledge in statistical subject matter and applied tools before they assume their roles.

To further develop expertise, the government annually provides funding under the Federal Training Funds (HLP), encouraging DOSM personnel to pursue advanced degrees, including master's and Ph.D. programs, particularly in data science and big data analytics. This initiative fosters the development of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and enhances capabilities in advanced statistical analysis.

Since 2012, the Statistical Training Institute of Malaysia (ILSM) has been instrumental in delivering structured training to strengthen internal capacity. In addition, DOSM personnel actively engage with international bodies, contributing their expertise through journals, technical papers, and global forums.

To bolster analytical expertise, DOSM has trained 19 certified data scientists, with 30 additional statisticians currently undergoing training through inter-agency collaboration. This modernization of statistical services aligns with Malaysia's National Agenda for Strengthening the National Statistical System (NSS), emphasizing the adoption of new technologies to address the challenges of the digital era and enhance the capacity of NSS officials.

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(i) Health environment workplaces

FitDOSM Initiative: DOSM organizes FitDOSM once a week, where each division at headquarters hosts various sports activities involving the DOSM community. This initiative promotes physical fitness, team-building, and overall well-being among staff.

Data Science Lab: To support complex Big Data and Data Science projects, DOSM provides a state-of-the-art Data Science Lab equipped with high-performance computers, specialized tools, and software. Additionally, personnel have access to virtual machines through VMware technologies, ensuring they have the necessary resources to handle computationally intensive tasks efficiently.

Intelligent Data Lounge (IDL) is a dedicated facility designed to enable users to perform **Actionable Analytics** services. It provides an environment for implementing advanced analytics, utilizing both public and restricted data to derive meaningful insights and support data-driven decision-making.

(ii) Internal communication strategy

In the efforts of maintaining healthy and dynamic relations among management and staff, DOSM has an internal communication strategy to strengthen the relationship between management and staff. Joint Departmental Council creates two-way communication where employees are given space in voicing opinions, views and contribute thoughtful ideas for the benefit and good of the organization.