



REPORT OF THE ADB/PARIS21

Joint High Level Forum on Statistical Capacity Building for ASEAN Countries

7-9 November 2002
Manila, Philippines



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I. AN OVERVIEW

Background

The background to the three-day High Level Forum on Statistical Capacity Building in ASEAN Countries, hosted jointly by the ADB and the PARIS21 Secretariat, can be linked to the conviction of the international development community, developing partners and donors alike, that there is a need to move in a sustained manner to pursue new approaches and poverty reduction strategies through growth. These aspirations culminated in the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The MDG call for setting targets and benchmarks, and the development of statistical indicators for measuring progress and results, for evaluating success and failures, and for evaluating policies and responses. Data availability has been identified as a key for such assessments.

Despite efforts by both developing countries and the donor community, national statistical capacities continue to remain inadequate to generate relevant data for design of appropriate policies and for monitoring development progress. Concerns about the adequacy of statistical capacities preceded the adoption of the MDG and in 1999 led the UN, the World Bank, the IMF, bilateral donors, and partners from developing countries to conclude that a more sustained effort was needed to heighten the need for greater attention to statistical capacity building. Following the initial meeting, the PARIS21 consortium was launched, as a partnership of decision makers, experts, analysts and statisticians. PARIS21 has, since its launch, promoted the principle that statistical development is not merely a technical matter, but a development policy issue. It has also argued that statistics and their analysis is a fundamental element of governance, accountability, transparency and evaluation.

In the Asia-Pacific region, ADB has played a significant role in assisting its member countries to strengthen their statistical capacities by a variety of means that have included providing grant based technical assistance, promotion of exchanges between member countries, the advocacy of adoption of “best practice” and demonstrating the importance of data in decision making and analysis. ADB has partnered other donors and the broader international statistical community in pursuit of developing statistical capacities.

The High Level Forum, jointly hosted by ADB and PARIS21, was the first in a series in the Asia-Pacific Region and mirrored similar meetings in Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East. The broad goals of the Forum were to assess current capacities, define strategies to strengthen national statistical capabilities so as to meet the increasing data demand of government planners, decision makers and researchers as well as the private sector. A second goal was to mobilize and harness international support, in a catalytic and better aligned manner, to pave the way toward self sustainability.

Highlights From Opening Addresses

Participants in the Forum included Ministers and senior officials of the 10 ASEAN countries, representatives of international agencies and donor governments. The Forum was opened by Mr. Tadao Chino, President of ADB, and Mr. Jean-Claude Faure, Chairman of the Development Assistance Committee of OECD. Mr. Dante Canlas, Director-General of NEDA and Secretary, Socio-Economic Planning of the Government

of the Philippines delivered the keynote address. A full list of participants and the agenda for the meeting are reproduced in annexes to this report.

Mr. Ifzal Ali, Chief Economist of the ADB opened the meeting by welcoming all participants to the Forum. He expressed great satisfaction that several ministers and senior government officials of ASEAN countries were present. He noted that this was indicative of the importance governments in the region attached to statistics and their eagerness to improve their statistical systems in their countries. He further noted the importance ADB placed to statistical capacity building and referred to its role in capacity building over the past three decades. He observed that strengthened statistical capacities invariably lead to improved planning processes as well as better and transparent policies and contributed to the overarching objective of poverty reduction. While the ADB would continue assisting DMCs in strengthening statistical capabilities, the responsibility for building national statistical capacity ultimately lies with national governments. External support in the form of bilateral or multilateral arrangements can make important strategic contributions towards the long-term goal of “better use of better statistics”, but demanded a serious commitment on the part of governments was a must for the development of statistics in any country.

In his address Mr. Chino reiterated the high importance ADB attached to the development of viable statistical capacities. He noted that almost all of ADB’s DMCs have endeavored to develop their statistical capacities but while there is clear evidence of progress, such progress has been uneven. The 1997 East Asian financial crisis showed that there were critical gaps in the compilation and release of timely, policy-relevant data sets that were needed for effective economic management, as well as for avoiding crises. He went on to note that ADB has worked closely with the ASEAN community in the compilation of new statistical series and enhanced the frequency of collections in a number of areas to minimize critical gaps.

Mr. Chino observed that ADB had adopted poverty reduction as its overarching goal. Comprehensive statistics on poverty were lacking. He attributed weaknesses in national statistical systems to: 1) under-investment in statistical infrastructure; 2) less than adequate budgetary resources; and 3) less than sound statistical management practices.

The President expressed the view that there was a need for a road map for strengthening statistical systems which are capable of generating policy-relevant data sets. He suggested a number of key principles that should underpin a new strategy for capacity building. These should include:

- capacity building demands a national commitment to allocate adequate financial and human resources;
- adoption of sound management practices to enable effective and efficient use of all available resources;
- demand for statistics should be the driving force in adopting balanced work programs;
- pursuit of policies that ensure data transparency and credibility;
- improved data dissemination

In closing, Mr. Chino stressed that while capacity building will undoubtedly demand new partnerships between countries and the development agencies in technical cooperation

efforts, it was patently clear that the primary and ultimate responsibility lay with the government themselves and that they must provide the bulk of the needed resources for establishing and sustaining viable statistical systems. Together with PARIS21, ADB will play a role in addressing complex issues of statistical capacity building of its DMCs.

In his opening address, Mr. Jean Claude Faure, noted that the development community at large, in adopting the MDG had recognized the formidable challenge of reducing poverty and that meeting the goals will demand collective endeavors from all countries and donor agencies. He stressed that success in meeting the millennium development goals will need to be based on the three pillars of governance, coherence and the pursuit of performance in the area of statistics in particular.

Statistical indicators represented just the tip of the iceberg in the production of statistics. National statistical systems needed to be fully operational and efficient. Capacity building in statistics was as complex and urgent as capacity creation in other areas, and required sustained efforts.

He then underscored the point that capacity building cannot be donor-driven any longer. While there was a need for renewed commitments from the donor community in support of statistical capacity building, national governments must take on the burden by committing themselves to address the issue of adequate funding of national statistical programs.

Regional workshop of this nature presented opportunities for a unique mixture of ambition and concrete, pragmatic exchanges between the different stakeholders represented by data producers, users and funding agencies. He expressed the view that these meetings would help participants to evaluate, measure and to define statistical strategies and to strengthen national statistical capabilities so that these meet the increasing data demand.

He stressed the need for a pragmatic and concrete approach that was inclusive and broad-based involving participation of policy makers, experts and statisticians and civil society representatives in the formulation of strategies. In welcoming the interest shown by the participating countries, he hoped that the Country preparatory documents will allow focus on national statistical systems, their problem issues and prospects. He further hoped that the meeting would contribute to the development of a dynamic partnership approach to sustained statistical cooperation through renewed and comprehensive national strategies in a supportive regional climate and union.

He concluded by expressing gratitude to the ADB for hosting the Forum and to the Government of the Philippines for its active involvement. He also thanked the PARIS21 Secretariat for its dynamism, dedication and efficient work.

In a keynote address, Dr. Canlas expressed the view that improving statistical capacity was a key to enhancing the availability of economic and social statistics. These were vital to the measurement of growth and development. Measurements are needed at regular intervals of time to track whether or not progress is taking place. In this context, the system of national income and product accounts represented a starting point but was not equipped to provide answers related to equity and poverty issues. Given the scarcity of resources, choices had to be made between improving the core of the national income accounts or to valuing non-market activities.

In his view, globalization has triggered the introduction of new products and consequently sharp change in prices. The challenge to national income accounting, then, is to keep track of the changing product mix and prices. Statistical agencies faced new challenges in monitoring change. A case in point was the measurement of productivity, an area that has received much attention in East and Southeast Asia. He noted that much had been accomplished but the information and communication technology revolution raised new issues. Hence, new estimation techniques were needed.

