Peer Review

MYANMAR

National Statistical System

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Peer Review of Myanmar's National Statistical System

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ACRONYMS

ACSS	ASEAN Community Statistical System
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
ASEANStats	Statistics Division, ASEAN Secretariat
COP	(ACSS) Code of Practice
CSO	Central Statistical Organization (of Myanmar)
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DoP	Department of Population (of Myanmar)
DOSM	Department of Statistics, Malaysia
DG	Director-General
DPs	Development Partners
e-GDDS	Enhanced General Data Dissemination System
FPOS	(UN) Fundamental Principles on Official Statistics
GSAD	Graduate School of Administration and Development
ICT	information and Communications Technology
IHLCA	Integrated Household Living Conditions Assessment Survey
ILSM	*Institut Latihan Statistik* Malaysia
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MMSIS	Myanmar Statistical Information Service
MPF	Ministry of Planning and Finance
MPLCS	Myanmar Poverty Living Condition Survey
NSCB	National Statistical Coordination Board
NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
NSO	National Statistics Office
NSS	National Statistical System
PARIS21	Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century
PD	Planning Department (of Myanmar)
PSA	Philippine Statistics Authority
SAQ	Self-Assessment Questionnaire
SCI	Statistical Capacity Indicator
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDDS	Special Data Dissemination Standard
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WB	World Bank

Message from the Union Minister for Planning and Finance

His Excellency U Kyaw Win, Union Minister for Planning and Finance

There is growing recognition that statistics plays a key driving role in developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating development plans and policies. Likewise, statistics have always played a very important role in the social and economic development of the country as they provide evidence of what works and what does not. Furthermore, statistical standards, concepts and methodologies are crucial for producing accurate, quality, reliable and timely statistics. In this regard, I always keep in my mind to make sure that the country invests in improving the entire National Statistical System of Myanmar to the extent that statistics produced meet data users' needs, especially in this age of information and communications technologies.

The Central Statistical Organization (CSO) has been formed as one of organizations under the Ministry of Planning and Finance since 1952 and currently the organization has a vision of "Emergence of a National Statistical System that can produce meaningful socio-economic indicators and indexes, accurate and quality statistics required for evidence-based policy making". CSO needs to work with various statistics producers to generate statistics that are fit for use. In order to accomplish the set missions, it is essential to increase public awareness on statistical literacy; and promote the importance of statistics

by publishing more technical reports and research papers that can be utilized by all data users, including the general public.

In Myanmar, this is an exciting time for the development of statistics and the statistical system. A new statistics law has been formulated which strengthens the relationship of statistics producers and stakeholders, as well promotes quality statistics across government. In addition, a statistical policy brief and a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) have already been formulated, which set a clear path and concrete milestones for developing quality and accurate official statistics in Myanmar. I would like to thank all those who have worked hard and with a firm commitment to improve the quality of statistics in a variety of fora including the Committee members of Data Accuracy and Quality Statistics and NSDS Clusters, Development Partners, the private sector, academic and private research institutions, civil society and media, all of which are important partners when it comes to producing, sharing and using quality and accurate statistics to improve the lives of Myanmar people. So it is an exciting time for quality statistics in Myanmar.

Since Myanmar is in the process of transforming the national statistical system into a more efficient and effective system, this report on "Peer Review of Myanmar National Statistical System" would be critical as it provides a systematic assessment of our work processes and arrangements and recommendations for efficient ways forward. Additionally, it will serve as the inputs for the implementation plan of the NSDS identifying priority issues to be addressed by statistical development working groups and clusters.

Finally, I would like to express my cordial thanks to PARIS21, its Peer Reviewers and their continued support and assistance for improving Myanmar's National Statistical System.

U Kyaw Win

Union Minister for Planning and Finance

Message from Director General of CSO

Dr. Wah Wah Maung, Director General, CSO

Since I took over the responsibility as Director General in 2015, I have noted the important role of the CSO in supporting accurate, quality and timely statistics to various data users: ranging from decision makers and policy developers to academics, researchers and media. The vision of the CSO is "Emergence of a National Statistical System that can produce meaningful socio-economic indicators and indexes, accurate and quality statistics required for evidence-based policy making." The missions are also identified to realize the set vision. The necessary statistical policy is in line with the regional ASEAN Community Statistical System (ACSS) Code of Conduct and 1993 UN Guidelines for Official Statistics.

Under the current decentralized statistical system, relevant Departments and organizations from all ministries in Myanmar's Government establish their own statistical units to produce the respective statistics according to their own purposes and needs. I also noticed that in order to ensure the utmost efficiency of a decentralized statistical system adhering to international standards, we need to establish strong coordination mechanisms in order to eliminate the negative effects of a decentralized system.

To accomplish all of these objectives for reengineering the National Statistical System, it is necessary to make continuous efforts in all areas including the development of a National

Strategy for Development of Statistics (NSDS) and Myanmar Statistics Law. The "Peer Review of Myanmar National Statistical System" supported by PARIS21 would seek to improve the institution, governance and operational mechanism of Myanmar's National Statistical System to strengthen its capacity in producing and making available to users the statistics needed for better decision making. I strongly believe that this Peer Review Report will provide insightful information and a means to fulfill the gaps among NSDS cluster groups with invaluable recommendations from the viewpoints of neighboring countries.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the report, please contact us at mnped.cso@ gmail.com or fax: +95-67-406151, phone +95-67-406325 and +95-67-5046328.

Dr. Wah Wah Maung

Director General

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1) A peer review mission for the National Statistical System (NSS) of Myanmar was carried out in Nay Pyi Taw from 26 June to 1 July 2016. The peer review team is composed of three members: one senior official from the National Statistics Offices (NSOs) of Malaysia and the Philippines, and a senior official of the Statistics Division of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretariat, with support from the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21) Secretariat through a Consultant, and the partnership's Regional Programme Coordinator for Asia-Pacific and Small Island Developing States. The team evaluated a number of documents supplied by Myanmar's Central Statistical Organization (CSO), and, met with a number of representatives of stakeholders of the Myanmar NSS, officials from various government agencies who are producers and users of statistics, as well as representatives from development partners (DPs). The following observations were noted:
   a) Despite the non-existence of a legal mandate for statistical coordination, the team observed that the Central Statistical Organization (CSO), as the country's National Statistics Office, has started to function as a statistical coordinator of the NSS particularly in the last three years. The CSO performs this statistical coordination role in addition to collecting some primary data and compiling of secondary data for its annual Statistical Yearbook and other publications.
   b) The 1952 Central Statistical Authority Act established the Central Statistical and Economics Department (CSED), which was later renamed into the CSO. This 64-year-old law envisioned a centralized NSS; however, the current NSS setup is far from being centralized. In the past year, the CSO has been strengthened, with a government provision to the CSO of improved information, communications technology (ICT) infrastructure, and increased human resources. Since 2013, there has been an increase in the budget allocated by the government to the CSO. However, despite these changes, the CSO is currently not adequately equipped to handle its increasing role as coordinator of the NSS as no unit is in charge of statistical coordination, statistical training activities (which are done mostly in an *ad hoc* manner), and other essential statistical services. The CSO is currently under the Ministry of Planning and Finance.
   c) Some other major administrative registers and/or producers of socio-economic statistics include the Planning Department (also under the Ministry of Planning and Finance); the Department of Population and the Department of Labour (both of which are under the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population); the Department of Agriculture and Land Management Statistics (under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation); the Department of Public Health (under the Ministry of Health and Sport); the Department of Human Resources and Educational Planning (under the

Ministry of Education); the Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection (under the Ministry of Industry); and the Central Bank of Myanmar.

d) Statistical coordination is new to Myanmar. While a number of government committees in Statistics have been established to improve the quality and accuracy of statistics, the processes by which these working groups provide inputs for statistical development, and specific recommendations on statistics policies to the government high-level committee have yet to be operationalized. Myanmar started formulation of its first National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) with the drafting of a core strategies paper and the establishment of several NSDS cluster groups to identify issues on statistics and concrete plans for statistics development.

e) Some good practices exist in dissemination, particularly for statistical activities supported by DPs, and statistics producers appear to be guided by technical autonomy in the production of statistics; however, the NSS does not adhere to common statistical practices like the ASEAN6 countries (i.e., Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand), such as advance release calendars, wide use of websites and press releases for dissemination of key statistics, as well as revisions of key statistics particularly for national accounts and balance of payments.

f) A number of resource constraints (including financial, human, and ICT) have hindered the Myanmar NSS from generating the required statistics of sufficient quality and accuracy. Some resource gaps have been addressed by DPs, but there has been duplication of statistical information in some key areas, such as consumption/expenditure data in the Household Income and Expenditure Survey of the CSO; the Integrated Household Living Conditions Assessment Survey; the Myanmar Poverty Living Conditions Surveys; and, in one module of the Labour Force Survey, as well as health/education data in the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, and the Demographic and Health Survey.

g) Demand for statistics is weak and some recent key publications prepared in English limit their wider use (particularly for citizens of Myanmar).

2) On the basis of these observations and findings, the Peer Review Team recommends the following:

a) The NSS should push for the approval of the new statistical law that would serve as legal mandate to improve its effectiveness in meeting demands for statistics. Further, governance in the NSS should be strengthened by having the Central Committee for Data Accuracy and Quality of Statistics act as the country's Statistics Policy Council with the CSO acting as secretariat for the Central Committee. Current committees should issue policy recommendations on statistics for adoption in the entire NSS, such as on advance release calendars; survey review clearance system; policies for statistical

revisions, statistical standards and classifications; and, policies on metadata and microdata release, among others.

b) The CSO should be further strengthened by restructuring some units so they have additional sections to take charge of statistical coordination, statistical training, and data user services. The government committees should adopt a regular meeting schedule. The CSO should also conduct an in-country training course on the NSDS, with the assistance of PARIS21, to give guidance to NSDS Cluster Groups in the formulation of action plans. A list of priority statistics should be developed by the NSS for monitoring the country's development plans.

c) Relationships between statistics producers and data providers and data users need to be systematized and strengthened. The CSO and other statistics producers will require more resources to meet growing information requirements, nationally, regionally and globally. It will help the CSO, in particular, to formulate an ICT development plan to support statistical development, following the good practices in Malaysia's Department of Statistics. The CSO will need to integrate its websites, especially for ease of updates, and to avoid confusion of data users. Likewise, the CSO should encourage other statistics producers to make use of their respective websites to release and update statistics in a timely manner and link this information with the CSO website. Quality assessment will also be needed for statistical activities in the NSS, particularly for administrative-based statistics. Duplication of statistical activities should be avoided.

d) The production of statistics will need to be rationalized as currently some statistics are too frequently generated, while other more relevant statistics are infrequently produced. Finally, it will be important to consider demand side issues. To increase the use of statistics, the CSO should consider offering training courses for data users (e.g., data analysis and interpretation, data visualization including infographics). The training should be given specifically to government units that are essentially data users requiring such training. The CSO should also encourage all statistics producers to prepare publications in both Burmese and English. Statistics producers should also be encouraged to identify and educate their data users (e.g., media practitioners, academicians/researchers, Union of Myanmar Federation Chambers of Commerce and Industry), perhaps with the support of DPs.

e) There are some good practices in Myanmar's NSS particularly on statistical advocacy activities. The recent celebration of World Statistics Day and some forums on the conduct of major statistical activities such as censuses and major surveys are very relevant especially for data users. It is important to have these forums systematically conducted for all key statistics, such as for national accounts.

f) Further, it is necessary to improve statistical coordination in the NSS and to work on specific steps to improve the quality, accuracy, and credibility of statistics, especially

key macroeconomic statistics vital to economic analysis and policymaking. More effective cooperation among statistics producers and development partners and greater focus on developing good primary data are essential.

g) While the support of development partners to the NSS is welcome, it is not sustainable. The government will need to invest more in statistics, statistical activities and statisticians. The required budget for priority statistics and statistical infrastructure must be guaranteed in the long run by the government, as is practiced in ASEAN6 countries, to ensure sustainability.

