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**PROGRAMME FOR STRENGTHENING NATIONAL  
SYSTEMS OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS IN  
AFRICA:  
SUMMARY PROPOSAL FOR A REGIONAL TECHNICAL  
SUPPORT PROJECT - PHASE I**

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 The following proposal is to be considered within the framework of initiatives being taken at the international level for a coordinated approach to capacity building in statistics for developing countries including the PARIS21<sup>1</sup> initiative, the evaluation and updating of the Addis-Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa proposed at the last CODI/ECA<sup>2</sup> Meeting June 1999, Afristat<sup>3</sup>'s 'Programme statistique minimum commun' (PROSMIC), etc..

1.2 The share of the agricultural sector in the total economy of African countries is generally high (typically 30 to 50 per cent of GDP) and the share of the population dependent on agriculture is still higher. Historically, data on agriculture have been collected to meet development needs related to land use and agricultural production. However, as agriculture is the main source of employment and livelihood of the majority of the population in most African countries, the attention of agricultural development planners has, over the years, evolved such that data needs refer not only to issues relating to agricultural holdings and agricultural production but also to those relating to the welfare of the population dependent on agriculture (e.g. income, health, nutrition, etc.) as well as the food security of the population as a whole. Agriculture planners are also concerned with improving production in the context of sustainable development. In this connection they are interested in data relating to the depletion of natural (land) resources and their environmental effects.

1.3 For many years, technical assistance has been provided to countries in Africa to develop systems of food and agricultural statistics but this has often been done in an 'ad hoc' and uncoordinated manner with more emphasis on getting a particular data set than the sustainability of a system. The technical assistance in general, has been aimed at developing a baseline set of data through the application of the Programme for the World Census of Agriculture and improving the crop and livestock production statistics through the development of 'current' agricultural data collection systems. While this information has proved useful, today's demands for data go far beyond what is available in most countries. Furthermore, while the broader issues of data availability and quality have been widely considered, historically, few resources have been made available for secondary analysis to 'add value' to the data and generate an internal demand and use of agricultural statistics. Also, the long term Capacity Building element has not received adequate consideration even if efforts have been made for training.

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<sup>1</sup> PARIS21: **PAR**tnership **I**n Statistics for development in the **21**<sup>st</sup> Century.

<sup>2</sup> CODI/ECA: Committee on Development Information/ United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

<sup>3</sup> AFRISTAT: "Observatoire Economique et Statistique d'Afrique Subsaharienne", Bamako, Mali

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## **2. Current State, Key constraints and Opportunities for Food and Agricultural Statistics systems in Africa**

### **Current State Food and Agricultural Statistics systems in Africa**

2.1 The availability of food and agricultural statistics in African countries varies from country to country and is highly correlated with a country's level of development. Even within any given country, the various components of the agricultural statistics system are typically at different levels of development.

2.2 Despite the increasing awareness of the importance of statistics in planning for agricultural development, most countries in Africa still do not have an adequate system of statistics pertaining to the agricultural sector. Over the past years, some progress have been made as an increasing number of African countries, with the assistance of international community, have conducted agricultural censuses and surveys, and trained personnel. However, the overall results are far below the expectations as the available agricultural data are often out-of-date and incomplete in terms of (a) the range of commodities covered (b) the range of variables or data sets covered, and (c) geographical coverage. Furthermore, even when data are available they are often difficult to access and their reliability is often questionable. The data is thus often ignored and not used in any meaningful way. The end result is that in most African countries there is a widening gap between the demand for, and the availability of, which is hampering economic and social development and which has to be addressed.

2.3 National food and agricultural data come from many sources including censuses and surveys as well as from administrative records. As the different institutions involved are not always aware of each other's activities, there is often considerable duplication of effort and, in many cases, conflicting data are reported for the same items. As regards data on the welfare of the households engaged in agricultural activities and the food consumption level of the population, good progress has been made during the past years in conducting household surveys in many countries but the sustainability of these surveys to ensure their conduct on a regular basis still poses some questionmarks. When it comes to data relating to the depletion of land resources and their environmental effects the situation is worse. Finally, even when data relating to the agricultural sector are generally available, it has seldom been recognised that the different data components often have different coverage and time frames thus requiring special processing, tabulations, adjustments, etc., prior to their usage in an integrated manner or for the purpose of a particular study or analysis.