He further observed that the current focus on poverty was highlighted by the war against terrorism. While recognizing that poverty is not necessarily the cause of terrorism, he was of the view that it is likely to be a conditioning factor. Therefore, efforts in fine-tuning the methodology for poverty measurement required closer attention.

Dr. Canlas thanked the ADB, the PARIS21 Secretariat, and the OECD for having organized the Forum.

Thematic Presentations

Representatives of the ADB, the PARIS21 Secretariat and the ASEAN Secretariat made presentations that were designed to serve as a backdrop to country statements that constituted the core agenda of the Forum.

The ADB presentation was based on a paper entitled *STATISTICAL CAPACITY BUILDING: AN ADB PERSPECTIVE FOR A FRESH APPROACH*. The presentation noted that almost all developing member countries had made progress in developing their statistical capacities. However, progress had been uneven as reflected by data gaps and weaknesses. These were attributed to inadequate funding and under-investment in statistical infrastructure, and discontinuities in donor support. The presentation highlighted the need to identify the major constraints on why there is uneven statistical development in the region; to map a course for capacity building; and to define a core work program that meets the need for basic data.

It was stressed that a statistical system should have the following major goals:

- producing data in a cost-effective and efficient manner,
- ensuring data transparency and credibility,
- making data demand-driven,
- meeting basic data needs for macroeconomic management, preparation of poverty reduction programs, monitoring progress towards the fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals,
- Promoting private sector development.

The presentation made a case for the adoption of clear cut strategies and programs for building statistical capacity. An important first step to capacity building required an assessment of existing country capacities to identify gaps and weaknesses. Two approaches for assessing country capacities were outlined. These were based on the input and output perspectives. The input perspective relies on assessing statistical capability in terms of five elements, i.e., 1) institutional context, 2) physical or capital resources, 3) human resources, 4) knowledge resources, and 5) management

resources. The output perspective, on the other hand, emphasizes realized statistical capacity based on 1) the coverage, periodicity and timeliness of data generated, 2) data access by the public, 3) integrity of the disseminated data, and 4) quality of disseminated data. It was stressed that countries embarking on assessing their capacities needed to approach the issue from both perspectives. Development of medium term statistical development plans demanded a realistic assessment of existing capacities. The IMF's data standards – SDDS & GDDS – were viewed as useful in enabling countries to adopt practices that led to greater timeliness and widening of the data sets deemed important from the view point of policy relevance

The presentation identified the major constraints faced by DMCs that lagged in statistical capacity. These were 1) lack of basic statistical infrastructure, 2) overall resource constraints, 3) the digital divide, 4) general lack of specialized and trained core staff, 5) severe skill shortages, and 6) added challenge of adapting to new international standards.

The ADB role in statistical capacity building in the region had allowed it to gain insights into how different statistical systems function. Lessons learnt from a review of the past technical assistance extended to DMCs pointed to: 1) the importance of country ownership and avoidance of donor driven programs and priorities, 2) ensuring sustainability by seeking firm country commitment of resources, 3) the need for overall national development and work plans, and 4) effective donor coordination and avoidance of duplicative efforts. It was further pointed out that in many countries effective management tools had not taken root despite the important role these play in the efficient functioning of statistical systems. In this context, it was pointed out that institutional and management development issues are often not addressed within the ambit of technical cooperation.

Looking to the future, it was stressed that countries needed to take new approaches in addressing capacity building. To this end, a well articulated strategy for capacity building was an imperative. Such a strategic approach to capacity building needs to address the issues of what package of measures best contributes to capacity building and what makes statistical systems more responsive to changing global conditions. It was suggested that a three-pronged strategy was called for to attain these goals: 1) measures to change the culture surrounding statistics, 2) steps to introduce management change, and 3) actions to emphasize the development of technical capabilities.

A critical first step to create the appropriate conditions for the collection and dissemination of reliable, timely and relevant data for a country is to define a core work program. In designing work programs, countries may benefit from the availability of existing frameworks. Two frameworks that can be used are those for economic statistics and for social data and poverty analysis. The 1993 System of National Accounts provides a comprehensive framework for economic statistics. For social statistics, the MDG offers a framework. A combination of integrated enterprise and household surveys, along with more systematic exploitation of administrative records could generate the data covered by a core work program. The work program should also permit the adoption of international standards and classifications, and the development of effective and accessible databases and metabases to aid dissemination and data transparency.

The primary responsibility for statistical capacity building, however, rests with governments. New partnership arrangements between donors and recipients would greatly advance the pace of statistical capacity building. The donors can provide sustained support but the recipient government has to acknowledge the importance of a well-defined, adequately funded work program. The price of failure to act will be high as poor data impacts on decision making and results in policy failures.

In the discussion following the presentation, clarifications were sought about possible assistance for developing indicators linked to the MDG, and ADB assistance to non-member countries in the region.

The second presentation entitled *Advocating Better Statistics for Better Policies* by the representative of the PARIS21 Secretariat referred to the origins of the initiative and its mission. It was recalled that PARIS21 was launched in Paris in November 1999 in response to an ECOSOC resolution to support achievement of goals adopted by various UN Summits dealing with development. PARIS21 was set up as a global forum and networking arrangement to build support for developing and using statistical capacity, through partnership of statisticians, policy makers, development professionals, and other users of statistics, including civil society.

The goals of PARIS21 are to:

- increase political support for statistics;
- integrate data efforts with poverty reduction strategies;
- promote statistical development strategies;
- promote better dialogue with users and partners;
- apply partnership principles and UN guidelines for technical cooperation.

PARIS21 views the importance of statistical information in the design of development policy including poverty reduction strategies; the implementation of programs; and the evaluation of the impact of the programs. In pursuit of these aims, it seeks to engender a culture of evidence-based policy making, management and monitoring; helping to develop well-managed statistical systems that are appropriately resourced; promoting sustainable statistical capacity building; and better use and analysis of existing data.

Since its inception, PARIS21 has developed partnerships with international organisations, bilateral donors, and developing countries. Similar partnerships have been formed with regional development organisations, including regional development banks. At the national level, it interacts with public institutions – NSO, government, policy-makers and civil society, NGO, private sector, and the media.

The range of current activities of PARIS21 include: regional workshops including follow-up at the national level; creation of task teams to address specific issues; and information exchange with partner entities.

To-date several task teams have been constituted to cover: 1) Advocacy - (led by the World Bank) 2) Statistical Capacity Building Indicators (led by the IMF); 3) Strategic Statistical Development Plans (led by France); 4) Census (under UNFPA leadership); 5) Agriculture & Rural Statistics (under FAO leadership); 6) Statistical Capacity for

Development Indicators (World Bank, Eurostat). Plans are in place to create teams dealing with Governance Indicators and Training.

In the financing of statistical capacity building, PARIS21 recognized that national governments must take responsibility for the costs involved. External support [from international and bilateral agencies should be seen as complementing national efforts](#). In this regard, the PARIS21 Secretariat proposed to work closely with The World Bank Trust Fund to support the development of strategic national statistical plans that would lead to the development of specific projects. These projects would then be funded from national budgets and/or donor funding.

Participants welcomed the PARIS21 initiative. Points raised touched on several issues which included the need to harmonize data reporting systems since reports for some countries come from both the statistical agencies as well as implementing agencies. It was acknowledged that harmonization of reporting was difficult. Countries should factor this aspect within their statistical development programs.

On the question of what constituted the best model for statistical capacity building, it was noted that no single model could be prescribed. A greater sharing of experiences was likely to result in identifying what worked and what did not.