3) A credible and accurate body of statistics is a vital prerequisite to sound socio-economic development planning and nation-building. While there are some good practices in Myanmar's NSS, the Peer Review Team calls attention to the urgent need to improve statistical coordination in the NSS, and to improve the quality, accuracy, and credibility of statistics. More effective cooperation among statistics producers and development partners, and greater focus on developing good primary data are necessary. Strengthening Myanmar's NSS hinges on strengthening and rationalizing statistical coordination and cooperation among the institutions and people within the system. The development partners' support to statistical development in Myanmar has considerably improved statistics in the country. However, such support may not be sustainable in the long run. The goal of the government should be to ensure data quality and accuracy and it entails investments in and reengineering of Myanmar's NSS. Experiences in statistical systems of ASEAN6 countries can serve as a guide for Myanmar as it formulates its strategy for statistical development. Professionalizing the entire statistics bureaucracy under the governance of the Central Committee for Data Accuracy and Quality of Statistics, with the leadership of the CSO, will strengthen Myanmar's NSS into an NSS marked by integrity, professionalism, and responsiveness in the quest for a better Myanmar.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Myanmar National Statistical System

1. **The Myanmar National Statistical System (NSS), comprised of various government departments and agencies in Myanmar that produce statistics, is a highly decentralized statistical system.** Several external assessments by development partners (DPs) even characterized the Myanmar NSS to be highly fragmented[i]. The Myanmar NSS, particularly the Central Statistical Organization (CSO), attribute its existence to the 1952 Central Statistical Authority Act (which was enacted four years after the independence of Myanmar). The legislation however no longer reflects reality, as the NSS is far from the centralized structure that was envisioned in the Act. Yet, in theory, the 64-year old legislation is still in operation as it has not been revoked, amended or updated to consider the current landscape of a decentralized structure in the NSS. In the past two to three years, the government has formulated and carried out reforms that sought to improve the organizational set-up in the NSS at the institutional, individual and enabling environment levels. With support from DPs, these reforms are continuing as the NSS, led by the CSO, has drafted a core strategies paper for its first Myanmar National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS). Further, an implementation/action plan for the NSDS is currently being formulated.

2. **The performance of the Myanmar NSS may be assessed using internationally accepted standards, such as the enhanced General Data Dissemination System (e-GDDS) of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as well as the Statistical Capacity Dashboard[ii] of the World Bank (WB).** These performance measures for NSS have their limitations as they do not consider institutional/organizational aspects in a NSS, e.g. resources availability and governance in an NSS. Nonetheless, they still provide a limited sense of the NSS' performance. The e-GDDS in particular, has a framework that looks at four dimensions, viz., data characteristics, quality, access, and integrity. It is intended to provide guidance for overall statistical development, with a focus on macroeconomic and financial statistics. Myanmar became the 110th participant to the IMF's e-GDDS in November 2013. Table 1 provides a summary of the dissemination practices in Myanmar, as of the writing of this report, for various e-GDDS Data Categories. It can be observed from the e-GDDS that while Myanmar adheres to suggested practices on periodicity of statistics (except for statistics on national accounts, balance of payments and central government fiscal operations), the country needs significant improvements on the timeliness of macroeconomic and financial statistics.

Table 1. Dissemination Practices for Real, Fiscal, Financial and External Sectors.

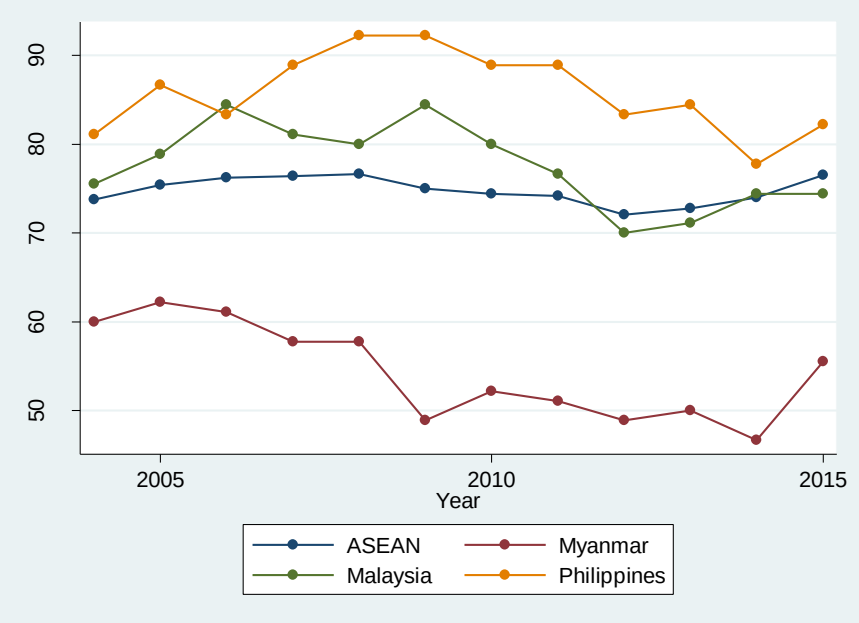
e-GDDS Data Category	Periodicity		Timeliness	
	e-GDDS	Myanmar	e-GDDS	Myanmar
Real Sector (Specifications)				
National Accounts	Q	A	1Q	1Y
Consumer price index	M	M	2M	1M
Fiscal Sector (Specifications)				
Central government operations	Q	A	1Q	20M
Financial Sector (Specifications)				
Depository corporations survey	M	M	1Q	5M
Central bank survey	M	M	2M	11M
External Sector (Specifications)				
Balance of payments	Q	A	1Q	20M
Official reserve assets – Gross	M	M	1M	22M
Merchandise trade	M	M	12W	2M
Exchange rates	D	D		D

Note: A – Annually; Q – Quarterly; M – Monthly; 1Y – one year; 1Q – one quarter; 2M – 2 months; 12W – 12 weeks.
Source: IMF
(http://dsbb.imf.org/Pages/GDDS/SOOCtyCtgList.aspx?ctycode=MMR)

Figure 1 illustrates the overall performance of the Myanmar NSS from 2004-2015 in producing important statistics as indicated by its Statistical Capacity Index (SCI) scores vis-à-vis the performance of the NSSs of the Philippines, Malaysia, and the average performance in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). A breakdown of the components of the SCI scores of Myanmar in 2013 to 2015 (see Figure 2) suggests that as far as methodologies used are concerned, there are issues noted on external debt reporting status, import and export price indices, industrial production index, reporting to the Special Data Dissemination Standard of the IMF, and reporting of education statistics to the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). With regard to timeliness and periodicity, the absence of official income poverty statistics, and the need to improve statistics on child malnutrition, gender equality in education, per capita gross domestic product (GDP) growth, and primary completion rate can be noted.

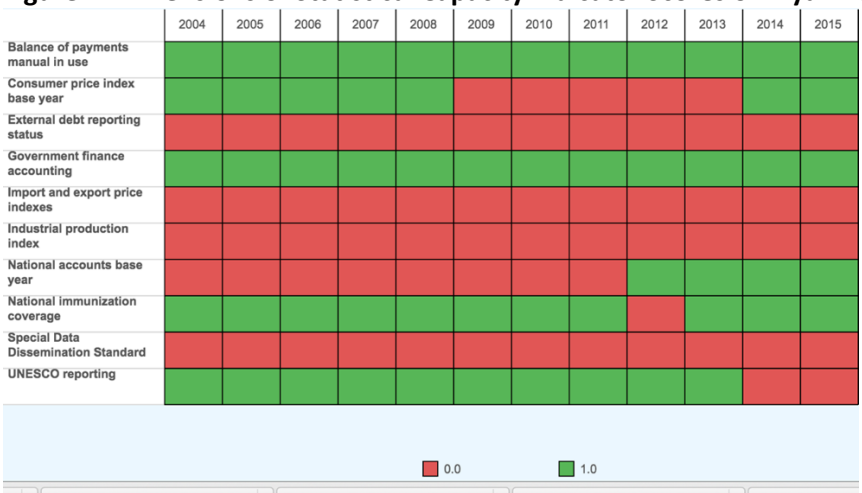
In regard to data source, the Myanmar NSS needs to improve the conduct of poverty surveys, vital registration system coverage, and regular conduct of the population census (which was only conducted in 2014 compared to neighbors that conducted their censuses in 2010). For 2015, however, release of the results of the 2014 population census provided an increased score in the source data that led to an overall increase in the country's SCI score. The Myanmar NSS clearly has opportunities to improve its overall statistical capacity at the institutional, individual and enabling environment levels, if strategic actions are undertaken to account for results from external assessments of the NSS.

