

Final Record of the Proceedings

Chair: Oliver Chinganya, African Development Bank

1. From 28–30 March 2012, PARIS21 held its Annual Meetings in Paris. A first session of the Board was held on the afternoon of 28 March. The following morning, PARIS21 held the second session of its Board, followed by a Meeting of Statistical Capacity Development Donors in the afternoon. The morning of 30 March, the Partnership held a seminar entitled “NSDS At Work: National and Regional Good Practices.” All documents, presentations, and records from each session are available for download on the PARIS21 website (<http://www.paris21.org/PARIS21annualmeetings2012>).

I. What key elements make a good strategy?

2. The representative from the African Development Bank presented the results of a preliminary report on the review of NSDSs (National Strategies for the Development of Statistics) in Africa. The objectives of this review were to: assess if NSDS essentials/principles are being respected, identify areas of improvement with a view to provide support, and identify areas that require the attention of national authorities (*i.e.*, advocacy, mainstreaming in the national development plan and budgeting). The reviewers conducted a desk review and missions to seven countries (Benin, Cameroon, Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Djibouti, Gabon, and Mali).

3. The review was structured along the four main NSDS principles: (i) integration into the national development process; (ii) inclusive participation in the design, incorporating results-based management principles; (iii) comprehensiveness and coherence; and (iv) provision for monitoring the status of the statistical system. For each of these principles, the review identified a number of best practices and weaknesses in the region’s NSDSs. In closing, he provided some key recommendations for countries’ NSDS processes. These recommendations include: mainstream the NSDS in the national development & budgeting process, clearly define M&E frameworks, develop sectoral strategies and a funding strategy, strengthen advocacy among stakeholders, improve co-ordination among development partners including through the establishment of thematic groups, elevate statistics to the highest possible office, review statistical legislation to make it robust in order to support NSDS implementation requirements and emerging needs, and scale up the NSDS to regional economic groupings.

II. Sharing good practices: Review of progress in updating NSDS Guidelines

4. The convenor of the PARIS21 Task Team on Updating the NSDS Guidelines presented the latest state of play in the team’s work. The team has held four meetings to identify/analyse documents to support the new guidelines, define the structure of the guidance, review some initial chapters of the paper, and initiate the development of the web version. The guidance will be straight-forward and user-friendly with a wealth of real-world country examples and links to

further documentation. The team will agree a final draft of the guidance by the end of July 2012, after which the wider partnership will be invited to provide comments. The team hopes to roll out the web-based version by November 2012. The task team convenor closed his presentation by requesting that Board members provide good practices for inclusion in the guidance and participate in the global review beginning in August.

III. Sharing good practices: Innovative tools for organising, presenting and sharing NSDS guidelines

5. The PARIS21 Secretariat announced that the updated guidelines will be rolled out in three different products: a paper guide, a website, and a visual environment tool. The guidance will draw a clear distinction between the design and implementation phases. It will also make clear that the design phase includes both sequenced and permanent steps and that implementation is also concerned with the same permanent steps. It will systematically link each process with existing norms, tools, and best practices. Specific issues to be covered include: how to embark on a first or follow-up NSDS, the mainstreaming of sectors, infra-regional strategies, regional strategies, fragile states, and small island states.

6. The Secretariat then presented tools for organising, presenting, and sharing the NSDS guidance. A live demo of the website was presented. Content will be fed into the site over the summer for review and comments by partners. The Secretariat foresees two types of users: technically advanced specialists who will download the application onto their PCs to run locally and those who prefer a simple HTML tool. Both types of clients will be served by this site. It will contain advanced search features and interactivity. Users will be able to export the entire content of the site onto their PC or onto a USB key. The Secretariat then provided a demo of the application, an open-source freeware called VUE (Visual Understanding Environment), which was developed by Tufts University and is largely used by research and education specialists. The application uses a basic visual grammar consisting of nodes and links, proposing pathways allowing presenters to create annotated trails through their maps, which become expert-guided walk-throughs of the information. The VUE will enable PARIS21 to create a knowledge database on NSDS processes, explaining the necessary steps in designing and implementing an NSDS via a visual medium.