### **Key Constraints**

2.4 Many of the problems and constraints associated with food and agricultural statistics are typical of the development of national statistical systems in general and identified as such in the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s<sup>4</sup> (poor co-ordination of scarce resources, especially of donor assistance; programmes reflecting the interests of donors rather than those of the country; non-sustainability of externally funded programmes; lack of trained manpower,

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<sup>4</sup> UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

high turnover of staff from statistical systems and poor management practices). More specific problems for agricultural statistics in Africa include:

### Institutional arrangements

- 2.5 The national Food and Agricultural Statistics System (FASS) typically suffers from a lack of clear identity and ownership. While National Statistics Offices (NSOs) are generally mandated with the responsibility for all official statistics, responsibility for agricultural statistics is, in many instances, delegated to the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) which is often technically ill equipped to assume this responsibility. The establishment of appropriate and functional institutional arrangements in each participating country is considered a key element of the programme with well-defined linkages established between the NSOs and the MOAs as well as a clear delineation of responsibilities.
- 2.6 The capacity to manage the system and the technical capacity to ensure the integrity and quality of the statistics produced, must both be ensured through the institutional arrangements.

#### **Case Study: Madagascar**

The key constraint identified for a sustainable food and agricultural statistics system in Madagascar was the lack of a proper institutional set-up and the technical and operational weakness of the institutions.

The capacity building project proposed will (i) put in place an adequate and stable institutional set-up (2 alternative scenarios have been presented in detail for a decision by the Government) (ii) strengthen the technical and operational capacity of the institutions concerned, and (iii) implement a ten-year integrated programme of food and agricultural statistics (to be adopted after a user-producer workshop).

The implementation of the programme will follow a phased approach and should keep pace with the strengthening of the technical and operational capacity. The first phase of the programme will concentrate on producing a minimum data set of data to meet priority needs, matching available resources, and with recurrent costs within Government's actual and expected financial capacity. The programme will be part of the next World Bank-APL being formulated in support of the PADR.

### Co-ordination

2.6 Agricultural censuses, surveys and other statistical inquiries are often undertaken in isolation and there is a general lack of understanding and co-ordination between statistical agencies producing the data (data producers) and offices undertaking economic analysis, planning and decision-making (data users). Co-ordination of activities is also essential both between the various producers of food and agricultural statistics and also between the food and agricultural statistics system, other sectoral statistical systems and within the overall national statistics system. This co-ordination is best achieved through the establishment of a 'high-level' steering group and technical working groups. Not only co-ordination among data producers, but also co-ordination between producers and users of statistics is an essential key to ensure the relevance and the sustainability of the FASS.

### Government commitment

2.7 A general lack of government commitment has been identified as a key constraint in many countries. In part this is a direct reflection of the weak institutional framework and the lack of identity and ownership of the national food and agricultural statistics system. Government commitment towards the establishment and maintenance of the FASS should be as great, if not greater, than any other national statistical system because of the importance of the sector to the economy and the well being of the people. Government commitment should be reflected in the resources made available through the recurrent budget to maintain at least a minimum system of food and agricultural statistics as well as through support for development initiatives. Given the overall budgetary constraints in many countries, a realistic long-term solution should be sought between the Government and its partners (policy dialogue).

Poor data integration from various sources and a lack of 'value added' through poor access and use of available data

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2.8 Most African countries suffer from poor data management characterised by poor data access, a multiplicity of data sources and conflicting data sets, a general lack of analysis and data use and difficulties in integrating data from different sources. The overall effect of this poor data management is that available data have little or no intrinsic value. The programme will place emphasis on creating a single point of access to all food and agricultural statistics (one-stop-centre) linked to the national statistical databank. By developing an integrated statistical system, duplication will be minimised and data will be collected in such a way that it can be used for a wide variety of purposes and not as an input to a single 'one-off' study. All data collected will have a well-defined need, priority and hence value and systems will be 'user driven' rather than 'producer driven'.