From a user perspective, the point was made that statistics are often regarded as dull and uninteresting. Given the importance of statistics for policy formulation and decision-making, statistical agencies were urged to pay greater attention to making data presentation simpler and more interesting. Several suggestions were made. These included educating users to enable them to communicate more effectively. It was suggested that universities with statistics programs be encouraged to promote and develop communication mechanisms.

The point was made that statistics are often under-used, thus calling for greater efforts to educate users. To ensure that statistics are seen as demand-driven, there must be a more educated set of data users. NSOs, for their part, needed to focus on reaching out to users. Media specialists could play a useful role in “translating” statistical information into easily understandable forms.

The third presentation by the ASEAN Secretariat representative dealt with the subject of STATISTICAL DEVELOPMENT IN ASEAN AND THE NEED TO FACILITATE CAPACITY BUILDING IN THE REGION. The presentation noted the existing disparities in statistical development between the member states of ASEAN. The differences were evident, for instance, in the availability of detailed national accounts and poverty statistics. There are also differences in the application of classifications, and in the types of survey instruments and procedures. There were also variations in IT capabilities.

These differences and gaps were attributed to a number of factors. The priority accorded to statistics and available funding differed considerably from country to country and contributed to weak statistical capacity in some countries. In countries where weak systems existed, statistical infrastructure was inadequate. International standards were poorly applied. External support did not fully meet needs.

The ASEAN countries had begun to address some of these problems through regional cooperation. Such cooperation was being promoted through the ASEAN Heads of Statistical Meeting (AHSOM), the ASEAN-METI Economic and Industrial Cooperation Committee (AMEICC), and regional workshops on sector-specific statistics relevant to particular ASEAN initiatives.

Among the steps taken by AHSOM was the adoption of a framework of cooperation and a plan of action on statistics. The overall strategy was to identify statistics of high priority and set up Task Forces to work on harmonization of concepts and classifications. Another initiative concerned the development of the ASEAN Statistical Indicators (ASI). The Secretariat had also formulated a scheme for staff exchanges through an attachment program. Efforts were underway to tap donor resources for training programs.

Participants saw a need for ASEAN and other international bodies like the PARIS21 to coordinate their efforts more closely. In response, the PARIS21 representative indicated that national level workshops for formulation of statistical development plans were planned. Such workshops would be funded by PARIS21 or the World Bank. Support from other donors would be welcomed.

It was again emphasized that the main responsibility for capacity development rested with the individual countries. The point was made that PARIS21 and ADB can only complement the process by providing modest support.

Country and International Agency Presentations

The Forum then had the benefit of statements from Country and International agency representatives. These statements were followed by a most useful, productive and wide ranging discussion. That discussion had the benefit of contributions from producers, users and international agencies that are partners in development, playing a dual role as an important set of users and as contributors to capacity building.

A variety of views, reflecting the diversity of circumstances, needs, and approaches, were heard. In a report of this nature it is not possible to record in full the richness of the discussions. It is however appropriate to convey a synthesized overview that touches on the range of issues that were raised and discussed. In this section of the report on the proceedings of the Forum the most salient points are highlighted. Key pointers that highlight the range of actions that appear to be needed to help a collective effort to define strategies and approaches that could further the cause of statistical capacity building is included.

The Producer Perspective

All countries reported on the progress that they have made in strengthening their capabilities to generate policy relevant data. Progress has, however, been uneven. It was acknowledged by all producer representatives that systems had to be **responsive** to user needs for reliable, timely data relevant to the policy concerns of the key users which were, in the majority of cases, government agencies. With the goal of enhancing **user satisfaction**, and providing greater and wider access to data, National Statistical Offices (NSO) were redoubling their efforts to improve data dissemination, particularly through electronic means. However, inadequate facilities were a limiting factor. There

was broad agreement that NSO needed to engage in limited amounts of data analysis to add value to the data and enhance an appreciation of the data. As regards **resources**, most NSO continue to face gaps in both financial and human resource terms. Although a small number of countries have developed their capacities through self-reliance on national resources, the majority of countries have had to rely on external assistance to varying degrees. The latter group of countries further indicated that future progress would be dependent on continued assistance in key areas such as knowledge transfer, development of statistical infrastructure, and the adaptation of global standards.

On the issue of adequacy of **management**, despite the constraints, all countries reported that they had already, or were in the process, of establishing strengthened mechanisms for co-ordination in the production of statistics within their respective national systems. They further indicated that national statistical development plans were either in place or were under preparation. There was broad recognition that effective management of resources and their use was a key element in enabling NSO to discharge their responsibility for delivery of outputs in a cost effective and efficient manner.

Several participants expressed concerns about the **burdensome reporting** demanded by international agencies. It was suggested that there was a critical need for greater co-ordination amongst these agencies and for greater data sharing amongst them. The IMF's data standards – SDDS & GDDS – were viewed as generally useful in enabling countries to adopt practices that led to greater timeliness, widening of the data sets deemed important from the view point of policy relevance. Many NSO were challenged by the need to generate better and more comprehensive data for poverty analysis and for the monitoring of the MDG. They indicated a desire for greater guidance on concepts, methods and analytical tools. **Regional Cooperation** was deemed to be important in the context of data sharing, transfer of best practice and knowledge transfer.

The User Perspective

The User perceptions of the state of statistical capabilities were broadly in line with the acknowledged weaknesses and challenges identified by producers. As regards **responsiveness**, user views differed from country to country. There were unmet data demands in almost all instances. However, a common theme was the need for greater detail, more timely delivery, and rapid response to new needs. On **Clients/Users** relationships, in most countries the most significant group of users is made up of governmental agencies. However, with the private sector emerging as a key engine of development, the needs of this sector are likely to increase. Users welcomed greater availability of data through electronic means. In most countries, the user-producer dialogue has been conducted through User Committees and National Statistical Councils and Committees. There was scope for a strengthening of these interactions.

The Perceptions of International and Bilateral Agencies

The international agencies represented at the Forum reported on their respective programs and contributions to statistical capacity building. There were a variety of inputs provided by the different agencies. Some took the form of TA through grant assistance to support capacity creation. The scope of such programs varied greatly. In some instances the assistance was in support of specialized data collection. In other instances, the scope was wider and covered training, modest financing for hardware,

and consultancy services. Some agencies supported capacity building through knowledge transfer delivered through workshops and seminars. On the theme of **emerging needs**, the multilateral financial institutions, in their capacity as data users, require internationally comparable data sets. To this end, they expressed the view that countries should adopt internationally agreed classifications, concepts and methods. All agencies were committed to helping governments in developing indicators for monitoring of the MDG. **Emerging funding constraints** were recognized as an obstacle to large resource transfers to help build national capabilities. It was also observed that the pool of grant finance was limited and such funding was unlikely to meet the large demand for funding investments in capacity building. It was pointed out that countries facing domestic resource constraints should give consideration to seeking loan financing of statistical development plans from the international financial institutions. In this context reference was made to the World Bank initiative to offer loans to member countries seeking resources for developing their statistical systems. It was suggested that such financing was particularly useful for investments in statistical infrastructure. **Self help** was therefore important and essential. The international financial institutions, in their interventions, emphasized that the primary responsibility for financing statistical programs lay with national governments. Technical assistance, it was emphasized, was not a substitute for such financing.

The bilateral agencies represented at the Forum indicated their willingness to continue providing modest amounts of technical assistance to aid capacity building particularly in areas linked with poverty measurement and the monitoring of the MDG. Bilateral assistance for statistics had to be seen within the context of the country assistance envelope. NSO had to initiate requests based on strategic national statistical plans. The representatives of the bilateral aid agencies echoed the view that technical assistance was not a substitute for national financing.

