

Report of the First Meeting of Partners for Statistics Development in Asia-Pacific

14 December 2010 – Bangkok, Thailand

Background

During the first session of the Committee on Statistics held in February 2009, a side event entitled ‘Forum on Statistics Development: Coordinating Support for Statistics Development in Asia and the Pacific’ took place to galvanize interest and support for launching an informal regional coordination mechanism of all international, regional and sub-regional organizations and bilateral donors concerned with the improvement of statistics in Asia and the Pacific.

At the 40th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission, member States confirmed the need for such a mechanism, calling for the ESCAP secretariat to “establish an informal mechanism for donor coordination for statistical development in the region, taking into account existing mechanisms, roles and responsibilities”.

To this end, the ESCAP secretariat organized the First Meeting of Partners for Statistics Development in Asia-Pacific on 14 December 2010, to define this Partnership. The meeting, Co-chaired by ADB and UNFPA, was attended by international, regional and sub-regional organizations and bilateral donors that are engaged in statistics development activities in the Asian and the Pacific region, as well as government representatives from Australia, Japan and the Russian Federation.

The Meeting discussed the purpose, membership and organization of work of the Partnership, and outlined the strategic objectives for its work.

Outcome

Participants agreed to establish the Partnership with the purpose of improving the combined impact of capacity building activities through enhanced coordination, synergy and complementarity among international agencies and donors.

Partners emphasized that support to the development of statistics in the region should focus on the outcomes to be achieved rather than on inputs they provide to countries. They also recognized that coordination among agencies should be realistic and pragmatic by founding the Partnership on solid and gradually increasing building-blocks.

On this basis, the Partnership agreed on its draft Terms of Reference (ToR) outlining its purpose, role and key functions, composition and structure, and the organization of work.

Strategic objectives

The Partnership supported the strategic direction and priorities outlined in the note prepared by the Bureau of the Committee on Statistics entitled 'Proposed strategic directions of the Committee on Statistics' (www.unescap.org/stat/cst/2/CST2-2E.pdf). Following these lines, Partners agreed that the strategic objectives for the work of the Partnership would be:

- Advocacy: The importance of engaging governments across line-ministries and policy-makers to highlight the need for investing in statistics was emphasized.
- Strengthening National Statistics Offices' role as the leader of National Statistical Systems: It was recognized that each partner has an important role to play in advocating for better coordination of National Statistical Systems with government officials from their respective counterpart ministries.
- Modernizing countries' statistical information systems: Modernization of statistical information systems was seen as particularly important for increasing the access by users to available data.
- Coordination in the development of core sets of indicators in the areas of social, economic, environmental and population statistics.
- Promoting the improvement and use of administrative data records for statistical purposes.
- Coordination of statistical training in the region.

Partners agreed to align its work to the decisions and priorities outlined by the Committee on Statistics, and to align efforts and cooperate with the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities at the global level.

It was further agreed to report progress made by the Partnership towards meeting its strategic objectives to the Committee on Statistics.

Next steps

1. The secretariat agreed to revise the ToR based on suggestions and comments made by the group and share it for final comments by 24 December 2010.
2. The Partnership decided that a first step towards the improvement of cooperation and collaboration is to share information. To avoid duplication, the group agreed to make full use of the PARIS21 Partner Report on Support to Statistics (PRESS) as a basis for information sharing. It agreed to further analyze the PRESS to assess its usefulness for this purpose, leaving the option for improving this tool or share information through other means open. To this end,

PARIS21 and the Secretariat will conduct an analysis of the PRESS exercise and its data by the end of March 2011.

3. Partners requested that the secretariat in consultation with the Co-chairs, prepares a document outlining the strategic objectives to be pursued by the Partners, and share this with the group in early 2011.
4. The group requested the Co-chairs to decide, with the assistance of the secretariat, the date and place for the next meeting.

Annex – List of participants

ESCAP MEMBER STATES

AUSTRALIA

Mr Brian Pink, Australian Statistician, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Belconnen, Australia

JAPAN

Mr Shunsuke Kimura, Director, International Statistical Affairs, Office of Director-General for Policy Planning (Statistical Standards), Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Tokyo

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Mr Igor Kharitonov, Director, Foreign Statistics and International Cooperation Department, Federal State Statistics Service (ROSSTAT), Moscow

UNITED NATIONS BODIES

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME (UN-HABITAT)

Mr Gora Mboup, Chief, Global Urban Observatory, UN-Habitat, Nairobi United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Mr Najib Assifi, Deputy Regional Director and Representative in Thailand, UNFPA, Bangkok

Mr Christophe Lefranc, Technical Adviser, Census and Data, UNFPA, Bangkok

Mr Eduard Jongstra, Technical Adviser Population and Development, UNFPA Pacific Sub-Regional Office, UNFPA, Suva

Ms Petra Righetti, Population and Development Analyst, UNFPA, Bangkok

SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND RELATED ORGANIZATIONS

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION (FAO)

Mr Pietro Gennari, Director, Statistics Division, FAO, Rome

Mr Jairo Castano, Senior Statistician, Economic, Social and Policy Assistance Group (ESP), FAO, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, FAO, Bangkok

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE (ILO)

Ms Monica Castillo, Head, Decent Work Data Production Unit, Department of Statistics, ILO,
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Mr Bijoy Raychaudhuri, Senior Statistician and SIMPOC Co-ordinator International
Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), ILO, Geneva

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND (IMF)

Mr Manik Shrestha, Deputy Chief, Real Sector Division, Statistics Department, IMF,
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Mr Michael Andrews, Statistics Advisor, PFTAC/IMF, IMF, Suva

INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION (ITU)

Mr Ashish Narayan, Advisor, ITU, Bangkok

UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION (UNIDO)

Mr Shyam Upadhyaya, Chief Statistician, UNIDO, Vienna

INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

ASEAN SECRETARIAT

Mr Agus Sutanto, Head, Statistics Unit, ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADB)

Ms Chellam Palanyandy, Lead Professional (Statistics & Statistical Capacity Building),
Economics and Research Department, ADB, Manila

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (EC)

Mr James Whitworth, Head of Unit, Eurostat, EC, Luxembourg

ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD)

Mr Eric Bense, Programme Officer, PARIS21, OECD, Paris

SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY (SPC)

Mr Gerald Haberkorn, Manager, Statistics and Demography Programme, SPC, Noumea

STATISTICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC COUNTRIES (SESRIC)

Mr Savaş Alpay, Director General, SESRIC, Ankara

OTHER ENTITIES

DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (DFID)

Mr Martin Dyble, Regional Statistics Adviser to Asia, DFID, London

ESCAP SECRETARIAT

Ms Haishan Fu, Chief, Statistics Division (SD)

Mr Jan Smit, Chief, Statistical Development and Analysis Section (SDAS), SD

Ms Rikke Munk Hansen, Chief, Statistical Information Services Section (SISS), SD

Mr Andres Montes, Statistician, SDAS, SD

Ms Harumi Shibata, Associate Statistician, SISS, SD