

DAKAR DECLARATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF STATISTICS

PREAMBLE

At the PARIS21 Consortium meeting, held in Dakar, Senegal from November 16 to 18, 2009, the participants unanimously affirmed that an effective and efficient statistical system is an essential element of good governance and that urgent action is still required if the data needed to monitor the Millennium Development Goals are to be provided by 2015. The meeting recognised that a lot has been achieved since 2000, but reaffirmed that much still remains to be done to deliver the vision of the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics (MAPS). Concerted and co-ordinated actions are required to make more effective use of statistical data to support poverty reduction policies and programs and to strengthen and sustain the capacity of statistical systems especially in developing countries. There is a collective responsibility to support the compilation, publication and use of statistics to ensure that, in the words of the Millennium Declaration “globalization becomes a positive force for all the world’s people”.

VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

The Consortium called upon all partners to recognise that official statistics are a public good and that their production and dissemination is a core function of all governments. To promote trust and accountability, governments should support and develop their statistical systems in line with the United Nations’ Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics as well as various regional declarations and codes. In addition, the Consortium called upon everyone involved in the development of statistics to commit to the following four principles:

1. **All countries must be encouraged and supported to define their own priorities, integrating user needs, and set out their own development pathways for statistics, from collection to dissemination, respecting internationally recognised quality standards.**
2. **All partners should promote the development of statistical systems and methods that anticipate and respond to new and emerging requirements for data at all levels.**
3. **Efforts to improve statistics should support, strengthen and sustain the institutions and agencies that make up national statistical systems.**
4. **Development partners should help strengthen and use developing countries’ statistical systems in line with the Accra Agenda for Action.**

CALL TO ACTION

The Consortium called on all partners to take action in five key areas.

1. **By 2014, the focus of attention should have moved from preparing strategic plans to implementing them with sustainable funding and technical capacity, so that:**
 - a. **All countries that are committed to improving their statistical systems have been able to put their national strategies for the development of statistics (NSDS) into effect.**
 - b. **Development assistance to statistics is being provided within the framework of nationally approved NSDSs, respecting the principle of alignment under the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.**

Significant and important progress has been made in strengthening statistical systems, especially in developing countries, through MAPS and a number of regional processes. The need for countries to

set their own development priorities for their statistical systems through the preparation of NSDSs has been widely accepted; the need now is to move from preparation to implementation.

2. Governments and development partners should place all essential global statistical programmes on a sustainable financial and technical footing by 2014.

The international statistical system consists of three main pillars: national statistical systems, which are operated, managed and largely financed by governments; international governance of statistics, including the development of standards; and global statistical programmes, which should be integrated, as far as possible, into national programmes. All three components are essential and must be supported and developed over the next five years.

3. In order to ensure more effective co-ordination at all levels, by 2014:

- a. **International and regional mechanisms for coordination and cooperation should work more effectively, taking into account the needs and priorities of developing countries as well as integration processes.**
- b. **Governments, with the assistance of development partners, should establish national partnerships for statistics, where such partnerships do not exist already.**

Coordination of statistical programmes, both internationally and in countries, must be strengthened and consultation between statistical producers and key user groups must be improved at all levels, making use of existing institutions, partnerships and forums, wherever possible.

4. By 2014 statistical systems in all countries should better meet the needs of users, operating in an efficient, cost-effective and results-based manner, in line with the core requirements of independence and integrity.

The managers of all official statistical agencies have an essential role to play in ensuring the quality and integrity of the statistics they compile and publish. They must also be open and accountable for the resources they use and their decisions and actions. Where development aid is being provided to help build capacity, the need for accountability is even stronger.

5. By 2014, the international community should support a programme of research and development to modernize statistical tools and technologies and to promote their use, especially in developing countries.

Statistical activities, involving the compilation and manipulation of large data sets have been transformed in recent years by the use of information and communications technology. In many countries, however, basic statistical procedures have changed little in this time. There is a need for the promotion of existing tools as well as the development of better tools at all levels, but especially in the collection of source data and in data analysis and presentation. There is also a need to develop robust methods that are cost-effective in small countries.

THE WAY FORWARD

In order to achieve the vision of the Dakar Declaration, the Consortium proposed that the following actions be taken:

1. The PARIS21 Secretariat, in collaboration with other partners, monitors the implementation of the Dakar Declaration and compiles and publishes an annual report on progress.
2. A follow-up Consortium meeting is convened before the end of 2014 to follow up and report back on progress in implementing the Declaration.
3. All partners and members of the Consortium undertake to continue to advocate for statistics and to mobilise resources to implement the Declaration.
4. By the end of 2010, the Dakar Declaration for the Development of Statistics is presented formally to all relevant processes and institutions.