On a more general note, the Forum took note of the changing times in which markets and their functioning are central to development. Therefore, there was a need to think out of the box and move away from old paradigms. Efforts in both capacity building and in delivering statistical outputs will need to be driven by the need to be effective and efficient. Being effective means: Doing the right thing. In meeting the test of efficiency, the concern is: Doing things right.

Effectiveness translates into being both Responsive and Relevant, while maintaining quality. Efficiency demands that input prices are used, and outputs produced based on minimum cost solutions. Further, efficiency requires adaptability to changing circumstances and translates into acting in ways that permit the use of all available resources by allocating them across changing needs. Being responsive and relevant require that NSO not only meet existing demand, but create further demand by producing what is useful. Relevance of what we do requires that we address the priority needs of all stakeholders.

These core management principles must be applied consistently if NSO are to meet the expectations of all stakeholders. Deviations from these principles will impact on the ability to create sustainable capacities that are so essential.

II. ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS IN STATISTICAL CAPACITY BUILDING

The Forum had a wide ranging discussion on the broader issues of statistical capacity building. To facilitate the discussion, five key issues were identified. Participants were requested to address the issues which were:

- **User needs**- How can these be better identified and user needs for statistical information met? How can the user-producer dialogue be improved?
- **Advocacy/Marketing** – What steps should NSO take to convince their governments to fund work program?
- **Strategic Development Plans** – Do countries have established procedures for developing medium-term strategies for statistical development?
- **Funding** – Are governments willing to consider loan financing, over and above grants, to fund statistical development?
- **Implementation** – Are countries giving sufficient attention to issues of modern management and are they using indicators of management effectiveness?

All participants spoke to the issues. On a number of issues there was a near unanimity of views despite the varying prevailing circumstances in the various countries that are at differing stages of statistical development.

User Needs

All countries in the region indicated that regular interactions took place between users and producers. In most countries the major users were government agencies. The private sector was a less significant user. Thus, the dialogue was largely with government data users. There was nevertheless an acknowledgement that private sector users were likely to become important users in the future. In the current environment, in some countries the dialogue with users was formalized through committees or working groups, in other instances the discussions were less structured. In almost all instances, producers recognized the importance of consultations to ensure that statistical work programs were demand driven and reflected essential policy concerns. It also noted that NSO welcomed the dialogue as it greatly facilitated priority setting.

Improving the dialogue was deemed essential. Some participants were of the view that improved data dissemination was likely to improve the dialogue. It was also suggested that a better appreciation of the practical problems faced by producers could lead to greater user support for additional resources. To bring about closer interactions, user participation in training workshops could contribute to improved relationships.

Advocacy/Marketing

Most NSO sought the support of the primary users when arguing the case for financing of their work program. A number of participants made the point that there was little need for advocacy as governments were largely convinced of the need for better, more timely and comprehensive data flows to support policy formulation and monitoring economic and social trends. However, financial circumstances of the government and other priority programs of the government affected the quantum of resources allocated for statistics.

Strategic Development Plans

Almost all countries had developed medium term strategic development plans. These plans took account of the data needs of all major users and of overall national development plans for economic and social development. The plans laid out the activities to be undertaken and also the resource inputs needed to upgrade statistical infrastructure. In some instances these strategic plans also identified the external assistance requirements.

Funding

On the issue of loan finance to support investments in statistical infrastructure, the general view was that statistical programs were best funded from government domestic resources. Some countries felt that the external debt burden was already heavy, and under these circumstances it would be inappropriate to add to that burden. The poorer countries were generally in favor of grant based external assistance for statistical development. The more advanced countries within the ASEAN family, on the other hand, were not in need of external resources since their governments were making the necessary allocations for investment in statistics from national resources.

Implementation

Management issues were recognized as important to the effective functioning of national statistical services. Several of the more advanced countries had adopted management reforms; others were in the process of introducing reforms. There was broad agreement that better management of financial and human resource aspects of statistical operations was essential to capacity building. No country had, however used the indicators of management effectiveness as a formal tool to assess capacity.

III. SUMMARY OF COUNTRY AND AGENCY STATEMENTS

Brunei Darussalam

Brunei Darussalam had upgraded the statistical unit to a full Department of Statistics reporting to the Department of Economic Planning and Development.

The key concerns of users of statistics were to match needed information to what was available, and to ensure that the statistical department was well positioned to serve the needs of planners and decision makers. They also desired reliable information that met international standards and definitions. Data were needed for strategic planning, aligning national resources. Users wished to see greater transparency in the data compiled and disseminated.

In terms of problems and issues, because of the small number of respondents, the producers of statistics faced the challenge of maintaining statistical confidentiality of the data. In addition, the statistical authorities were confronted by low response rates to surveys. There were data gaps especially in respect of foreign investment income. There was an acute shortage of qualified staff. This contributed to timeliness being affected. Weaknesses in the IT area affected data generation and analysis. Budgets allocated for censuses/surveys fell short of what was needed and thus affected data quality.

Since Brunei Darussalam is not a member of ADB and SIAP, it had only received very short-term technical assistance from ESCAP and the UN Statistical Division. Brunei Darussalam would like to receive long-term statistical capacity building assistance. The representative made a formal request to be included in the list of countries that would be provided with statistical capacity building assistance from the international donor community.

In terms of plans for the near term, Brunei Darussalam hoped to undertake the following:

1. ICT training for all statistical staff;
2. Collection and compilation of environment statistics and statistical indicators;
3. Attachment and/or study visits by statistics staff to other ASEAN countries and relevant international organizations;
4. Regular dialogue between producers and users among government and private sectors;
5. Closer cooperation among government agencies and the private sector;
6. Continuous technical assistance in future to support statistical development;
7. Develop special training scheme in statistics
8. Set up statistical website through e-government networks and;
9. Formation of Brunei Statistics Advisory Council.

Cambodia

Although there had been significant improvements in the Cambodian statistical system in recent years, the statistical system continued to face many challenges. These included: lack of highly competent and experienced statistical staff, budgetary constraints, low salaries, weak local offices, and lack of national statistical standards. Moreover, there is also a need to strengthen the management and coordination mechanisms,

implementation of the Statistics Law, improved data dissemination, and filling gaps in economic and environment statistics.

In order to overcome current problems, proposals had been developed for a Forward Work Program for the National Institute of Statistics (NIS). A workshop had been convened at which the proposals had been discussed. The workshop - Partnership in Statistical Capacity Building for Cambodia was held from October 9-11, 2002, - considered 51 proposals for strengthening the capacity of the statistical system. A number of high priority projects had been identified.

Cambodia maintains a decentralized statistical system. The National Institute of Statistics (NIS), which is under the Ministry of Planning, serves as the central statistics office. It has four departments, namely, General Statistics, Economics Statistics, Social Statistics, and Demographic Statistics.

Several reforms had been carried out under various laws concerning statistics. One of these requires establishments, persons, and households to respond to statistical questionnaires and for the statistical offices to keep the information confidential. Penalties for non-compliance are provided under the law. A new Statistics Law 2002 provides for the establishment of a Statistics Advisory Council. However, the Council has not been established yet.

Cambodia will require sustained technical assistance over the next decade if it is build a well functioning statistical system that is able to satisfy user needs.

Malaysia

The Forum was briefed on the Problems, Issues and Prospects of the National Statistical System in Malaysia. In the Malaysian statistical system, the Department of Statistics, Malaysia (DOSM) acted as the central agency entrusted with the responsibility to collect, interpret and disseminate statistics. The DOSM is placed in the Prime Minister's Department. The Chief Statistician is responsible to the Chief Secretary to the Government and is the head of the national statistical service.

