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**Contry Paper**

**on**

*Lao PDR*

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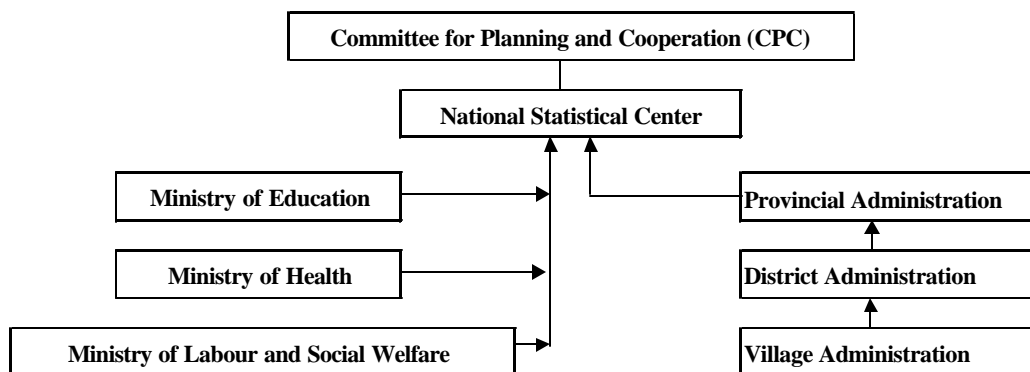
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## A. Organization of Statistical Services

National Statistical Center (NSC) is a decentralized organization in Lao PDR, which is under Committee for Planning and Cooperation. It has over the years become recognized as a professional statistical institute. NSC has a coordinating role in the production of national statistics, and the central line ministries are its concerned agencies as horizontal line. In each ministry there is a planning department with a unit for statistics. Organizations of provincial and district levels are the vertical lines. Every provincial and district administration had a statistical unit within its department of committee for planning and cooperation. Each district also collects village basic statistics data. (See chart 1).

**Chart 1: The organization of the concerned agencies**



The main agencies involve in compiling social statistical statistics are Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health where the statistics data is regular compiled by their own system. Those social statistics are being posted in Statistical Yearbook.

Within the government organization, NSC has a role to collect, compile, processing, analyzing and distributing statistics data officially about the social economic situation of the country. It is a statistics center on social economy for supplying data to government organization, sectional government, local organizations and other users for different purposes, especially for planning and formulating of the policy on socio-economic management and development.

At this moment NSC has 5 divisions and there are 47 staff including those who are leave for learning in the country and abroad. (See table 1). Data collection division has the task to collect data from the line ministries and there is only two staff respond on compiling social statistics such as education and health statistics.

**Table 1: NSC structure and distribution of staff**

Organization unit	Actual staff		
	Female	Male	Total
Director	1	-	1
Deputy director	1	1	2
Data collection division	1	7	8
Service division	-	6	6
Survey division	2	12	14
National account division	5	2	7
Administrative division	4	5	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>47</b>

In the compilation and maintenance of social statistics there some problems and difficulties like the coordination, the definitions and standards, the reliable data collection and data reporting system, lack of data analysis which based on the existing data base and lack of monitoring indicators.

## **B. Historical Background**

The first social statistics series was compiled since 1976 by the report system and in 1985 the first Population Census was conducted. The latest date of was 2000 when the Lao National Reproductive Health Survey (LRHS) and the Second Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS II) were conducted. The major users of social statistics are national planners, policy makers, ministries, private sectors and international organization. Those data are used as a base line data, to be the tools to measure the changes and monitor the progress of implementing plan. Education and Health statistics are compiled annually and they can be released at the end of the year. These data is the most current series available.

### **C. Data source**

In fact the statistical system in Lao is still based on the reporting system but it is quite heavy and often slow system to get information at National level. So censuses and survey are regarded as the most cost efficient methods to produce fast and accurate statistics. Population Census is taken in every 10 year and surveys are conducted in every 4 or 5 years. The production from these methods could be released at least within 6 months after a completion of fieldwork. All data is mainly used to formulate country development plan and monitor national implementation plan. The agencies responsible for each of the social statistics are Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, Ministry of finance and Bank of Lao PDR.

In between census years, some surveys are conducted to compile social statistics like LRHS 2000 and Mid Term Population Count. The LRHS 2000 was conducted in all provinces with a sample size of 720 villages and covered about 210 000 households. The vital registration system in Lao is not practiced properly.

### **D. Estimation Methodology**

Some indicators of social statistics are compiled by indirect methods like fertility, mortality and life expectancy. The most problems countered in compilation of social statistics are the use of methods, and some data is not enough cases to be analyzed for the sub-regions. Since NSC has very limited skilled staff so sometimes its has been supported from other international organization in making data processing and analysis.

As the vital registration in Lao is not a proper system so most social statistics are derived from censuses or surveys. In producing social statistics, gender perspective has been taken into account at both national and sub-regional level. But it was limited to generate desegregation by sex and only some statistical areas can be done such as education, health and labour force statistics.

Additionally, to promote and strengthen of produce gender statistics NSC has a very close cooperation with Lao Women's Union and the Gender Resource Information and Development (GRID) Center.

#### **E. Social Statistics Compilation Programme**

Lao PDR is a country that is likely to have regular compilation of social statistics. To improve the compilation NSC has the plan to conduct annual household sample survey, which is importance in increasing the information of Lao society as well as to create a sustainable system provide continuously National Account and other data areas. The activities are needed to implement this improvement are to have human resource development for professional capacity in certain specialist fields such as statistics analysis, IT, financial management, publishing and marketing. In addition to improve the reporting system NSC may need to classify responsibility of line ministries and provinces and method of data collection for the respective matter areas.

The management support from the NSC is expected to have the development of procedures and methods for managing the statistical systems. The NSC can be strengthen its responsibilities in compiling of statistics and the statistics services if there is the development of the ability to carry out further commercial activities, marketing and other users contacts, in order to increase the revenue.

The possible strategies that could be adopted to help country in the maintenance and improvement of social statistics compilation:

- Organize special workshops for ministries and provinces to deal with co-ordination issues;
- Attending in international conferences and workshops concerning compilation of social and gender statistics issues;
- Professional exchange of experiences.