IV. Country Case Good Practices: Designing a strategy

7. The representative from Côte d'Ivoire presented his country's experience in designing its NSDS. A wide range of stakeholders participated in the design: the government, the *Comité National de la Statistique et de la Normalisation Comptable*, specialised commissions, sector ministries, individual experts, technical and financial partners, and data users / media. Over the past decade, strategic statistical planning in Côte d'Ivoire has adopted different planning and budgeting approaches. The planning approach used for the current NSDS is participatory and bottom-up with specialised commissions filtering their priorities upward to the national statistical office who co-ordinates the work. The budgeting approach is now activity- and results-based. In evaluating the implementation of past NSDSs, the country decided to revise its statistical legislation, ratify the African Charter on Statistics, and modernise the financial and technical resources in the national statistical office. In closing, the presenter identified a number of constraints to statistical development in the country and a number of next steps to take the agenda forward. Constraints include: the timely mobilisation of resources, the balance between an activity-based budgeting and a straight accounting-focused budgeting, and government adoption

of the NSDS. Next steps include: further pursuing the participatory, bottom-up, and decentralised approach; integrating the NSDS in the National Development Plan (NDP); addressing the mobilisation of resources at NDP round tables; creating a sustainable source of funding for the NSDS; and launching a Country Report on the Support to Statistics (CRESS).

V. Country Case Good Practices: Implementing a strategy

8. The representative from Uganda presented her country's experience in implementing their statistical strategy, which is called the Plan for National Statistical Development (PNSD). Uganda developed their PNSD through a highly participatory, bottom-up process that built on NSDS principles. From 2002 to 2007, Uganda had a corporate strategy for its central statistical office, the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS). At that strategy's mid-way point, they integrated 16 different sector plans and developed a results framework to upgrade the strategy to a true NSDS. UBOS signed Memoranda of Understanding with ministries to ensure the latter would implement their sectoral strategies. They also opened special accounts for statistics by each sector with the Central Bank, mandated the UBOS Planning Committee to approve sectoral work plans and budgets, developed financial and technical performance monitoring tools, then disbursed funds to the implementing agencies.

9. The implementation of the PNSD has been successful largely thanks to its structure. In addition, a number of other best practices have emerged. These include:

- Sharing a common Vision, Mission and Strategic Objectives.
- Institutionalisation of Statistical Co-ordination structure in the UBOS Organigram.
- Integration of a 'Statistics Sector' Chapter in the National Development Plan and Budget.
- Establishment of Institutional arrangements for development and management of Statistics in the NSS.
- Integration of budgets for statistics in most Sectoral budgets
- Development of statistics web pages for ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs).
- Development of the Long Term Census and Survey programme.
- Collaboration with country wide Universities for Capacity Building in Local Governments.
- Mainstreaming gender statistics into all data production processes.
- Manpower development for compilation and analysis of data through group training.
- Harmonisation of key indicators aligned to the National Development Plan, National Monitoring and Integrated Strategy, Mid Term Expenditure Framework.
- Champions at all stages of the process – design, advocacy, implementation, management.
- Documentation of processes.
- Participatory and inclusive approaches such as linking technocrats within the NSO with specialised subject areas in MDAs.
- Production of Annual Sectoral Statistical Abstracts has driven allocation of funds to statistics in the sectors.
- Emphasis of the concept and function of a 'SYSTEM' with inter-related parts, culture, norms, and values.

10. Although the PNSD and its sectoral statistical plans have expired, the updating process is ongoing. Modalities will be similar to the PNSD cycle but the focus will be on harmonisation of statistical production with development, policy, budget and M&E frameworks; co-ordination of efforts across the NSS; quality assurance through self assessment followed by audits; and meeting user needs and assessing satisfaction.

VI. Regional Case: towards a successful RSDS process

11. The representative from the Statistical Commission (CENTROESTAD) of the Central American Integration System (SICA) presented their experience in developing a Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS). In 1993, regional integration became an important issue in Central America. The countries of the region recognised that they needed data in all sectors, across all countries to make efficient decisions. They therefore created CENTROESTAD in 2008 to promote common policies to ensure that implementation was proceeding according to plan and to harmonise data and make them comparable and timely. Collaboration with PARIS21 began in 2009 and helped reactivate CENTROESTAD. In 2010, in close collaboration with PARIS21, the region embarked on an RSDS process, involving the input of all relevant stakeholders. With funds from the TFSCB, the design phase is now underway.

12. He then presented a number of good practices that have emerged in the RSDS process. These decisive elements include:

- Political commitment to get the process moving.
- The creation of a technical steering committee to design the RSDS. *CENTROESTAD decided that this would be a standing committee to implement directives from the region's national statistical offices.*
- Close linkages with SICA priorities.
- Co-ordination and participation of donors and other partners early in the RSDS process.
- Co-ordination of the RSDS with the countries' individual NSDSs.
- Co-ordination with other SICA programmes (PRESANCA II).

VII. Closing Statement

13. The chair drew the seminar to a close by urging participants to provide written comments to the PARIS21 Secretariat on the presentations and to share best practices in NSDS design and implementation with the task team convenor.