



**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COUNCIL**

Distr.
LIMITED
E/ESCWA/SD/2010/IG.1/4(Part I)/Add.1
5 August 2010
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Statistical Committee
Ninth session
Beirut, 13-15 October 2010

**FEEDBACK FROM NATIONAL STATISTICAL OFFICES IN SOME MEMBER
COUNTRIES ON THE OUTLINE OF THE STRATEGIC VISION FOR
THE WORK OF ESCWA IN THE FIELD OF STATISTICS**

Summary

This document is an addendum to the document containing the outline of a strategic vision for the work of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in the field of statistics. The outline was circulated by the ESCWA secretariat to member countries in April and June 2010 with a request to send comments, suggestions and amendments they deem appropriate.

This document presents the feedback received from national statistical offices in Jordan, the Sudan, Iraq, Palestine, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Department of Statistics in Jordan

The topics listed as priorities are not as such in fact, but they rather represent the areas covered by national statistical offices (NSOs) in their routine work without identifying specific priorities. It is known that NSOs differ substantially in terms of their priorities depending on the extent of their advancement in the field of statistics.

The priorities of the Department of Statistics in Jordan are as follows:

1. Increasing the reliance on official records to obtain statistical data.
2. Harmonizing statistical data bases.
3. Capacity-building in the area of measuring poverty and livelihood levels.
4. Capacity-building in the area of establishing tables of inputs and outputs, and national accounts and salary indices.

Central Bureau of Statistics in the Sudan

The Central Bureau of Statistics in the Sudan thanks the ESCWA secretariat for sharing the outline of the strategic vision of ESCWA for the upcoming five years. The outline of the strategic vision is well appreciated and it addressed almost all key areas of interest, but we would like to add the following areas of interest to be highlighted in the priority areas/areas of focus:

1. Agriculture and livestock statistics.
2. Informal sector statistics.
3. Statistics of special groups (nomadic population, etc).

Central Organization for Statistics and Information Technology in Iraq

*Proposal for discussion and consultation
"Partnership for statistical work and exchange of expertise
to build statistical capacity at regional and international levels"*

We would like to point out that the proposed vision indicates the most important elements that should be encompassed in the strategy; we also suggest the addition of some items we deem important and which need to be discussed and implemented as follows:

1. Identifying needed priorities according to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and filling the gaps according to the World Bank statistical list for the purpose of international comparison.
2. Developing the infrastructure of NSOs in member countries.
3. Optimizing the use of information technology and electronic publishing and applying the electronic government.

4. Preparing a schedule of capacity-building programme for workers in the field of statistics to be updated every two years according to the plan set forth by the ESCWA Statistical Committee, with a focus on the following:
 - (a) Methods of statistical analysis;
 - (b) Tourism statistics (visitors, emigrants, residence, archaeological tourism and religious tourism);
 - (c) Official statistics making applying the taxation system, including the informal sector.
5. Adopting a statistical code for economic activities and establishing comprehensive statistical frameworks.
6. Developing all kinds of water and energy statistics.
7. Developing methods for field work and the use of Global Positioning System (GPS) devices to locate samples.
8. Using the geographical information system in data dissemination and presentation.

Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics

Following are the additions required by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics to the strategic vision:

Possible working groups

We suggest that the following groups be added:

1. Working group on poverty.
2. Working group on the informal sector.
3. Working group on disability.
4. Working group on the International Comparison Program.

Priority focus areas

We suggest adding the following:

Social statistics:

1. Unemployment.
2. Elderly people.
3. Persons with disability.

Economic statistics and information technology:

1. Foreign sector.
2. Research and development.
3. Electronic trade.

Samples:

1. Least squares estimates.
2. Variance analysis and addressing lack of response.
3. Samples and the establishment of sampling frameworks.

Environmental statistics:

1. Statistics and accounts of emissions.
2. Environmental tourism statistics.

Policies

The production of statistical data on policies should focus on the production of statistics related to the measurement of advancement of societies and governance statistics.

Goals

We suggest that the following items be added:

1. Compiling, disseminating and analysing statistical data on ESCWA member countries through a questionnaire to be circulated to those countries, with prior coordination with international agencies that undertake similar activities, such as the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC) and others.
2. Establishing an information bank or data bank for statistical data on member countries and regularly updating them.
3. Encouraging member countries to adhere to the new methods of compiling statistical data and to international concepts, terminology and classifications.

Working mechanisms

We suggest that the following item be added:

The Statistical Committee shall act as a rapporteur for ESCWA meetings and provide them with the required secretariat services.

Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics in Egypt

The following subjects are suggested to be added to the priority areas:

1. Statistical capacity-building in the area of tracking studies.
2. Statistical capacity-building in the area of in-depth and descriptive analytical studies.
3. Using internationally standardized surveys in order to obtain internationally comparable standardized indicators.
4. Addressing statistics on environment issues.
5. Addressing statistics on all kinds of consumed energy.
6. Addressing statistics on democracy and good governance.
7. Adding to the proposed agenda such topics as touristic activity, health services, sports activity and cultural activity.

8. Raising statistical awareness among workers and supporting statistical capacity.
9. Setting up the general framework for the elements and components of the statistical strategy and coordinating with line ministries.
10. Adding, among the proposed expert groups, a group on energy.

Central Department of Statistics and Information in Saudi Arabia

We would like to note the importance of the following:

1. Developing a mechanism for the huge accumulation of information at the NSOs, including by compiling, analysing and packaging data, in addition to disseminating data in an atlas form.
2. Supporting research and training material through the organization of training sessions, seminars, conference and workshops on applications, statistical programmes and geographical systems.
3. Enhancing cooperation and designing mechanisms for consultation and exchange of expertise between member countries and expanding the performance assessment in the light of the fast evolution of the information environment used.
4. Intensifying technical meetings with the United Nations organizations and other statistical organizations to explain the working methods and mechanisms of those organizations specialized in statistical work, and coordinating between statistical offices (departments) in the state and central statistical offices to achieve statistical integration and obtain accurate and consistent statistical results and information.
5. Raising statistical awareness in societies and give attention to the media for the presentation of statistical results.
6. Including statistics dissemination in the strategic vision, and ensuring the adoption of the General Data Dissemination System (GDDS) in the short term, and preparing for the fulfilment of the requirements of the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) in the long term.
7. With regard to priority focus areas, we suggest adding the following subjects:
 - (a) Informal sector statistics;
 - (b) Bases and standards for marketing statistical products.