The DOSM has responsibilities for: 1) Provide information which are of current priority such as National Accounts, Balance of Payments, External Trade, Manufacturing, Construction, Mining, Services (including Telecommunications and IT), Prices, Demography and Economic Indicators; 2) Provide consultancy services in the field of sampling and; 3) Conduct small ad hoc surveys for specific agencies. The most recent Population and Housing Census was undertaken in 2000. The Economic Census and Census of Distributive Trades were carried out in 2001 and 2002, respectively.

The users of statistics are essentially government agencies, trading companies, research institutions, individuals and international organizations such as UN, ASEAN Secretariat, ADB, OIC, ILO, ESCAP, IMF, World Bank and WHO. The Department disseminates information through publications, diskettes and CD, BERNAMA/News Agencies (local and foreign), press conferences, internet, e-mail, special reports and facsimile and telephone. Last August 12, 2000, a Certification of MS ISO 9000 was given to DOSM.

The challenges faced by the DOSM were to achieve a reasonable balance between meeting different user needs, and to produce data within available resources efficiently. The DOSM aspired to provide optimum service within given resources. It was attempting to move from conventional data collection to estimation and forecasting.

Governmental agencies were the major data users. The key user agencies are the Economic Planning Unit, Ministry of Finance and Central Bank. They were responsible for the formulation of the long and medium-term national development plans that entailed the use of macro-econometric models for forecasting and policy simulation, computable general equilibrium models (CGE) and the input-output framework.

From the user perspective the main issues were the availability of updated statistics covering a number of areas of importance. These included: Input-Output (IO) Table (the latest IO was 1991); Investment by Sectors – Malaysia does not currently compile these data; Capital Stock Data – used to estimate the potential output; External Trade Price Indices – used to monitor the change in export and import prices, and the movement in terms of trade, volume of exports and imports and as deflator; a more recent base year for the National Accounts; and greater disaggregation of certain statistics currently only published at aggregate level.

The future plans for data improvements cover the conduct of a Capital Stock Survey; compilation of investment data by sectors and prepare IO tables every five years.

Lao People's Democratic Republic

The statistical system in the Lao PDR was a decentralized one with statistics being generated by several government agencies among which, the main players are the National Statistical Center (NSC), line Ministries, Ministry of Finance, the Bank of Lao PDR, and the provincial governments. The NSC was the central producer and collector of statistics. The NSC produces statistics through censuses, surveys, case studies, and secondary data from line ministries and the provinces.

During the last 10 years, production of official statistics has improved significantly and changed direction as a result of the technical cooperation program with Statistics Sweden. However, a large number of statistics are still being collected traditionally through the reporting system, common in a centrally planned economy.

The Lao PDR a wide range of statistics covering population statistics, social statistics, poverty, national accounts, prices, and enterprise statistics are available. However, there were weaknesses affecting the data. One of these is the lack of a sample survey system that is capable of producing socio-economic statistics on a regular basis. The annual household and enterprise surveys are still in the planning stages.

The main users of statistics are the Planning Department, Ministry of Finance, Bank of Lao PDR, other ministries, NGO, and international organizations. The demand for statistics from the academic and research community and the general public is very limited.

Future plans for developing the national statistical system include the strengthening of the institutional capacity, training of national statisticians, improved coordination, implementation of a dissemination policy, improved legal framework, and attainment of a

sustainable statistical system given limited financial and human resources. The authorities recognized the need to prioritize and develop a long range plan to achieve a sustainable statistical system that meets national needs.

Myanmar

The Statistical System of Myanmar is highly decentralized with the Central Statistical Organization (CSO) functioning on a national level since 1952. Some ministries have set up their own planning and statistics departments and they have statistical units or sections to meet their own planning and administrative requirements. The Central Statistical Authority Act of 1952 empowers the CSO to assume a central role in a national system of statistical information. At present, CSO publishes official statistics in book form as well as in CD-ROM form on a regular basis. These statistics are collated by the CSO from reports provided by other agencies.

The future plans of CSO include a strengthening of the statistical system to enable it to respond effectively to the data demands of the Government and the growing private sector. Myanmar will take up the implementation of the 1993 SNA over a medium term period. It was also committed to the collection of data for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals. It also hoped to compute the Human Development Index (HDI) at the national and regional level. Myanmar also plans to participate in the global ICP program.

Myanmar is in need of technical assistance to develop its statistical capacity and thanked the ADB for having undertaken an assessment of its needs.

Indonesia

General purpose statistics or basic statistics are compiled by the Bureau Pusat Statistics obtained through the conduct of surveys and censuses, administrative records and other methods. In addition, sectoral statistics are produced by other agencies as a by-product of their administration, compiled independently or in cooperation with BPS. Thus, the Central Bank of Indonesia is one of the government agencies that works in cooperation with BPS for the production of data on banking, balance of payments, external debt and the international investment position. It helps BPS accelerate the flow of documents from the customs offices to BPS for the compilation of external trade statistics.

Since some of the data are processed in the provinces and some in the central office, timeliness of data availability poses challenges. In addition some users require detailed data or tabulations which are not fully met by currently published data. Other issues confronting the statistical system are:

- There is a disconnected flow of information from the regions to the line ministries. Hence, there is a need to redesign the reporting system
- The needs of district governments for more data at the local level which are local and culture specific for policy formulation have grown
- The need for geo coded maps at lower level that is, at the sub-district and village levels, is not fully met.

In order to ensure data quality, adequate resources are critical along with a well-developed statistical infrastructure in terms of trained staff and computer hardware and software. Data dissemination requires improvements.

From a user perspective, data are needed for both monitoring and planning. Preparation of the five-year development plan and other short-term plans is data intensive. Other data needed in monitoring cover inflation, trade, employment, health, education and others.

Following the economic crisis, BPS has had to cope with budget cuts. It has been compelled to eliminate certain surveys. Priority setting has assumed greater importance. The austerity measures have affected BPS upgrading and updating of its current hardware and software resources. BPS looks to the international community to contribute to capacity building by providing inputs to upgrading the quality of data and also through targeted technical assistance to BPS. As for statistical cooperation among ASEAN countries, BPS is supportive and stands ready to sharing its experience with other countries that are developing new survey programs in fields such as manufacturing and labor force surveys.

Philippines

The Philippine Statistical System is a decentralized system with several agencies engaged in statistical activities at the national, regional, provincial, city, municipal and barangay levels. The National Statistical Coordination Board is tasked in policy making and coordinating the conduct of statistical activities of the various agencies that produce the statistics.

Coordination and policy setting, essential to achieving consistency and efficiency in the statistical system and to avoid duplication of statistical activities, is pursued by the NSCB through a number of mechanisms:

- Philippine Statistical Development Program – articulates the vision, key result areas and statistical programs to meet current and emerging needs. It outlines the new strategies and activities to improve the capability of the PSS and the quality of statistical products and services.
- System of Designated Statistics - a mechanism that identifies critical and essential statistics. These designated Statistics are given priority attention in the preparation of the budget.
- Statistical Budget Review – The NSCB is mandated to review budgetary proposals for statistical activities of the agencies and make recommendations to the Department of Budget (DBM) for resource allocation.
- Technical and Subject Matter interagency bodies – The committees are created to a) assess and evaluate the quality, usefulness and timeliness of sectoral data and determine areas of duplication, discrepancies and gaps; b) to review the concepts, techniques and methodologies used in collection, processing and reporting of data; c) recommend an efficient and workable scheme for the allocation of agency responsibilities in the production of Statistics.
- Statistical Survey Review and Clearance System - involves the review of the design and instruments of surveys and censuses

- Regional Statistical Coordination Committees (RSCC) – these are created in all regions of the country to provide direction and guidance to statistical development activities.