#### Technical and methodological constraints

2.9 There are challenges to collecting and using agricultural statistics that are quite unique to Africa. The bulk of African agricultural production comes from small traditional farmers using a wide variety of agricultural practices. This complex environment, coupled with a lack of documented and factual information on the farming practises used, presents a particular challenge for data collection. In many cases, crop production estimates are based on the objective measurement of crop areas and yields but these exercises are extremely costly and often generate only limited, sub-standard data due to the complexities of the procedures involved. Specific concerns also still remain that need to be urgently addressed such as the measurement of root crop production and the measurement of nomadic livestock.

#### Role of Technical co-operation

2.10 While technical cooperation still has a major role to play in the development of national statistical systems too much emphasis has been placed in the past on 'ad hoc' and uncoordinated interventions other a short time period aimed at addressing a particular data gap rather than long term capacity building and the establishment of sustainable systems. Furthermore, these interventions have often been very disruptive to the established statistical work programme, in that they have diverted, often already very limited statistical resources, into these 'ad hoc' exercises.

### **Opportunities**

#### New methodologies and technologies

2.11 Advantage should be taken of new methodologies and technologies. While much research has been carried out on developing new and appropriate methodologies for collecting agricultural statistics, the results have rarely been put into practise. These research findings need to be consolidated and documented and practical manuals developed so that countries can use these new methods for collecting agricultural data. There have also been very rapid advances in technology associated with data collection, capture, processing and dissemination and these new technologies should be introduced where considered appropriate and cost effective.

#### Skills and human resources at regional level

2.12 While the national skills and human resource base in a single country may be weak, a considerable skill and human resource base exists within the region. This regional resource base should be used to its fullest advantage through the promotion of technical Co-operation between participating countries and the sharing of experiences. Also, African regional centres (EASTC<sup>5</sup>, ISAE<sup>6</sup>, ENSEA<sup>7</sup>, Afristat, ECA) should be used for delivery of technical assistance, training and for country collaboration.

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<sup>5</sup> EASTC: Eastern Africa Statistical Training Centre. Dar Es Salam, Tanzania

<sup>6</sup> ISAE: Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics- Kampala, Uganda

<sup>7</sup> ENSEA: Ecole Nationale de la Statistique et de l'Economie Appliquée. Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

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## Increasing data demand and use

2.13 The existence of an effective internal demand for, and use of, data is essential for the sustainability of the system. Only by satisfying the demand for data will support for the statistical system be forthcoming. If the system is seen as producing no worthwhile data no support can be expected but if the system is seen as producing 'high value' data then support and resources are more likely to be forthcoming to maintain and further develop the system. In recognising the importance of this factor, this new approach to improving food and agricultural statistics in Africa places heavy emphasis on promoting the dissemination and use of the data rather than just on the collection and processing. The priority given to poverty alleviation, food security and sustainable development programmes at international and national level translates into an increasing demand for comprehensive, integrated and reliable information base for the agriculture sector.

### **3. Expected benefits**

3.1 Food and agricultural statistics are required for a multiplicity of uses including the compilation of national accounts, policy analysis and policy advice, sector performance monitoring, food security and poverty monitoring and impact analysis of policies and programmes. It is expected that this programme to strengthen national systems of food and agricultural statistics in Africa will directly contribute to improved information flows in these areas as follows:

#### National Accounts and the measurement of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

3.2 The agricultural sector often accounts for upto 50% of GDP yet the data used to estimate the contribution of the agricultural sector to the national economy is often inadequate and unreliable. National programmes will be designed to generate data to provide a more accurate reflection of the food and agricultural sector in the national accounts.

#### Policy Analysis and Policy Advice and sector performance monitoring

3.3 Some policy advice can be provided based on limited information such as about existing market distortions (tariffs, restrictions to entry of new firms, government monopolies, subsidies, etc.), which generally cause welfare losses, and whose removal, therefore, can be expected to contribute to an increase in overall welfare by improving the incentive framework. But better or more detailed policy advice can be provided on the basis of more serious policy analysis. The latter in turn requires accurate empirical information, which this project is expected to help provide.

