



NSOs & IDB STATCAP IN POST-CRISIS WORLD: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

Abdullateef Bello (Ph.D)

Director,

Data Resources and Statistics Department

Islamic Development Bank

23 March 2010

Challenges for NSOs

“Without strong data, **policymakers cannot manage effectively and business leaders may be left in the dark, unable to spot emerging trends and danger signals**” (IMF’s F&D, Vol. 46, No. 1, March 2009)

“...accurately measuring progress towards the MDGs is sometimes difficult **when precise data are not available or come with a long time lag**” (UN S-G report on MDGs, p. 3, 12/2/2010)

“... economic policymaking is **hindered by low frequency and long publication lags** associated with key ... finance and spending data” (Alan Krueger, US Treasury Dept, Feb. 2010)

NSOs & Global Economic Meltdown

- Failure of global statistical system -- national statistical systems and international agencies-- due to increase in demand for additional official statistics
- Meltdown impacted negatively on statistical activities of OIC countries due to budget cuts for NSOs
E.g. in 1998 during Asian Financial Crisis: The ADB reported that Indonesia CBS suffered 21% budget cut, and Malaysia's Dept. of Statistics 15% (Source, ADB, 1998)
- Obsolete indicators; i.e. relevance of some indicators traditionally used by policymakers is questionable. E.g. using outstanding bank loans to gauge the strength of credit markets without considering loans made by nonbank financial institutions (Alan Krueger, US Treasury Dept, Feb. 2010)

Challenges for NSOs in Post-Crisis World

1. Repositioning to weather adverse effect of the crisis
 - E.g. 2010 Round of population census
2. New technical skills and expertise beyond the traditional knowledge of statistics. E.g. “Data Scientist” (a la Economist magazine, 5/3/2010)
3. Developing early warning indicators and availability of corresponding data
4. Frequency and quality of data to support global statistical system
5. Financial resources and additional manpower to respond to increased demand for data at national, regional, and global level

IDB-STATCAP

- Launched in September 2007
- **Aim:** assist member countries with weak statistical capacities to overcome vicious cycle of under-performance and under-funding of their national statistical systems.
- Guideline and Procedures approved in Dec. 2007
- Regional and international organizations can enter into co-financing arrangement with IDB
- Application Form is online (www.isdb.org)

Features of IDB-STATCAP

- Mainstream statistical capacity projects in regular operations of IDB
- Support and finance training courses, workshops, conference, hiring consultants, experts visit, and studies
- Provides scholarships for Statisticians to obtain M.Sc. degrees in statistics

Challenges

- Countries are under-utilizing IDB-STATCAP
- Requests from countries are sometimes outside NSDS and more often there is lack of transparency (e.g. budgets are exaggerated)
- Candidates for IDB-STATCAP Scholarships are not from the mainstream statistical agencies
- Regional statistical institutions have overlapping training courses for common member countries, leading to duplication of efforts and wastage
- Lack of database on statistical consultants from MCs as well as database on statistical skills/experts available in OIC NSOs

IDB STATCAP in Post-Crisis World

1. Partnership Strategy

- With **MCs** to conduct Country Statistical Diagnostic Study
- With **OIC Institutions** through Statistical Working Group (SWG) & joint financing of statistical activities
- With **development partners**
 - **DFID** (£2 million for Yemen, Iraq & Palestine as well as for regional statistical activities)
 - **AfDB** (an MOU under review)
 - **PARIS21** (Agreement being finalized)
 - **UNCTAD** (OIC intra-investment database)

2. Targeted regional training courses

- With OIC institutions (i.e. SESRIC)
- With regional institutions (e.g. AFRISTAT, ECA, ESCWA, AfDB etc)
- Directly to MCs upon request (e.g. Afghanistan)

3. Sponsoring twinning Program

- Short Term Expert Program (STEP): Intra-OIC statistical experts from the most advanced MCs to another.

Going forward:

- ✓ **Working together to improve statistical services and statistical development in OIC countries in post-crisis world**
- ✓ **Sharing knowledge and best practices among NSOs through effective partnership and twinning program**
- ✓ **Managing scarce resources through joint statistical activities to avoid duplication of efforts and wastage**
- ✓ **Reviewing NSOs statistical publications (as well as frequency) to remove redundancies and outdated indicators and replacing them with time-honoured indicators needed in post-crisis world**
- ✓ **Strengthening cooperation to enable NSOs to collectively face challenges of future crisis**



Thank you