The major statistical agencies include the following;

1. National Statistics Office (NSO) –responsible for collecting, compiling, classifying, producing and publishing and disseminating general purpose statistics, including data on population, housing, agriculture, fisheries, business, industry, prices. It also processes and compiles administrative-based statistics on domestic and foreign trade, business permits and vital statistics from the civil registration system.
2. Bureau of Agricultural Statistics (BAS) – generates statistics on crop production, prices of agricultural commodities, volume and value of livestock traded, farm income and expenditure, farming systems, agricultural finance through sample surveys.
3. Bureau of Labor and Employment (BLES) – generates establishment-based labor data, such as labor turn-over, labor practices, organizations, occupational injuries and illnesses and wage rates through surveys on an annual and quarterly basis.
4. NSCB – compiles the GDP, GNP, Leading Economic Index and related indicators in the compilation of the satellite accounts of the PSNA. They also maintain other indicators to keep track of the socio-economic status of the country such as poverty statistics, Foreign Direct Investment statistics and Human Development Index.

Other statistical agencies that generate statistics as by products of their primary functions are; Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas which compiles money and banking statistics, Balance of Payment and Flow of Funds and conducts the Business Expectation Survey; Food and Nutrition Research Institute, on nutrition; Department of Finance and Department of Budget and Management on public finance statistics. These agencies directly disseminate information to data users.

Problems and issues identified included:

- Data producers are constrained by limited resources and capacity. Users and producers of statistics must have a common definition of data quality to achieve better statistical services.
- Need to continue building confidence in official statistics
- Need for methodological improvements of major surveys and compilation systems; more timely data release;
- Need to promote transparency of methodologies – documentation of survey methodologies.
- Need to strengthen compliance to statistical standards – strengthening of the planning and resource linkages for the system of designated agencies; review of the system and consider current realities faced by designated agencies; review of methodologies
- Need to develop a Culture of Information Sharing
- Need to improve capability for statistical analysis by users and producers.
- Need to address emerging concerns and local data needs – due to the devolution of basic services to the LGU's, poverty alleviation and

countryside development, the need for lower level disaggregation is greatly demanded.

- Need to rationalize data collection; determine relevance of surveys and maximizing use of the results.
- Need to inculcate a statistics culture in departments/ ministries
- Continuous building of statistical knowledge and capability of major statistical agencies and local government units through continuous training

Financing the Statistical System – there is a need for constant and complete funding of statistical activities.

- Perennial inadequacy of resources for statistics
- Need for reform in budgeting for statistical operation
- Political will of ministries/national leadership
Country expectation from the International Community
- Contribution of International Community to PSS
- Less of Statistical capacity diversion and debilitation
- Creation of statistical fellowship

What the country could offer to countries in the region

- Sharing of good practices
- Study visits and technical assistance
- Advisory services in some areas in response to the call of ESCAP
- Support, assistance or partnership by/with SRTC

Thailand

The compilation of statistics in Thailand was largely divided between the National Statistical Organization (NSO) and the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB). The former was responsible for primary data collection while the later had responsibility for compilation of national accounts, I/O tables, flow of funds accounts, balance sheets (which were partly developed); poverty line; productivity; economic indicators and forecasts.

The presentation focused on the current challenges faced by the statistical system of Thailand. There had been a large increase in the demand for statistics due in part to (1) government decentralization; (2) government bureaucratic reforms; (3) trade negotiations; (4) globalization and fast development of new technology; and (5) the need for an early warning system for the social economic situation. Other challenges faced by the NSO of Thailand concerned issues connected with statistical production, coordination and standards, and data dissemination.

Further strengthening and developments of the statistical system will require the strengthening of the role and status of NSO as manager of the national statistical system. To build a sustainable capacity, both government support and that of international organizations' through technical assistance, and study visits is needed.

An issue of some importance concerned the image and perceptions of the NSO in the eyes of the public. The independence of NSO was a critical factor. Public trust has weakened due to government interventions; weakening of NSO coordination role had led

to statistical duplication; NSO was understaffed in terms of qualified statisticians. Budget allocations were inadequate for the implementation of work programs.

National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) is both a producer and user of data. Demands for data are driven by the needs of economic modeling and forecasting; formulation of national development plan, policy making and monitoring. Problems in terms of timeliness, integrity and insufficiency of data gathered, irregularity in the frequency and the accessibility of the data hinder the production of high quality statistics. There was a felt need to educate high-level officials and respondents to help them realize the importance of statistics. Technical assistance from the international organizations was needed if capacity was to be enhanced.

Singapore

The presentation provided an overview of Singapore's statistical system; and reasons why DOS of Singapore had been able to obtain adequate resources from the government.

Singapore's statistical system was highly decentralized. The Department of Statistics was designated as national coordinator of statistical activities across all government agencies. The DOS had been successful in obtaining adequate resources from the government over time. As a consequence, it had been able to build a sustainable capacity. It was now able to produce high quality data, quickly respond to ever-changing data needs of policy makers, and to come up with policy relevant publications and papers. Staff were able to acquire and accumulate professional expertise. The DOS recognized the importance of knowledge accumulation and knowledge dissemination. It was further recognized that the statistical agency's role is not merely to collect and compile routine statistical data but rather to generate knowledge and disseminate this knowledge and information to the policy makers and other sectors of the country.

Vietnam

The presentation highlighted the organizational structure of the General Statistics Office of Vietnam. The GSO had a total staff of 5,000 staff, of which 4,700 were in field offices. The GSO had responsibility for all statistics in Vietnam. The GSO had gradually developed its capacity and had carried out the 1999 population census; it also conducted demographic and other household surveys. The GSO had started work on compiling national accounts based on the SNA 1993.

Statistical reforms and capacity building were being pursued. A new Statistical Law had been passed by the National Assembly in 2003; the Prime Minister had approved a long term plan for statistical development in Vietnam up to 2010. The Government had also given approval for an IT Development Project for the period 2001-2005.

There was a felt need for the standardization of statistical methods, classifications and products. GSO needed larger provision of funds for the conduct of surveys/censuses. GSO desired continued assistance from international institutions for capacity building. As to demand for statistical data, GSO claimed that demand for data is steadily increasing especially from the private sector.

STRATEGIES OF INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES IN RESPONDING TO COUNTRY NEEDS

Australia

Australia provides support to ASEAN countries through the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID).

AusAID provides assistance on the basis of jointly agreed country strategies, and works within its partner countries' broad development frameworks, and coordinates its aid with that of other donors. All assistance is designed to fit in with AusAID's broader country strategies which emphasize the reduction of poverty. Requests are cleared by the partner countries' central aid coordinating agency (for country requests) or through the ASEAN Secretariat (for ASEAN requests).

The ABS approach is to transfer skills to a statistical agency by way of study tours to Australia, dispatch of experts to countries to address particular issues and for in training courses or workshops. ABS prefers to have short missions rather than long term consultancies.

Assistance that Australia has been providing to ASEAN countries during 2002 involves the Australia-Indonesia Government Sector Linkages Program, Thailand: Strengthening of Macroeconomic Statistics Project, Philippines-Australia Governance Facility as well as the provision of ABS staff to act as resource persons at UNSD and IMF workshops, receiving study tours from Malaysia and Philippines and provision of expert consultants/technical assistance to selected ASIA-Pacific countries.

Australia will use statistical information gathered on performance against the Millennium Development Goals as part of any analysis of a country's poverty situation.

United Kingdom

The UK approach to support for statistical capacity was rooted in the development of monitoring systems for poverty reduction. All assistance was linked to the development of statistical programs to needs of policy makers and was of a long-term nature. Assistance was linked to the host government's commitment to guaranteed and sustainable funding of statistical system.