Figure 1. Statistical Capacity Indicator Scores of NSS in Myanmar, Malaysia, Philippines, and ASEAN Average: 2004-2015



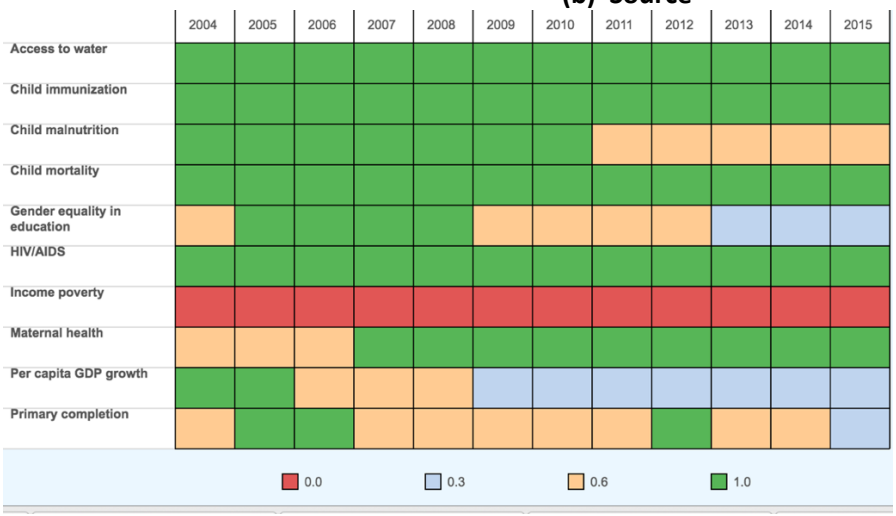
Source: World Bank
Note: ASEAN Average does not include NSSs of Singapore and Brunei Darussalam.

Figure 2. Dimensions of Statistical Capacity Indicator Scores of Myanmar NSS: 2004-2015



(a) Methodology

(b) Source



(c) Periodicity

Source: World Bank (http://datatopics.worldbank.org/statisticalcapacity/)

1.2. Rationale for Peer Review

3. **As Myanmar undergoes rapid socio-economic transformation, results of external assessments and a Peer Review of Myanmar's NSS can be used to craft an action plan to improve Myanmar's overall NSS.** In November 2015, the CSO of Myanmar, through its Director General (DG), requested the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21) to conduct a Peer Review of the Myanmar NSS. The results of the review can be used to influence the design of the Myanmar NSDS implementation plan. In particular, the Peer Review will be used to:
    - provide concrete suggestions on how to improve governance and operation of the Myanmar NSS and, in particular, the performance of CSO
    - promote South-South learning (ASEAN-help-ASEAN) through the exchange of best practices
    - advocate for actions to the government's (Central) Committee for Data Accuracy and Quality of Statistics[iii], established by the current government in May 2016 that aims[iv], among others, "to make Peer Review on the NSS to be consistent with international statistical systems"

4. **In general, Peer Review exercises facilitated by PARIS21 are aimed at improving governance and operation of NSSs through South-South learning in statistical development.** Since 2005, Peer Review exercises have been undertaken in thirteen African countries. Within Asia and the Pacific region, Peer Reviews of NSS were piloted in Cambodia in June 2015, another Member State of ASEAN. The Peer Review of the Myanmar NSS

complements various external assessments[v] made on Myanmar's NSS in the last decade. The focus of this Peer Review on Myanmar's NSS is to evaluate the operations of the NSS in all fundamental aspects of governance (i.e. institutional, organizational, statistical production processes, strategic planning, service to users, as well as funding and sustainability). The evaluation is viewed through the lens of the ACSS Code of Practice (CoP) adopted on 27 September 2012 by ASEAN Member States including Myanmar. The ACSS CoP sets principles on the mandate for data collection, professionalism and integrity, confidentiality, accountability, statistical cooperation and coordination, cost effectiveness, reduced respondent burden, and commitment to quality in NSSs across ASEAN Member States. The ACSS CoP is an adaptation of the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (UNFPOS)[vi], which was endorsed by the UN General Assembly in 29 January 2014 during its 68th Session. Both the UNFPOS and the ACSS CoP provide due political recognition of official statistics as a public good produced with (technical) independence, objectivity and professionalism in the NSS.

5. **The peer review of Myanmar's NSS identifies strengths and weaknesses of the NSS in relation to practices in the management and operations of NSS's across ASEAN, provides recommendations for improved performance, serves as an advocacy tool for national statistical authorities, and suggests concrete measures on strengthening statistical capacity building.** It is hoped that the Union Government of Myanmar will take ownership of the issues identified in this report, and work toward carrying out specific interventions for improving governance and operation of Myanmar's NSS in a practical and feasible manner. Strengthening NSS capacity to produce and make available important statistics in Myanmar can lead decision makers in formulating evidence based policies, programs, and projects for better development outcomes in Myanmar.

1.3. Methodology

6. **From 26 June to 1 July 2016, a peer review mission for Myanmar's NSS was carried out in Naypyitaw. The DG of Myanmar's CSO hosted the review and met with the peer reviewers at the inception and conclusions of the review mission.** The review was facilitated by the PARIS21 Secretariat. Documentary reviews of institutional practices in the NSS and meetings with NSS stakeholders formed the core of the peer review methodology. The peer review team was composed of one senior official from National Statistics Offices (NSOs) of Malaysia and the Philippines, and from the Statistics Division of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretariat. The three peer reviewers were supported by one official and one consultant from the PARIS21 Secretariat. The team met managers and staff of the CSO, officials of other data producers in the NSS, key users of official statistics within

the government, the development community, and other data users in the private sector. (Please see Annexes B and C that list the organizations represented during the Kick-off Meeting, and, the stakeholders that met during the peer review mission, respectively.) Interviews were guided by a discussion schedule based on the Peer Review Self-Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ), but reviewers had the flexibility to deviate from this schedule and to pursue topics in more depth.

7. **The Peer Review of Myanmar's NSS is based on 17 principles that cut across 4 major themes: Theme 1 - organization and management of the NSS (at the institutional and enabling environment levels); Theme 2- management of the statistical production process; Theme 3- assuring quality of statistical outputs; and Theme 4 - dissemination, communication and use of statistics.** These 17 principles are:
    - Principle 1: Governance of the NSS
    - Principle 2: Statistics in national development policy
    - Principle 3: Strategic plan on statistics/NSDS
    - Principle 4: Relationship with stakeholders
    - Principle 5: Independence, professionalism, and integrity
    - Principle 6: Mandate for data collection
    - Principle 7: Confidentiality and protection of personal data
    - Principle 8: Adequacy of resources
    - Principle 9: Methodological soundness
    - Principle 10: Cost-effectiveness
    - Principle 11: Respondent burden
    - Principle 12: Appropriate statistical procedures
    - Principle 13: Commitment to quality
    - Principle 14: Quality measures
    - Principle 15: Accessibility, availability of data
    - Principle 16: Communication and advocacy on statistics
    - Principle 17: Use of statistics

    As illustrated in Figure 3, the 17 Principles for the Peer Review of Myanmar's NSS articulate the 10 Principles set forth in the UNFPOS and further elaborated in the 8 Key Principles of the ACSS CoP. The first 8 of these 17 principles concern the theme on "organization and management of the NSS", with the first four pertaining to a sub-theme on coordination of the NSS, while the sub-theme of the principles 5 to 8 is on managing the institutional environment. The next four principles (9 to 12) relate to the theme on managing statistical processes, the next two (13 to 14) are on assuring quality of statistical outputs, while the last three (15 to 17) concern dissemination, communication and use of statistics.

Figure 3. Myanmar Peer Review Principles vis-à-vis the UNFPOS and the ACSS CoP

8. The Peer Review team evaluated a number of documents supplied by Myanmar's Central Statistical Organization (CSO), including the results of a self-assessment questionnaire (SAQ) provided to statistics producers that reflect various elements under the 17 principles of the Peer Review. The SAQ took into account several documents of the European Statistical System (i.e. European Statistics Code of Practice, EUROSTAT peer review documents and Snapshot Tool) and PARIS21 peer reviews in the Africa region. Further, the team had meetings[vii] with a number of representatives and stakeholders from Myanmar's NSS, and officials of government agencies (aside from CSO) who are producers and users of statistics, as well as representatives of DPs. An observation visit was also made to the Graduate School of Administration and Development (GSAD) where about 40 government staff, including CSO staff, are pursuing a Diploma in Statistics.

9. The assessment undertaken here highlighted the extent to which Myanmar's NSS is able to implement the 17 principles of the Peer Review. Particular attention was given to the challenges and issues facing the NSS when certain principles are partly or not at all implemented. The observations and findings (grouped by theme) provided in the next chapter discuss issues and constraints for implementing the principles, while the final chapter provides a series of recommendations to address the observations made by the Peer Reviewers. This chapter provides specific proposals for improving Myanmar's NSS based on the experiences of the Peer Review team. Ultimately, no one will be in a better position to see what will work best than the leadership and entities of Myanmar's NSS.

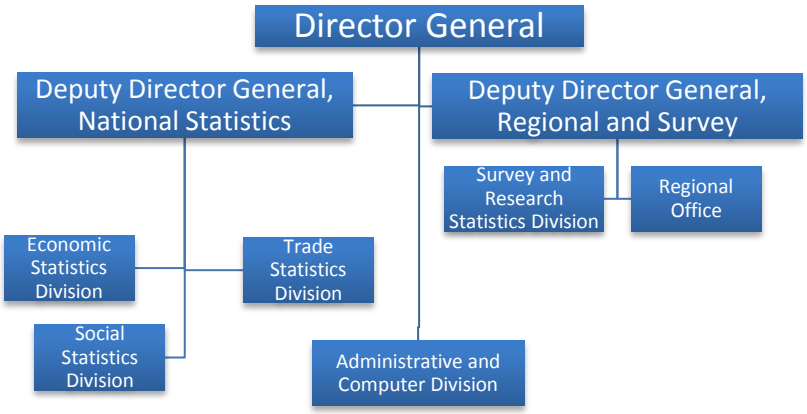
Chapter 2: Observations and Findings

2.1. Organization and Management of National Statistical System

1. **The CSO, the country's National Statistics Office (NSO), has acted as statistics coordinator in the NSS especially in the last two years, although the outdated legal framework does not actually provide for this mandate nor for responsibilities for statistical capacity building.** The 1952 Central Statistical Authority Act established the Central Statistical and Economics Department (CSED) which later was renamed into the CSO. This law was formulated in a manner similar to legislations in many other Commonwealth countries that provided for the power to collect information for statistical purposes, and the provision of confidentiality to data suppliers. However, this law which envisioned a centralized NSS, is already far from the current realities of a decentralized NSS, thus the absence of legal provisions for statistical coordination. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the CSO can convene meetings of inter-agency committees despite the absence of a specific directive. The CSO's DG functions as Secretary to the Central Committee for Data Accuracy and Quality of Statistics (which was first formed in 2013), and as Chair of the Sectoral Working Group (SWG) on Statistical Quality[viii]. The CSO also leads in the formulation of the NSDS. Further, the CSO has been regularly providing basic training on statistics to its staff as well as to other statistics producers in the NSS. Other statistics producers also give training to their respective staff, but these are ad hoc in nature and tied to specific statistical activities typically supported by DPs. Some of the key holders of major administrative registers and/or producers of socio-economic statistics in government include the Planning Department (PD), also under the Ministry of Planning and Finance; the Department of Population (DoP) and the Department of Labour, both of which are under the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population; the Department of Agriculture and Land Management Statistics (under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation); the Department of Public Health (under the Ministry of Health and Sport); the Department of Human Resources and Educational Planning (under the Ministry of Education); the Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection (under the Ministry of Industry); and, the Central Bank of Myanmar. The PD compiles national accounts, the DoP conducts the population census, while the Ministry of Agriculture conducts the agriculture census. The CSO also engages in some primary data collection, (i.e. conducts the Household Income and Expenditure Survey; collects price data and generates the consumer price index; conducts establishment survey in the zones, and recently conducted the Myanmar Business Survey). It has also been compiling data for its Annual Statistical Yearbook and other publications.