DFID had not been active in the ASEAN Region. The DFID concerns were the development of new instruments (e.g., poverty mapping, light touch survey, data collection) and largely focused on improved capacity for poverty analysis, improving skills of policy makers in making use of statistical data and analysis, and the development of local and district level data. DFID also favored providing support on a regional basis as it is more practical to organize support on a regional basis (considering economies of scale), lesson learning and information sharing and easier delivery of specialist training and skills development.

Eurostat

Eurostat programs of cooperation are based on partnership agreements between the European Union (EU) and the recipients. Eurostat's mission is to support statistical systems of developing and transition economies. The Community Statistical Program defines the statistical sectors and fields where Eurostat is likely to play an active role. These are: regional integration; food security; and the fight against poverty. Assistance delivered is designed to contribute to the strengthening of institutions in the national and regional statistical systems to ensure that the beneficiaries internalize the project and ensure sustainability. To this end, countries are required to have in place an over-all statistical program, training capacities; and a consolidation of institutions.

Eurostat's active participation in the PARIS21 Consortium ensures coordination with other donors including EU Member States. Eurostat programs cover both regional and national projects. Regional projects promote actions that are harmonized at the regional level (methodology, collection, production and dissemination of statistics) and methods consistent with statistical standards of the EU. National projects are mostly within the area of technical supervision.

The thematic priorities are statistical needs of the Commission's priority policies in the field of the fight against poverty and measures to promote democracy and human rights in terms of creation and monitoring of statistical indicators covering in particular the effects of sex discrimination in all components concerned (evaluation of women's condition in society), good governance, and transparency.

Although Eurostat has no ongoing programs in the ASEAN Region, possibilities exist for future cooperation for statistical capacity building in the region. Potential beneficiaries may apply, through formal channels, for EC funding. However, priority is likely to be given to regional rather than country programs in order to promote regional statistical harmonization. In general, current fields of priorities for EC statistical cooperation funding include capacity building and institutional strengthening, agriculture, national accounts, non-observed economy, promotion of democracy and human rights, fight against poverty. Foreign trade statistics is also a common priority.

Japan

The postwar reconstruction of the statistical system in Japan had created a decentralized system which was coordinated by a Statistics Commission. The Statistics Law designated important statistics, establishing a clearance system of surveys for such statistics, reporting obligation for them, protecting confidentiality of information obtained from surveys, and quick dissemination of survey results. Japan's experience could be a reference for international organizations providing assistance on statistical capacity building. Japan's success could be attributed to the following:

- preserved basic institutional condition favorable toward official statistical surveys
- strong support from political and academic leaders for reconstruction of statistics
- reinforcement of the basic framework in the early time of reconstruction

Japan's cooperation in the field of statistics in the Asian region includes:

- a) development studies such as the *Development of Industrial Statistics in the Philippines*;

- b) training programs – at present there are seven courses which specialize on statistics capacity building conducted by different institutions such as SIAP, METI, MHLW, MPMHA, and National Federation of Statistics Association on Agriculture;
- c) loan projects such as those in China and Indonesia; and
- d) dispatch of Japanese experts to developing countries.

Germany

Germany's technical cooperation programs in statistical capacity building were the responsibility of 4 German Organizations:

- GTZ – German Technical Cooperation provides Grant Aid and Reimbursable TA
- CIM – Center for International Migration provides topping-up for German experts that are locally employed
- InWEnt – Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung provides special training
- Destatis – Statistisches Bundesamt/Landesämter provides reimbursable TA

German technical cooperation is driven by the country's Development Cooperation Basic Principles which stresses that assistance to a particular country or government should be "demand-based". Within the Asian region focal partner countries include Vietnam, Philippines, Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, Laos, and Malaysia. Currently assistance was being provided in statistical capacity building to China, Kyrgyzstan, and Saudi Arabia. As of this date no programs were in place for ASEAN countries except indirectly through components in other projects dealing with Poverty Monitoring, and sector projects

New Zealand

The Statistics New Zealand maintains a special focus in statistical development in the Pacific in partnership with ABS. SNZ is committed to sharing its knowledge of the latest statistical techniques and developments, gained through experience or country practice or through visits to leading statistical agencies and attendance in conferences, to the less developed countries in the region. SNZ welcomes visitors from other countries and provides technical assistance to statistical agencies in developing countries in the Pacific and South East Asia through its International Assistance Program.

The broad strategy is to provide assistance to Southeast Asian countries where their size and expertise is relevant and with whom SNZ has a long-standing and close working relationship. SNZ provides the following assistance at the specific request of recipients:

1. Assistance in developing and maintaining regular production of core outputs;
2. Assistance focused on providing specialized training, developing and implementing tools and/or procedures to enhance statistical outputs, and undertaking reviews targeted at specific issues;
3. Assistance on regional initiatives focused on improving the coverage, quality and timeliness of official statistics.

International Assistance Program: SNZ established a program in February 1999 that will manage and coordinate requests for technical assistance. The scope of activity of the program is to:

1. Assist in formulating policy and advising on policy issues that have international implications;
2. Assist other areas of SNZ keep abreast of, and contribute to, international statistical developments;
3. Coordinate programs for overseas visitors to SNZ;
4. Liaise and work closely with SPC and the ABS on statistical development and coordination issues in the region;
5. Assess, manage and implement appropriate opportunities that arise for the provision of assistance;
6. Focus assistance activities in the primary regions of interest, namely the Pacific and Asia.

PARIS21

PARIS21 has initiated the development of Statistical Capacity Building (SCB) Indicators. The SCB indicators are a product of extensive consultation with donor agencies and countries like the Philippines and Indonesia. The SCB are used for comparative overview of countries' statistical capacity with a view to facilitate capacity building. They are used by domestic policy makers who have interest in the statistics generated by the statistical producers, as well as the international community as means of determining areas that need technical support. The SCB indicators also provide a snapshot of a country's statistical state of statistical development, a focus on opportunities by highlighting what has already been achieved as well as the weaknesses, and provide the means to track over time results of capacity building efforts. There are 16 quantitative and 18 qualitative indicators to guide the assessment of capacities.

UN-ESCAP

National capacity building has been a cornerstone of ESCAP's statistics program; hence, its sub-program objective focuses on the improvement of statistical capabilities of ESCAP member countries.

ESCAP strategy to promote capacity building has stressed the development of common methodologies and harmonized approaches for inter-country comparison of poverty levels and for measuring and monitoring poverty; Improving the capacity of national statistical systems, collecting and disseminating statistical data on the countries and areas of the region and the promotion of data sharing. It has also promoted coordination at the regional level the development and implementation of selected international statistical standards and strengthening the network of regional statistical institutions for the monitoring of poverty eradication policies and relevant MDGs

For its capacity building activities, ESCAP relies heavily on extra budgetary funding. It also faces the challenge of how to balance country priorities vis a vis international demand. ESCAP has jointly organized capacity building events with ADB, IMF, OECD, WB UNDP and UNIFEM. In addition it has been providing advisory services in the field of national accounts, poverty, gender, population statistics and data processing.

UNDP

UNDP focuses on support for strengthening capacities in data collection and collation to link this to policy analysis; support for social indicators related to the MDGs;

establishment of databases and user-friendly software developments with mapping facilities. Its technical assistance programs place stress on policy advice linked to data collection and analysis (comparative experiences at country level); net-based knowledge-sharing and MDG websites and resources; MDG workshops; expert and research referrals; Poverty TTF and Millennium Trust Fund to help NSO in Statistical Capacity Building.