2. **While the CSO performs a statistics coordination role in the NSS, it has hitherto no specific organizational unit dedicated to perform this coordination function (see CSO organizational chart in Figure 4).** This is also true for its current conduct of statistical capacity building programs, and for statistical information services. In contrast, many NSOs of ASEAN6 countries have specific units that are tasked with statistical coordination and data user services. In the case of Malaysia, coordination is under the purview of Corporate and User Services Division, while in the Philippines, it is under the Statistical Policies and Programs Division. It can be also noted that many ASEAN Member States have updated their statistical legislations, or, are in the process of revising their statistics laws that involve the provision of mandates to NSOs on statistical coordination, training, and dissemination. The Philippine Statistical Act of 2013, for instance, consolidated a number of major statistical agencies from various ministries in the Philippines into the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), and strengthened the statistical research and training arm of the Philippine Statistical System. In the case of Malaysia, the DOSM Transformation Plan 2015-2020 signifies a proposal to revise the country's Statistics Act 1965 (revised 1989) to enhance the use of administrative data for statistical purposes.

Figure 4. CSO Organizational Chart as of 17 June 2016



Source: CSO.
Note: Each Division is headed by a Director, with a Deputy Director and Assistant Directors who head one or two Sections in a Division. The Economic Statistics Division has four sections (Agriculture, Livestock, Fishery & Forestry Section, Industry, Mining & Energy Section, Construction & Transport Communications Section, and Monetary & Investment Statistics Section); The Social Statistics Division has two sections (Social and Labour Section, Vital Statistics Section); the Trade Statistics Division has two sections (Price and Internal Trade Section, Foreign Trade Section). The Administrative and Computer Division has three sections (an Administrative Section, an Account Section and a System and Application Section). The Survey and Research Statistics Division has two sections (a Research and Development Section, and a Survey Section). The Regional Office supervises field offices in the State and Regional Offices and, Naypyitaw Council, as well as Branches of State and Regional Offices, and Self-Administered Zone and District Offices.

3. **The government has initiated mechanisms for statistical coordination through various committees on Statistics.** These committees include (a) the Central Committee for Data Accuracy and Quality of Statistics; (b) the SWG on Statistical Quality, and (c) Eight NSDS

Cluster Groups that were established to discuss major thematic areas among lead statistics producers and stakeholders. All these committees have Terms of Reference (TORs) that provide their respective functions, but the Peer Review Team noticed that the TORs do not specify the expected frequency of meetings (i.e., quarterly, monthly, etc.). Further, the Peer Review Team observed that the reportorial arrangement of the SWG and Cluster Groups with the Central Committee is unclear. The Cluster Groups, in particular, have no clear operational guidelines on how issues are discussed and resolved, and whether these cluster groups can provide clear recommendations on specific statistical policies or guidelines for the promulgation by the Central Committee across the entire NSS. There is no indication from minutes of meetings of these Cluster Groups and those of the SWGs that there is an actual linkage of these groups with the Central Committee, except for having CSO present in many of these committees. Further, there is also a lack of statistical policy agenda in these meetings to serve as a guide in discussions.

4. **Myanmar has started work on its first NSDS, with the drafting of a Core Strategies Paper**. The NSDS is led by CSO, with support provided by WB. An implementation/action plan is still being formulated. In practice, ASEAN Member States formulate their NSDSs that already contain implementation details. The NSDS Cluster Groups are expected to identify issues and bottlenecks on statistics production, and to formulate specific plans for statistics development. The Peer Review Team observed that these NSDS Cluster Groups appear to need more guidance on developing actual work plans and on accelerating work for producing inputs to the NSDS implementation plan. In the case of Malaysia, action plans are immediately formulated after the strategic plan is finalized and accepted. This is crucial in ensuring that strategies are implemented successfully. Further, the NSDS of Malaysia is fully in sync with the national development plan of Malaysia.

5. **The Peer Review Team notes that typically, the formulation and implementation of the NSDS is synced with a national development plan, whether a medium term or a long term plan.** Myanmar's National Comprehensive Development Plan for 2011-2031 should have several Five Year Plans in support of this long term plan. The last government's Five Year Plan (for 2011/12 to 2015/16), the 5th such plan of the country, focused on balanced economic growth, social development and better statistics. Monitoring development targets in these plans will require "priority" statistics that should be of high quality and accuracy to help the government in tracking results (or the lack of them). In developing strategic/transformation plans in Malaysia, the DOSM takes into account the requirements of national development policies, development of global statistics, as well as users' expectations. These requirements are then linked to the development of competent human, capital and information and communications technology (ICT) requirements. In

addition to the main strategic/transformation plan, DOSM also formulated an ICT Strategic Plan and *Institut Latihan Statistik* Malaysia (ILSM)[ix] Strategic Plan.

6. **The NSS of Myanmar has some good practices to enhance the relationship of statistics producers with statistics stakeholders (both data providers and data users).** Some dissemination forums on statistical activities appear to have been done well, and the Peer Review Team notes that these activities were supported by DPs. These forums include those on the population census by the Department of Population (DOP), on the agriculture census by the Department of Agriculture and Land Management Statistics (DALMS), and on results of some sample surveys, e.g., by the Planning Department (PD), or the Department of Labor. Other important socio-economic statistics (such as national accounts, prices, employment), however, are not released regularly to the public, and are instead disseminated through the CSO's Statistical Yearbook. The Peer Reviewers note that NSOs of ASEAN6 countries[x] make huge efforts to maintain a strong relationship between users and producers of statistics. In the case of Malaysia, DOSM has specific publicity programmes and budget for censuses and large surveys such as Population and Housing Census, Economic Census and Household Income and Expenditure Survey. For others, DOSM makes press releases for the media, specific announcements and media releases for national accounts by the governor of Malaysia's Central Bank, trade statistics by the Minister of the Ministry of Trade, and consumer price index by the Minister of Ministry of Domestic Trade, Co-operatives and Consumerism. State offices, on the other hand, hold specific sessions with respondents once a year. There are various collaborative activities undertaken in tandem with various agencies, institutions of higher learning and the national news agency using the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Engagement is also undertaken with the relevant stakeholders to promote new statistical products. Similarly, in the Philippines, user-producer dialogues are undertaken by the PSA for various statistical activities, particularly censuses and large scale sample surveys. The Philippine Director General of the National Economic and Development Authority, the equivalent of Myanmar's Minister of Planning and Finance, acts as a resource person for its press releases of key socio economic statistics, such as the national accounts and poverty statistics. Further, the PSA leads in the celebration of October as National Statistics Month, and conducts a triennial National Convention on Statistics as part of its statistical advocacy activities that promote the importance of statistics in society.

7. **Interviews with statistics producers suggest that data producers appear to be guided by technical autonomy/independence in reporting statistics to their respective ministers, but there are no advance release calendars to the public on important socio-economic statistics.** Further, while statistical work programmes are defined across statistics

producers, there is no Annual Statistical Work Program defined for the entire NSS. There are also no specific target release dates on the public dissemination of statistics. In the past, most statistics were largely produced for purposes internal to ministries, thus practices for public dissemination were deemed unnecessary. Reporting to the public was only done through the Annual Statistical Yearbook and other publications of the CSO, rather than having them released in a regular and timely fashion. The Peer Reviewers note that NSOs of ASEAN6 countries subscribes to the IMF's Special Data Dissemination Standards (SDDS) with advance release calendars for SDDS products provided to IMF, while for non SDDS products, advance release calendars are posted at the beginning of each calendar year. Since 2014, the time of release for official statistics in Malaysia is fixed at 12 noon for all products. For the Philippines, the release time is at 10 am.

8. **Since 2013, government has slightly increased human and financial resources at CSO.** Despite an increase in personnel, CSO still has very lean human resources (currently less than 600 staff). This is much less compared to the 3,000+ staff in both Malaysia's DOSM and the Philippines' PSA as well as the 17,000+ staff in Indonesia's BPS-Statistics. ICT resources (computers, training room, and internet access of staff) have notably improved at CSO through assistance of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and Asian Development Bank (ADB). The ADB has also assisted CSO in providing "replicated" training on basic statistics that first involved a training of trainers at CSO, and were replicated for CSO staff (especially new staff) and staff from other statistics producers.

9. **Across the NSS, there has been limited provision of human, financial and IT resources for infrastructure required in statistics production, with some gaps in financial resources filled by DPs.** The Peer Review Team notes that while assistance from DPs can be helpful, this assistance is not sustainable. Programmes and budget have to be institutionalized into each statistical organization and in the entire NSS to ensure sustainability and to obtain required resources. The strategic plan, action plan and annual work plan should be used to justify the need for resources in the NSS. In the case of Malaysia, budget proposals are submitted for annual requirements as well as for a five year development budget plan. Structure reviews are undertaken from time to time to meet present requirements. In the case of the Philippines, the PSA annually reviews the statistical budgets of all statistics producers. Further, the PSA also develops and submits budget proposals to the Department of Budget and Management for the medium term expenditure framework, which links planning and budgeting across the government. In 2015, the PSA piloted the Country Report on Support to Statistics (CRESS), a PARIS21 tool designed to document the existing and planned financing and budget resources for statistics provided by government and other external entities.

10. **Websites of statistics producers in the NSS have generally not been used for statistics dissemination.** There are notable exceptions to this practice, such as the Myanmar Statistical Information Service (MMSIS) of CSO, and the website of the Department of Population (DoP).

2.2. Managing Statistical Processes

11. **National accounts compilation, conduct of censuses (of population and agriculture), and sample surveys supported by DPs generally follow international standards but some issues remain.** Notable among sample surveys are the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), Integrated Household Living Conditions Assessment Survey (IHLCA), Myanmar Poverty Living Condition Survey (MPLCS), and Myanmar Business Survey. The latest release of 2015 National Accounts data still follow the 1968 System of National Accounts (SNA), but adoption of 1993 and 2008 SNA is currently underway by PD with support from ADB. Statistics sourced from administrative reporting systems and other sample surveys conducted fully with government funds require a quality assessment (coverage, non-response, reliability, *etc*.). Finally, the Peer Review Team took notice of the recent Cabinet directive to all ministries to form statistics units within each ministry. The Team notes that these units will need to develop capacity to produce quality statistics. In Malaysia, cadre officers and staffs of DOSM are posted to statistical posts in ministries and agencies. If an agency requests for new statistical posts, the Public Service Department will seek DOSM's endorsement prior to the approval. In terms of technical capacity, DOSM provides technical advice to both private and public agencies and DOSM is invited to sit in steering and technical committees for studies undertaken by ministries or agencies. In the Philippines, the PSA has been a rather new organization, and the law that formed it allows for the PSA to post personnel to ministries, but this has yet to be done. The PSA currently produces most of the country's general purpose statistics, including national accounts statistics, and is also in charge of conducting censuses and major sample surveys.

12. **Statistics producers are making use of various data sources (including administrative data as alternative to sample surveys), with DPs providing assistance to NSS on developing systems for generation and dissemination of statistics.** The Peer Review Team took note not only of the need for quality assessment and assurance processes, but also the need to address the duplication of information from various sample surveys, e.g. consumption/ expenditure data from the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES), the IHLCA, MPLCS, Labor Force Survey (LFS) module, as well as health/education data in MICS and DHS.

The Philippines has a Statistical Survey Review Clearance System[xi] that allows the PSA to design all statistical surveys or censuses sponsored and/or to be conducted by government agencies, including government corporations at the national and local levels. This system was started by virtue of Executive Order No. 121 of 1987, "Reorganizing and Strengthening the Philippine Statistical System (PSS) of and for Other Purposes", and the former National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) Resolution No. 4-88, "Clearance of Statistical Survey Forms/Questionnaires", and NSCB Memorandum Circular No. 4-95, "Statistical Survey Review Clearance System."

13. **Staff of Myanmar's NSS has benefitted from statistical capacity building (including provision of a few graduate scholarships with the support of DPs and government, participation in national and international workshops/training).** Some government staff, including CSO staff, are also currently taking Diploma Programs in Statistics in the government's Graduate School for Administration and Development (GSAD). The Peer Review Team took notice of the current improvements that have been introduced by the CSO. However, "re-entry" plans when the scholars return to station from their graduate education need to be formalized, strengthened and institutionalized. Relative to the conduct of statistical training activities, much of these have been ad hoc, and some of these training activities involved very "intermediate" and "advanced" topics, often tied to statistical activities supported by DPs. The Peer Review Team further noted that aside from the ADB-assisted replicated training on basic statistics, many of these training activities do not appear to be sustainable, and did not benefit from a systematic training needs analysis that diagnose actual requirements for improving skills and competencies. The Team notes the experiences of ASEAN6 countries in establishing statistical training units in their NSOs. In the case of the Philippines, a training institute is situated outside of the NSO (which also has its own training unit). Prior to having its own statistical training institute in 2012, DOSM established a unit to coordinate training activities in 1990 and this unit was later expanded to the division level. Having a unit to coordinate training activities has enhanced capacities of NSOs in ASEAN6 countries in managing more structured training.

2.3. Commitment to Quality

14. **Myanmar committed to the ACSS Code of Practice and to UN FPOS, but extent of knowledge on COP and FPOS across the NSS is limited.** There is evidence that there may be too much data being collected, and too much statistics produced for internal purposes of ministries but processes for quality and wider use are not given much attention. While some processes for data checks appear to have been developed in the NSS, these are clearly more systematic in donor-supported statistical activities than those carried out by statistics

producing agencies including CSO. In Malaysia, DOSM includes quality checks in its processing system. For tabulations, data generated are also compared with relevant indicators. Statistical products are based on the prioritization of statistical activities tabled and approved at the Main User Committee meeting at the beginning of the year. Similarly, in the Philippines, the PSA adheres to several layers of quality checks at the field level and at the data processing stage. Before any statistics and official publications are released, attention to data from other related statistical indicators are noted.

2.4. Dissemination, Communication and Use of Statistics

15. **The Peer Review Team took note that there are three websites pertaining to the CSO (including the MMSIS and the MPF websites).** The MMSIS is a recent website developed by CSO with support from KOICA for releasing timely socio-economic statistics compiled from data sources at CSO and across the NSS. Maintaining multiple websites can be a source of confusion, and can be challenging to simultaneously update. The Peer Review Team took note of a comment from one of the DPs that some stakeholders thought that CSO changed its name to MMSIS. The CSO also disseminates statistics through traditional mechanisms, such as its annual Statistical Yearbook (SY) in book form and CD, and a Report on Selected Monthly Economic Indicators (SMEI). It also now maintains a Facebook page, but this is largely to disseminate information on CSO events. The Peer Review Team compared this practice with those of ASEAN6 countries. In Malaysia, DOSM make the most of its website for disseminating official statistics, where all publications are available for free download. Users have access to DOSM data at any time. The DOSM website is continuously improved and updated to provide better service to users. As a mechanism for disseminating data, having the website minimizes data requests from users, which have been reduced by 50% compared to pre-internet years. This enables DOSM to focus on other important activities. At the same time, DOSM also disseminates data via social media, e.g. Facebook and Twitter. The Philippines also makes extensive use of the internet and social media as a mechanism for statistics dissemination. In case there are misleading uses of its statistics in media, the PSA (particularly the predecessor agencies comprising it) releases a “For the Record” blog to discuss the proper use of statistics, consistent with its responsibility under the UN FPOS.

16. **Generally statistics producers, other than CSO and DoP, do not make use of websites to release statistics.** The Peer Review Team noticed that there is no data dissemination policy across the NSS. CSO publications are the usual mechanism for the dissemination of statistics by a number of statistics producers. Metadata is extremely limited. A policy on microdata release across the NSS is also not available, unlike in NSSs of ASEAN6 countries. In response to increased demand for micro data, DOSM has developed its microdata policy in 2009

which serves as a guide in disseminating micro data to users. Similarly, the PSA has a microdata policy that includes a standard pricing (although some researchers of less financial means may request discounts from the PSA). Microdata are available particularly for sample surveys of households, and for a sub-sample of the population and agriculture census. The PSA is currently discussing the possibility of providing microdata to the public for establishment surveys (but with care to protect the confidentiality of respondents of these surveys).

17. **Data use is very weak, and almost absent, except by government ministers, members of parliament, and DPs.** Publications supported by DPs are generally prepared in English, thus limiting their wider dissemination, communication and use of statistics, particularly for Burmese people. Data advocacy is needed to promote the wider use of statistics particularly in evidence based decision making. In this context, DOSM and PSA undertake various activities such as engagements with stakeholders. These include parliamentarians, main stakeholders, research agencies, media, students, respondents, sharing of micro data with institutions of higher learning via MoUs, *etc*. In the Philippines, the Philippine Statistical Research and Training Institute, a sister agency of the PSA, conducts various regular and customized statistical training courses including those meant to improve data use.

18. **The Peer Review Team took notice of the celebration of World Statistics Day in Myanmar, given the participation of a large number of statistics stakeholders in the event.** The team also noted a number of statistics user forums held for selected statistics/statistical activities, particularly those supported by DPs, a positive step for the improved dissemination of statistics. Malaysia and the Philippines also join in the celebration of World Statistics Day. In celebrating World Statistics Day in 2015, DOSM organized a rather unconventional statistical event i.e. Stats Run which attracted approximately 4,000 participants from various agencies and also the public. Other activities included a Statistics Talk; Session with Ex-Chief Statistician, MyStats Conference, Stats Talk at institutions of higher learning, *etc*. Aside from celebrating World Statistics Day, the Philippines celebrates the whole month of October as National Statistics Month, with the PSA taking the lead in the celebration.

Chapter 3: Summary of Recommendations

This final chapter outlines key recommendations of the Peer Review Team under the four broad themes in the previous chapter, namely: organization and management of the NSS; managing statistical production processes; commitment to quality; and, dissemination, communication and use of statistics.

3.1. Organization and Management of National Statistical System

1. *The government and other statistics stakeholders should strongly endorse to Parliament the adoption of a draft Statistics Act that defines roles and responsibilities of a high-level policy council, CSO (and its leadership), other statistics producers, and data providers.*

- While it will be challenging for the Myanmar NSS to shift to a more centralized set-up that can increase its efficiency, it will nonetheless be important to strengthen governance in the NSS. The government's Central Committee for Data Accuracy and Quality of Statistics already acts as a Statistics Policy Council. This can be institutionalized in a statistical legislation so that it is mandated to provide oversight to the CSO and to all statistics producers of the Myanmar NSS. It can promulgate policy and coordination on statistical matters in the entire government. Its decisions on statistical matters can be deemed final and executory across the NSS. This governance structure, the entire set of responsibilities and accountabilities of all actors of the NSS (from the CSO, to its head, to all statistics producers, to data providers), and the principles behind statistical activities, need to be defined in a new legal framework for a decentralized NSS. Similarly, this should take account of statistical coordination and capacity building along with current realities in a decentralized setup.
- CSO should identify champions and partners who can support the urgent passage of the draft statistical legislation (prepared with the assistance of the ADB).
- While CSO awaits passage of the new statistics act, it should start working on implementing rules and regulations for the draft legislation in order to ensure effective implementation of the legislation.