MDG indicators set a common framework for assessing the impact of development cooperation. The identification of indicators; consistency in the use of indicators among MDG, disaggregated data for location comparison and thematic comparisons; database development to monitor a country's progress in terms of achieving the MDG; local capacity development for participatory data collection and analysis, represent priorities for UNDP.

UNFPA

UNFPA role in support of statistical capacity building in the ASEAN Region has focused on assisting countries in the conduct of population censuses, specifically in Cambodia and the Lao PDR. UNFPA's capacity building strategy is linked to:

- Evidenced-based population and development strategies
- Development of national sex and geographically-disaggregated databases for tracking MDG including ICPD and ICPD
- Result-based management of UNFPA country programs
- Work in partnership in data collection

UNFPA provides leadership in support of population and housing censuses - special technical support in the design, conduct, census operations, estimation, population projections, and dissemination of census results. Only limited support is provided in terms of logistics (equipment and supplies) to conduct censuses. Special areas of concern to UNPFPA are poverty mapping using census data, reproductive health and integrated population and development database (in terms of support in the conduct of survey, sample designs, etc.) in relation to MDG.

FAO

FAO mandate on poverty reduction and food security is linked to the MDGs. In this context, FAO's regular activities include:

- Agricultural censuses and surveys
- Compilation of current agricultural statistics, nutrition statistics, agribusiness statistics, fishery statistics, forestry statistics
- Compilation of supply and utilization accounts
- Analysis of food balance sheets of different countries, number and percent of undernourished, food crop forecasts
- Maintenance of database and websites

International cooperation pursued by FAO takes several forms that include projects, technical assistance visits, participation in PARIS21 Task Team on Rural and Agricultural Statistics, APCAS, expert consultations, workshops/seminars and support for the World Census of Agriculture in 2010.

WORLD BANK

The World Bank has been active in statistical capacity building through a variety of mechanisms. A number of ASEAN countries have been recipients of WB support for projects on statistical capacity building, with Indonesia being the beneficiary of the most number of projects. In recent years it has instituted a Trust Fund which extends grants for initiating statistical capacity building activities.

World Bank strategies highlight the use of new statistical tools and technologies and better use of existing resources. The World Bank is of the view that capacity building efforts must begin with building demand and creating support for statistical activities. The capacity building effort will require making better use of existing resources and capacity, and making statistical systems more independent and accountable. The importance of capacity building to monitor the MDGs will demand greater investments in statistical infrastructure.

The Bank had also recognized need to enhance in-country analytic capacity in poverty analysis, monitoring and evaluation, and poverty data collection. The World Bank Institute had developed the *Poverty Analysis and Data Initiative*. PADI, a demand-driven program, is a four-step strategy that incorporates:

- a. Poverty measurement and diagnostics
- b. Monitoring poverty and social indicators
- c. Poverty and social impact evaluation
- d. Better data collection and dissemination strategy

SIAP

SIAP offers training programs at its Tokyo Metropolitan Area facility. A total of 4 courses on statistics (Modules on Core Official Statistics; Applications of ICT for Statistical Processes; Analysis and Interpretation of Official Statistics; Country/Area-focused course in Central Asia; and Research-based Training Programs) are offered. In addition, it has an Outreach program that provides regional/sub-regional workshops and country courses in cooperation with requesting governments.

SIAP targets middle and senior-level government statisticians. Its programs aim to raising capability in undertaking independent research in official statistics; preparation of quality statistical reports using research techniques; and presentation of research papers at international fora. SIAP plans to compile and make research as country case studies on statistics; it hopes to initiate distance education/learning and engage in preparation of training tools (using participative training techniques). Partnership with other institutions is necessary due to limited number of SIAP staff. There is a need to have a focal point or coordinating mechanism/clearing house on training activities in official statistics conducted and/or supported by donor agencies. SIAP welcomes initiative to effect focal point or mechanism that will help SIAP in terms of coordination.

ANNEXES

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**ADB/PARIS21 High Level Forum on Statistical
Capacity Building For ASEAN Countries
EDSA Shangri-la Hotel
7-9 November 2002**

AGENDA

Thursday, 7 November 2002

- 09:00 Opening Ceremony:
- Welcome Remarks: **Mr. Ifzal Ali, Chief Economist**
- Opening Address: **Mr. Tadao Chino, ADB President**
- Opening Remarks: **Mr. Jean Claude Faure, Chairman, Development
Assistance Committee, OECD and Co-Chairman,
PARIS21 Consortium**
- Keynote Address: **The Honorable Dante B. Canlas
Secretary of Socio-Economic Planning
and Chair, National Statistical Coordination Board**
- 10:15 Coffee Break
- 10:45 Chair: Chief Economist, ADB
- Statistical Capacity Building: An ADB Perspective for a Fresh Approach
- Mr. Bishnu D. Pant
 Principal Statistician, ERDI, ADB
- Advocating Better Statistics for Better Policies
- Mr. Antoine Simonpietri
 Manager, PARIS21 Secretariat
- Statistical Development in ASEAN and The Need to Facilitate Capacity
Building in the Region
- Mr. Agus Sutanto
 Senior Officer, ASEAN Secretariat
- 12:30 Lunch Break
- 14:00 **National Statistical Systems: Problems, Issues and Prospects**
- Chair: Dr. Paul Cheung, Chief Statistician, Statistics Singapore
- Country Presentations by:
- Brunei Darussalam:
 Producer of Statistics
 User of Statistics
- Cambodia:
 Producer of Statistics

- User of Statistics
Lao PDR:
Producer of Statistics
User of Statistics
- 15:30 Coffee Break
- 15:45 **National Statistical Systems: Problems, Issues and Prospects** (Continuation)
Country Presentations by:
Myanmar:
Producer of Statistics
User of Statistics
Viet Nam:
Producer of Statistics
User of Statistics
Indonesia:
Producer of Statistics
Presentation of paper on Poverty Mapping
Malaysia:
Producer of Statistics
User of Statistics

Friday, 8 November 2002

- 08:30 **National Statistical Systems: Problems, Issues and Prospects** (Continuation)
Chair: Mr. V.N. Gnanathurai, Director, ERDI/ADB
Country Presentations by:
Philippines:
Producer of Statistics
User of Statistics
Singapore:
Producer of Statistics
User of Statistics
Thailand:
Producer of Statistics
User of Statistics
- 10:15 Open Forum
- 10:30 Coffee Break
- 10:45 **A Tool for Statistical Capacity Building: Statistical Capacity Building Indicators and Questionnaires by**
PARIS21 Task Team on Statistical Capacity Building Indicators
- 11:00 **Strategies of International Organizations in responding to country needs**
Chair: Dr. Romulo Virola, Secretary General
Presentations by:
World Bank
ESCAP
SIAP
UNDP

- 12:30 Lunch Break
- 14:00 **Strategies of International Organizations in responding to country needs**
(Continuation)
Presentations by:
FAO
UNFPA
DFID
EC-Eurostat
- 15:00 **Strategies of Bilateral Organizations in responding to country needs**
Chair: Mr. Tomas Africa, Director, UN-SIAP
Presentations by:
Australia
Germany
Japan
- 15:45 Coffee Break
- 16:00 **Strategies of Bilateral Organizations in responding to country needs**
(Continuation)
Presentations by:
New Zealand
- 16:15 PARIS21 Video Demonstration
- 16:40 Open Discussions

Saturday, 9 November 2002

- 08:00 **Country Responses and Proposals**
Chair: Chief Economist, ADB
Brunei Darussalam
Cambodia
Lao, PDR
Myanmar
Vietnam
Indonesia
Malaysia
Philippines
Singapore
Thailand
- 10:45 Coffee Break
- 11:00 Concluding Remarks by:
Chief Economist, ADB

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