2. *Dedicated sections will need to be established at CSO for Statistical Coordination, Statistical Training, and Statistical Information Services, perhaps as part of a Corporate and User Service Division.*

- The CSO is not the sole producer of statistics in the NSS. It will need a strengthened role and capacity on statistical coordination, in order for the NSS to achieve both efficiency[xii] and effectiveness[xiii]in implementing a national statistical program. Institutional linkages in the NSS will require reinforcement to meet existing demands and priority requirements of stakeholders for statistics, and to generate further demand and use for statistics. Statistical cluster groups formulated for the NSDS will need to have at least two personnel from the CSO to perform the secretariat work, and to prepare background papers for meetings of these cluster groups, working closely with the Cluster Group chairperson. Whatever is the governance structure above CSO, there will be a need for some CSO staff to anticipate statistical policies and programs. For instance, "Notifications" need to be proclaimed by the Central Committee for execution across the NSS. This will require complete staff work from CSO. The coordination section may also be tasked to develop and promote statistical standards and classification systems for use in the NSS. Further, cooperation of CSO and other statistics producers with DPs, and south-south partnerships will also require more statistical coordination. Finally, statistical coordination also has an international dimension to ensure adherence by the Myanmar NSS to international statistical standards, classifications and frameworks. NSOs of ASEAN6 countries typically have their Statistical Policy Councils that oversee the NSOs, and the NSOs provide the secretariat support. For the Main User Committee of Malaysia, DOSM as the secretariat of the meeting makes call for papers from members of the meeting and the papers will be presented and scrutinized during a preparatory meeting. Only papers that were approved by the preparatory meeting will be tabled at the Main User Committee. The PSA also has its PSA Board that serves as the highest policy body on statistical matters in the country. Secretariat support is provided by the PSA to the PSA Board, with the quarterly PSA Board agenda set by the PSA Chairperson, based on inputs from the different Technical Committees on Statistics.
- Personnel within CSO will require retooling through statistical training. Every new CSO staff should preferably undergo at least 60 hours of statistical training on basic statistics, including the use of spreadsheet applications (such as Excel), and statistical software. Occasionally, advanced statistical training courses will be needed to develop specialized skills among CSO staff and special training for specific statistical operations. Basic training on statistics will also be needed not only for new recruits at CSO but also for staff of other statistics producers. There will also be a need for training of data users to enable them to appreciate the value of official statistics and know their limitations for their improved use. A dedicated statistical training section will be needed to carry out regular training programs and customized training courses, based on a training needs analysis. This section will have to devise mechanisms for CSO to obtain at least cost recovery of these training activities to sustain this work.

- While the CSO has its regular publications, and has developed a Facebook page, it will require the improved use of social media by a public that has growing access to the internet. Certainly, the public will demand more statistical information in the coming years. As a consequence, the CSO (and other statistics producers) will need to make full use of various mechanisms for developing relationships with stakeholders, including various social media beyond Facebook (e.g., Twitter, YouTube, etc.). CSO will need a user services section that learns from good data dissemination practices in NSOs of ASEAN member states, including press releases for key statistics, advance release calendars for key statistics, production of metadata, availability of micro data of sample surveys, and production of infographics for key socio-economic statistics. While CSO has developed MMSIS, it will be important to constantly improve this information portal to include key statistics for monitoring Myanmar's development plans, as well as statistics on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at whatever possible levels of disaggregation.

3. *Government committees on Statistics need to establish a regular working schedule (e.g. quarterly meetings for Central Committee; quarterly meetings for SWG; monthly/every two months for Cluster Groups).*

- SWG and Cluster Groups should provide specific statistical recommendations for adoption by the Central Committee as statistical policies. Notifications on these statistical policies may include:
    a) approval of the following year's Programme for Official Statistical Activities
    b) formulation and approval of the NSDS (at least every five years)
    c) approval of advance statistical calendars for the entire NSS (which should be released at the beginning of each calendar year)
    d) approval of methodologies for inter-censal projections
    e) approval of an official methodology for poverty lines
    f) setting up of a sample survey review system
    g) policies on statistical revisions (i.e., when statistics producers can release revisions in statistics, and up to when, especially for statistics on national accounts and balance of payments)

4. *A country training on NSDS to systematically develop the NSDS implementation/action plan in Myanmar should be conducted by the CSO for NSDS Cluster Groups, with assistance from PARIS21.*

- NSDS Cluster Groups will need to provide specific inputs on the implementation of the NSDS work plan. The cluster groups focusing on sectors need to develop an Inventory of Statistics Produced (including Information on Frequency of Reporting internally and public-wide) toward identifying "Priority" Statistics in Sector, and to do Gap Analysis. The Survey Cluster Group needs to have an inventory of various sample surveys conducted in the past 5 to 10 years and to develop a survey review clearance system for the entire NSS that should rationalize the conduct of sample surveys.

5. *A List of "Priority" Statistics should be identified and adopted for monitoring goals and targets in the current and future National Development (Five Year) Plan, as well as in the country's long term development plan.*

- Through NSDS Cluster Groups, the NSS can obtain an Inventory of Statistics across Sectors to streamline/rationalize statistics development. Some statistics (e.g., agriculture statistics on key commodities, consumer price indices) are too frequently produced, while others are too infrequently generated. The ADAPT tool of PARIS21 can help map indicators with national development goals to establish a results framework for national development plans.
- The Peer Review Team noted that while the SDG Assessment can be quite helpful as input for identifying a List of "Priority Statistics", the SDGs are not the only development goals. Each country, including Myanmar, also needs to identify its priorities for the 2030 global development agenda and the SDGs.

6. *Some good practices to enhance the relationship of statistics producers with stakeholders were noted and these need to be systematically in place (e.g., regular user-producer dialogues) across the NSS to include other important socio-economic statistics (e.g. CPI, national accounts, labor and employment statistics, agricultural and rural statistics, SDG indicators) to encourage wider use and to strengthen a community of statistical practice.*

- More strategies will be needed to constantly improve the relationship of statistics producers with their stakeholders toward ensuring responsiveness of the NSS to data needs of various sectors that are expected to grow in time. With the cooperation of other data producers or strategic partners, the CSO may consider a communication plan/advocacy programs for targeted users.

7. *Methodologies for producing important statistics (e.g. national accounts, poverty, prices, education, health and vital statistics) and advance release calendars should be approved by the Central Committee, to ensure processes for independence of statistics production; the concerned minister can be given 24-hour notice on these statistics before public release (as practiced in ASEAN6 countries).*

- Official statistics need to be credible. In order for official statistics to fulfill their important task to describe socio economic conditions in a country, they must be based on clear, publicly stated operating principles from methodologies for production to their dissemination. These operating conditions guarantee the quality of statistics as well as the trust among data users and data providers towards statistics producers.
- Most statistics producers (except for the Central Bank of Myanmar) are under some ministry. The integrity of statistics should be ensured and should be free from political influence, whether perceived or real. Both the FPOS and the ACSS CoP highlight the importance of adherence to international standards, professionalism and (technical) independence of NSSs. NSOs of ASEAN6 countries, typically are attached to either ministries of planning (as in the case of the PSA of the Philippines) or commerce, or under the Prime Minister's Office (in the case of DOSM), yet these NSOs and the entire NSSs are widely viewed to be credible sources of statistics. Practices on advance release calendars and on processes to ensure independence in statistics production help provide credibility of statistics and the entire NSS.

8. *CSO and the entire NSS will need more human, financial and ICT resources to meet growing responsibilities in the wake of demands for more and better data.*

- Compared to counterpart NSOs in ASEAN, Myanmar has the fewest NSO staff per population in ASEAN: 1 personnel for every 92 thousand people, while Vietnam and Indonesia each have 1 personnel for about 15 thousand people.
- The Vice President and Union Minister, MPF, along with the executive and legislative branches, should preferably be the primary champions to represent the entire NSS on

required human, financial and ICT resources for statistics generation that will be required not only at the national level, but also at sub-national levels (i.e. regions, states and NPT).

9. *Since funding statistical activities from DPs is not sustainable, government needs to gradually invest more in statistics, and to secure the necessary budget for the production of regular statistics. Financial requirements for the List of Priority Statistics need to be built into the budgetary system of Myanmar. These financial requirements should also consider statistical infrastructure needs, i.e., ICT requirements, capacity building and advocacy programs.*

- Budgetary resources required for implementing Myanmar's List of Priority Statistics should be preferably guaranteed by the government, subject to oversight by the Central Committee and by the Parliament, if necessary. A multi-year budgeting framework for statistical activities, including censuses and regular surveys is important. Close coordination must be effected among statistics producers in the sourcing of funds from the DPs. A review of the design of donor-funded activities for the NSS should be conducted on a regular basis by the Central Committee to ensure sustainability of statistics. In the Philippines, budget coordination, i.e. to review and thus influence the budgets of statistical activities in the NSS is a regular function of the PSA. A List of Designated (or Priority) Statistics has been identified to ensure the necessary funds for these priority statistical activities, and the placement of an undersecretary (i.e. deputy minister equivalent) of the Department of Budget and Management sitting as PSA Board Vice-Chair. In the case of Malaysia, as was stated, the NSDS and National Development Plan are in sync, allowing priority statistical activities identified in the NSDS to be provided guaranteed budgetary support. Further, budget proposals on statistical activities are submitted both annually and for a five-year plan for the country's development budget.
- A comprehensive ICT plan that includes a detailed plan for improving hardware and software facilities for support of statistical activities including dissemination should be developed and regularly updated by statistics producers. The CSO, in particular, needs to have an ICT development plan that includes a plan for ICT infrastructure, capacity development in geographic information systems (GIS), and overall ICT skills for staff.

10. *Statistics producers need to use their websites and other ICT tools for timely dissemination of statistics, rather than merely continue to disseminate statistics through CSO's Statistics Yearbook and Monthly Report on Selected Indicators.*

- The Peer Review Team strongly recommends taking deliberate measures to further enhance the accessibility of statistical information in all forms of dissemination, especially via the websites of CSO and other statistics producers.
- ICT utilization must be maximized in the delivery and dissemination of statistical products and services. Websites of statistics producers, especially the CSO, must be configured to provide easy and fast access to useful information. Key statistics producers must publish comprehensive metadata along with their regularly released statistics at all times. Micro-level data must be produced and made available in forms useful to various types of researchers, and at an affordable cost that may be subject to a pricing policy dependent on the resources of the data user. Advance release calendars containing information on when, where and what statistics will be released and by whom, must be issued widely, especially for key statistics.
- Adequate training in website development, maintenance and updating should be provided to ICT staff of statistics producers. Packaging, promoting and disseminating of statistical publications, products and services and improving statistical databases should be programmed by ICT staff of statistics producers maintaining these databases. There ought to be NSS-wide guidelines for developing websites as a means of disseminating and communicating statistics. CSO should take the lead on this, and it should make sure that capabilities are trickled down to other statistics producing units in the government.
- Big data holdings, e.g. population and agriculture censuses, should be archived at locations outside of the offices of the data holders.

3.2. Managing Statistical Processes

11. Quality Assessment is required for various administrative reporting systems, and sample surveys. For the latter, a Survey Review Clearance System will need to be developed through the Survey Cluster Group. The Cabinet's directive for ministries to establish a statistics unit within each ministry will need specific implementation guidelines.

- A Survey Review Clearance System that involves statistics producers providing information on purpose, survey design, sample size, questionnaire, funding, etc., will need to be established and maintained in the NSS to obtain feedback and clearance before a survey is conducted. International standards on survey practices should be referenced when evaluating the survey instruments and survey designs of proposed surveys.
- Regular assessments on the NSS performance undertaken by WB (e.g., the SCI of Myanmar) and the IMF (e.g., the e-GDDS) need to be reviewed by the NSDS Cluster Groups as part of quality assessments of priority statistical indicators produced in the NSS. This is essential in

order to develop a work program to regularly improve quality (including timeliness, response rates, accuracy, *etc*.).

- There should be policies concerning revisions in designs, concepts, definitions and methodologies, and ensuring a wide release of ample corresponding explanatory and technical notes. Parallel runs of the old and new series of statistics that undergo changes in definitions and methodologies should be maintained for a reasonable length of time (e.g., 2 years) to allow assessment of the comparability and consistency of the estimates, as is done in Malaysia and the Philippines.
- The Central Committee may need to issue a set of implementation guidelines regarding the Cabinet's directive for all ministries to establish a statistics unit within each ministry. These statistics units may, for instance, be put under the direct supervision of the Permanent Secretary of each ministry. These units may require statistical capacity building. In the case of the MPF, a long standing suggestion in several external assessments (e.g. done by the ADB) for the phased consolidation of statistical activities into the CSO may be considered, especially as national accounts expertise cannot be immediately transferred to the CSO. This action within the MPF will also allow the PD to strengthen its planning responsibilities, including monitoring and evaluation, results monitoring and impact evaluation. Further, this separation of planning responsibilities to PD and statistical activities to CSO can also improve the credibility of statistics produced by the MPF.

12. Duplication of statistical activities should and could be avoided through the Survey Review Clearance System.

- Avoiding duplications in statistical activities will reduce respondent burden as well as eliminate unnecessary costs. Further, this clearance system can be an added coordination mechanism to look more closely at rationalizing statistical activities in relation to the identification of priority statistical indicators.

13. NSS staff benefiting from scholarships will require re-entry plans; re-echoing of training activities within the statistics producers would be important to multiply learning across the agency.

- Re-entry plans for scholars can provide a smoother transition and ensure that skills and competencies gained by the scholars from their graduate degrees can be fully utilized. Re-echoing of training can similarly harness learning gained and strengthen institutional capacity.

- The GSAD can benefit from "partnerships" with higher education institutions within and outside of Myanmar for enhancing the Diploma program in Statistics (by having other lecturers outside of current GSAD faculty). With the growing importance of statistics, program courses should also go through more thorough review to ensure that fundamentals of statistical concepts and methods are extensively discussed, and the introduction of more intermediate and advanced materials should be integrated.

3.3. Commitment to Quality

14. *CSO will need to disseminate information about ACSS CoP and on UN FPOS across NSS, perhaps including briefings. CSO will also need to encourage statistics producers to implement a quality framework especially in "priority statistics" (including consistency checks, e.g. economic growth and employment), and to rationalize statistics production.*

- Core principles on statistical activities of the NSS are anchored on the UN FPOS and ACSS CoP, which promote the relevancy and credibility of official statistics in the eyes of the general public. It will be important for CSO to take the lead in explaining the UNFPOS and ACSS CoP to all statistics producers and NSS stakeholders.
- More attention should be given to developing quality frameworks for statistics in order to assure the public of the accuracy, trustworthiness and relevance of statistics. It will be important for statistics producers to examine whether the statistics they produce are providing a realistic and meaningful portrait of Myanmar's economy, society, and environment.

3.4. Dissemination, Communication and Use of Statistics

15. *CSO is encouraged to integrate at least its MMSIS website and its regular CSO website (and request MPF to link its web pages on CSO to this integrated website). Further, the integrated CSO website can be linked with the MPF website, as well as other relevant websites (e.g. ASEAN Stats). Given the rising use of internet and social media, CSO should make full use of its Facebook page, develop Twitter accounts, and regularly update these accounts.*

- With the rising use of the internet in Myanmar, it will be important for CSO to fully leverage the internet and social media as mechanisms for improving the dissemination, communication and use of statistics in the country. Myanmar can benefit from going through the experiences of NSOs of ASEAN6 countries in translating statistics into more meaningful information with the use of ICT, e.g. statistics blogs, infographics, etc.

16. *CSO should encourage other statistics producers to make use of their respective websites to release and update statistics more timely. Further, CSO can lead in developing a data dissemination policy across the NSS (including advance release calendars and metadata), and a data revision policy.*

- The experience of NSSs in ASEAN6 countries to make full use of ICT tools such as websites and social media for statistics dissemination can not only improve the accessibility of statistics to the public but also minimize data requests so that more attention can be given to other work. Other practices in NSSs of ASEAN6 countries on data dissemination (e.g., advance release calendars, metadata, microdata) and data revisions policies can serve as models for the Myanmar NSS.

17. *To increase the use of statistics, CSO should have training for data users (e.g. data analysis and interpretation, data visualization including infographics). CSO should encourage all statistics producers in having publications in both Burmese and English.*

- Being a commodity, statistics have both a supply side and a demand side. Further, statistics have their uses and limitations. It will be important that the use of statistics, especially by the Burmese people, be strengthened.

18. *CSO should encourage statistics producers in identifying and educating data users (e.g. media practitioners, academicians/researchers, private sector especially the Union of Myanmar Federation Chambers of Commerce and Industry).*

- Statistics have a public good, and thus government (with the support of DPs in the short and medium term) will need to invest more in the production, effective communication and wider use of statistics among NSS stakeholders.

3.5. Concluding Remarks

A credible and accurate body of statistics is a vital prerequisite to sound socio-economic development planning and nation-building. While there are some good practices in the Myanmar NSS, the Peer Review Team calls attention to the urgent need to improve statistical coordination in the NSS, and to improve the quality, accuracy, and credibility of statistics. Notable among these are key macroeconomic statistics vital to economic analysis and

policymaking. More effective cooperation among statistics producers and DPs, and greater focus on developing good primary data are key imperatives. In its week-long examination of the NSS over consultations with stakeholders, and examination of documents, the Peer Review Team has affirmed that strengthening the Myanmar NSS hinges on strengthening and rationalizing statistical coordination and cooperation among the institutions and people making up the system. While DP support to Myanmar is welcome, this support is not sustainable. Better resource allocation for statistical development is important. The government will need to make more investments in statistics, in statistical activities, and in the entire NSS. With the leadership of the CSO, professionalizing the entire statistics infrastructure under the governance of the Central Committee will develop the NSS into a statistical system marked by integrity, professionalism, and responsiveness in the quest for a better Myanmar.

ANNEX A: PEER REVIEW TIMETABLE

Schedule/Date	Topic/Activities	Venue
26-6-2016 (Sunday) 3:00 PM	Peer reviewers Preliminary Meeting with CSO	Emerald Palace Hotel, NPT
27-6-2016 (Monday) 9:30 AM –12:30 PM	Peer Review of the NSS Kick-off Meeting	Office (32) Meeting Hall, Nay Pyi Taw
12:30 PM – 1:30 PM	Lunch Break	
2:00 PM –3 :00 PM	Meeting with DPs	Office (32), Nay Pyi Taw
28-6-2016 (Tuesday) 10:00 AM –12:00 PM	Meeting with Central Bank of Myanmar (Monetary Affairs and Financial Institutions Regulation Department)	Office (55), Nay Pyi Taw
12:00PM –1:30 PM	Lunch Break	
2:00 PM – 3:30 PM	Department of Population (of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population)	Office (48), Nay Pyi Taw
4:00 PM – 5:30 PM	Department of Labour (of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population)	Office (51), Nay Pyi Taw
29-6-2016 (Wednesday) 10:00 AM–11:30 AM	Department of Agricultural Land Management and Statistics (of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation)	Office (43), Nay Pyi Taw
12 PM – 1:30 PM	Lunch Break	
2:00 PM – 3:30 PM	Department of Public Health (of the Ministry of Health and Sport)	Office (4), Nay Pyi Taw
4:00 PM – 4:30 PM	Courtesy Call to Union Minister, MPF	Office (1), Nay Pyi Taw
6:00 PM – 6:30 PM	Visit to Graduate School of Administration and Development	
30-6-2016 (Thursday) 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM	Meeting of Peer Review Team	Office (32), Nay Pyi Taw
10:30 AM – 11:30 AM	Department of Human Resources and Educational Planning (of Ministry of Education)	Office (13), Nay Pyi Taw
12:00 PM – 1:30 PM	Lunch Break	
2:00 PM – 3:30 PM	Myanmar Development Resource Institute	Office (32), Nay Pyi Taw
4:00 PM – 4:30 PM	Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection (of Ministry of Industry)	Office (41), Nay Pyi Taw
5:00 PM – 8:30 PM	Meeting of Peer Review Team	Emerald Palace Hotel, NPT
1-7-2016 (Friday)	Presentation of Interim Report to	Office (32) Meeting Hall, Nay

Schedule/Date	Topic/Activities	Venue
10:00 AM -12:30	CSO Management and Staff, and PD Representatives	Pyi Taw
12:30 PM – 1:30 PM	Lunch Break	
2:00 PM	Courtesy Call to CSO DG	Office (32), Nay Pyi Taw

ANNEX B: PARTICIPANT ORGANIZATIONS IN KICK-OFF MEETING

1. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
2. The World Bank (WB)
3. Macroeconomic Monitoring and Financial Statistics Cluster
4. National Account Statistics Cluster
5. Survey Coordination and Statistical Standard Cluster
6. Social and Vital Statistics Cluster
7. Agricultural and Rural Sector Statistics Cluster
8. Energy and Environment Statistics Cluster
9. Trade and Investment Sector Statistics Cluster
10. Department of Research and Statistics (Central Bank of Myanmar)
11. Department of Banking Inspection and Supervision
12. General Administration Department
13. Department of Fisheries
14. Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (Department of Planning)
15. Department of Agriculture
16. Department of Irrigation and Water Management
17. Agricultural Mechanization Department
18. Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank
19. Rural Development Department
20. Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department
21. Posts and Telecommunication Department
22. Department of Road Transport Administration
23. Department of Meteorology and Hydrology
24. Department of Forest
25. Department of Environmental Conservation
26. Department of Hydro Power Implementation
27. Department of Labour
28. Department of Immigration
29. National Registration and Nationality Department
30. Department of Population
31. Directorate of Industry Supervision and Inspection
32. Directorate of Industry Collaboration
33. Department of Consumer Affairs
34. Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization
35. Department of Medical Care
36. Department of Budget
37. Department of Internal Revenue

38. Directorate of Investment and Company Administration
39. Customs Department
40. Department of Social Welfare
41. Directorate of Hotels and Tourism
42. Department of Human Resources and Educational Planning
43. Research and Innovation Department
44. Ministry of Energy
45. Ministry of Planning and Finance
46. Ministry of Education
47. Yangon University of Economics (Department of Statistics)
48. Myanmar Statistical Association
49. Myanmar Marketing Research Development
50. Union of Myanmar Federation Chambers of Commerce and Industry
51. The World Food Programme (WFP)

ANNEX C: LIST OF PERSONS MET

Preparatory Meeting

Dr. Wah Wah Maung,	Director General
Daw Khin Mar Aye	Deputy Director General
U Than Zaw	Director
Daw Cho Cho Myint	Deputy Director
Daw Thida Aye	Asst. Director
Daw NyoNyo San	Staff Officer
Daw Suu Lei Yee	Staff Officer

Meeting with Development Partners

Mr. Felix Schmieding	Statistics Specialist, Development Effectiveness Democratic Governance Pillar, UNDP
Prof. Dr. Thaung Htay	Programme Officer (Consultant), WFP

Meeting with Central Bank of Myanmar (Monetary Affairs and Financial Institutions Regulation Department)

Daw May Marlar Maung Gyi	Director General
Daw Thet Thet Hla	Deputy Director General RSD
Daw Win WinThan	Director RSD
Daw Htwe Htwe Aye	Director
Daw Aye Aye Maw	Deputy Director
Daw Nwe Ni Win	Principal Research Officer
Daw Myint Zu Soe	Research Officer
Daw Nan Khin Kyawt Yin	Research Officer
U Zaw Zaw Htun	Research Assistant
Daw EiEi Mon	Research Assistant
Daw Cho Nwe Aung	Research Assistant
U Nyan Myo Tun	Research Assistant

Meeting with Department of Population, Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population

U Nyi Nyi (PhD)	Director
Daw Khine Khine Soe	Director
Mr. Frederick Otieno Okwayo	Chief Technical Adviser, UNFPA Census Project

Meeting with Department of Agricultural Land Management and Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation

U Aung Htay Win	Deputy Director General
Daw Sandar Aye	Director
Daw Mar Mar Aye	Deputy Director
Daw Win Win Myint	Staff Officer
Daw Mya Mya Htwe	Staff Officer
Daw Thin Thin Khine	Staff Officer

Meeting with Department of Labour, Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population

U Tha Toe Aung	Director General
U Kyaw Nyein Aung	Director
U Kan Tun	Director
Dr. Win Htut	Director
U Than Htut	Director
U Htay Lwin	Director
U Win Myint	Deputy Director
U Hha Naing	Deputy Director
U Aung Win Swe	Staff Officer

Meeting with Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health and Sport

Daw Aye Aye Sein	Deputy Director General
Daw Thet Thet Mu	Director

Meeting with Ministry of Planning and Finance

H.E. U Kyaw Win	Union Minister
Dr. Wah Wah Maung	Director General CSO
U Than Zaw	Director, CSO

Visit to Graduate School of Administration and Development

DawKhin Mar Aye	Deputy Director-General, CSO
Daw Khin Win Nyunt	Director, CSO

Meeting with Department of Human Resources & Educational Planning, Ministry of Education

U Ko Lay Win	Deputy Director General
Daw Aye Aye Mon Oo	Deputy Director
Daw Than Than Myint	Assistant Director
U Min Zaw Oo	Assistant Director

Meeting with Myanmar Development Resource Institute Center for Economic and Social Development

U Zaw Oo	Executive Director

Meeting with Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection

Daw Htay Htay Than	Director
U Tin Shwe Oo	Director
Daw Thin Thin Soe	Deputy Director

Meeting with Planning Department, Ministry of Planning and Finance

Daw Tin Tin Myint	Director
Daw Mya Mya Aye	Director
U Kyin Htay	Director
Daw Kin Nwe Yee	Deputy Director
U Hla Aung	Deputy Director

ANNEX D: ENDNOTES

[i] See National Strategy for Development of Statistics, Part One: Core Strategies (June 2016 Draft).

[ii] The dashboard (http://datatopics.worldbank.org/statisticalcapacity/SCIdashboard.aspx) provides a composite index that assesses the capacity of a country's NSS based on a framework on the following areas: methodology; data sources; and periodicity (and timeliness). Countries are scored against 25 criteria in these three areas, using publicly available information and/or country inputs. The overall Statistical Capacity Indicator (SCI) score is then calculated as simple average of all three area scores (each on a scale of 0-100).

[iii] The Committee is led by the Vice President as Patron and the Union Minister of the Ministry of Planning and Finance as Chairman, with members consisting of Economic Related Ministries of All State and Regional Governments; the Permanent Secretaries of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Home Affairs; the Ministry of Border Affairs, the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock Breedings and Irrigation, the Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunication, the Ministry of Resource and Environmental Conservation, the Ministry of Electric Power and Energy, the Ministry of Labor, Immigration and Population, the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and Sport, the Ministry of Planning and Finance, the Ministry of Construction, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, the Union Attorney-General Office; and with the Director General (DG), Central Statistical Organization (CSO) Ministry of Planning and Finance, as Secretary.

[iv] As announced in Presidential Order 7/2016, the (Central) Committee for Data Accuracy and Quality of Statistics has been tasked to: (a) give guidance for promulgation of new National Statistical Law to meet the requirements of the current situations and to supervise the enforcement of the law; (b) promote the credibility of Statistics; (c) give advice and guidance for the establishment of National Statistical System (NSS); (d) supervise and give guidance on surveys and statistical activities for the socio-economic development of Myanmar; (e) coordinate for the emergence of good statistical system in various sectors with the responsible line ministries; (f) make Peer Review on the National Statistical System to be consistent with international statistical systems and to submit report to the Cabinet on the sectoral review of gaps for the necessary preparations; (g) coordinate and manage in providing trainings for the unification of data collection system and statistical methods among Union Ministries, Local Governments and Regional Governments; (h) supervise National Strategy for Development of Statistics (NSDS) implement and manage of National Statistical Institutions for statistical development. This Central Committee was first

established by the previous government on 12 July 2013, with a composition led by the Vice President as Mentor and chaired by the Union Minister for the MNPED.

[v] The draft document "National Strategy for Development of Statistics Part One: Core Strategies" identifies the following external assessments of the Myanmar NSS: a) The 2011 report on 'Review of the Statistical System of Myanmar and Recommendations' by Viet Vu, commissioned by United Nations Development Programme; b) The 2013 report on the 'Assessment of the Myanmar Birth Registration System' submitted by Tomas Africa, commissioned by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); c) The 2014 report on 'Assessment of Statistical Activity in Myanmar' by Alex Korns, commissioned by the Asian Development Bank (ADB); d) The 2014 report on 'Strategic Review and Assessment of Myanmar National Statistical System and Recommendations for Re-engineering Institutions' by Jose Ramon Albert, commissioned by ADB; e) Several International Monetary Fund (IMF) staff assessments done of macro-economic indicators in Myanmar through the IMF Article IV consultation processes and also through technical capacity development work coordinated by Dr. Thomas Elkjaer; f) Assessments during the preparation process of the 2014 Population and Housing Census on the quality of population data, the demographic data system, the use of statistical concepts, and data processing capabilities by the Population Department of the Ministry of Immigration and Population and supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); g) several documents by the President's economic adviser, Mr. U Myint on the adequacy of Myanmar's statistical system, particularly in relation to trade flows and value-added computation; and h) Assessments currently underway on the quality of economic indicators by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and on the quality of agricultural statistics by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The ADB has also prepared a source data assessment of the national accounts in Myanmar, as it works with Myanmar's Planning Department in adopting the 1998 and 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA), given that the latest release of 2015 national accounts data still follows the 1968 SNA.

[vi] As described in the website of the UN Statistics Division, the UNFPOS was first adopted in 1991 by the Conference of European Statisticians (CES/702) and subsequently by its parent body the UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE); it was then meant to provide a general framework for the organization of NSS's in Central Europe following the transition of Central European countries from centrally planned economies to market economies. Statisticians in other parts of the world realized that these Fundamental Principles had a wider significance. Following a consultation process, the Fundamental Principles were adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) in 1994, but incorporating a revised preamble. In 2011, the UNSC acknowledged that the ten Fundamental Principles were still as relevant today as ever, and that no revision was necessary, but it

recommended that a Friends of the Chair group revise and update the preamble of the UNFPOS. At its forty-fourth session in 2013, the UNSC adopted the proposed revised preamble for the UNFPOS and recommended to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) the adoption of a draft resolution on the UNFPOS. The ECOSOC endorsed the UNFPOS in its resolution 2013/21 of 24 July 2013, and also recommended the UNFPOS to the General Assembly for its endorsement. The General Assembly, in its resolution 68/261 of 29 January 2014, endorsed the UNFPOS. This endorsement of the UNFPOS is considered an important step towards the enhancement of statistics in all domains, particularly facing the discussions on the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

[vii] The schedule of meetings of the reviewers with NSS stakeholders is found in Annex A, with the list of organizations represented during the kickoff meeting and the list of specific people met for the peer review, shown respectively in Annex B and Annex C. Results of individual meetings are interspersed in the observations and findings chapter of this report.

[viii] This is one of the sixteen Sector Working Groups established after the first Myanmar Development Cooperation Forum (held in January 2013 by the government with DPs) to ensure effective coordination at the sector/thematic level and promote development effectiveness in Myanmar

[ix] ILSM is a statistical training institute under DOSM's purview.

[x] The ASEAN6 consists of the older and economically more advanced ASEAN Member States, viz., Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.

[xi] See, e.g., https://psa.gov.ph/sites/default/files/SSRCS%20Primer%20FINAL.pdf

[xii] Efficiency means statistical products and services are provided to data users with minimum costs, consequently minimizing duplication of efforts.

[xiii] Effectiveness means being both relevant to stakeholder demands and responsive to changing conditions while maintaining quality.

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