#### Food Security and Poverty Monitoring

3.4 At the World Food Summit, Rome, 1996, the resultant Action Plan called for countries to monitor food security through the establishment of national Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Mapping and Information Systems (FIVIMS). National systems of food and agricultural statistics will provide:

- Improved ability for analysis of constraints and better support to programme design;
- Improved ability for monitoring poverty and better support to poverty alleviation programmes;
- Data for mapping and monitoring food insecurity and vulnerability, food consumption and nutrition.

#### Impact analysis and evaluation of programmes and projects

3.5 In order to assess the impact of programmes and projects, baseline surveys need to be undertaken before project/programme implementation. During implementation both project and non-project areas need to be monitored so that appropriate 'with and without project' analyses can be undertaken during project implementation and afterwards. Better impact evaluation in turn will have a pay-off in terms of improved implementation and project design.

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## **4. The Programme**

### Goal (Development objective)

4.1 The development objective of the programme is to provide assistance to African countries to strengthen the overall capacity of their statistical systems to produce timely, relevant and reliable food and agricultural statistics for decision makers to design, implement and evaluate policies, programmes and projects, including programmes aimed at reducing poverty and improving food security.

4.2 The programme will comprise capacity building initiatives (projects or components of larger programmes) at the national level developed, co-ordinated and supervised by a Regional Technical Support Project (RTSP). The programme has two distinct phases, namely, Phase I: Preparatory Activities and Phase II: Implementation. The Regional Technical Support Project will assist participating countries to undertake the necessary steps (preparatory activities) through to the development and adoption of a country framework document and the formulation of a national capacity building project(s) and then provide supervision during the implementation of these national projects.

### Immediate objectives of the programme

4.3 The immediate objectives are to:

1. strengthen national food and agricultural statistics systems through an assessment of data needs and priorities and the formulation, adoption and implementation of a long-term development framework for a comprehensive and integrated statistical system at the national level,
2. improve the quantity, quality, timeliness and accessibility of relevant food and agriculture data in the Africa region for policy makers and other users,
3. improve and expand the use of food and agricultural data through descriptive and in-depth analysis, to meet the demands of the various users,
4. contribute to the statistical information base used for the assessment of food insecurity (FIVIMS),
5. contribute to improved development programmes (AGSIP, APL, Poverty alleviation and other programmes) through better design/formulation, monitoring, evaluation and impact analysis.

### **Output of the programme at participating country level**

#### 4.4 Phase I – Preparatory Activities

- (a) legal/institutional framework for the national system of food and agricultural statistics defined/revised,
- (b) co-ordinating bodies defined and established to ensure the proper co-ordination of statistical activities,
- (c) data needs assessment undertaken and data priorities determined,
- (d) long-term statistical frameworks defined and adopted by national Governments leading to national ownership,
- (e) national capacity building project(s) formulated for the priority components of the framework,
- (f) analytical procedures established to reconcile, rationalise and evaluate existing data through an analysis of the supply/ utilisation accounts and economic accounts for food and agriculture,
- (g) food and agricultural data banks designed (one-stop-centres),

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#### 4.5 Phase II - Implementation

- (a) national capacity building projects implemented,
- (b) institutional arrangements implemented,
- (c) co-ordination mechanisms and linkages functioning effectively,
- (d) personnel trained in all aspects of food and agricultural statistics and in sufficient numbers to ensure sustainability,
- (e) adequate resource base established and institutionalised to ensure sustainability,
- (f) minimum priority data collection systems defined and operationalised,
- (g) flow of timely, reliable, relevant and harmonised food and agricultural statistics available,
- (h) data access assured through the establishment of food and agricultural data banks (one-stop-centres) in participating countries,
- (i) data analysed and disseminated (regular publications, electronic and on-line dissemination, etc.),
- (j) national FIVIMS developed in participating countries;
- (k) monitoring and supervision exercised.

### **5. Strategy**

5.1 The strategy of the programme is based on past experience and recent pilot activities conducted by FAO and USDA in Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Madagascar, Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda. It is also guided by the recommendations (guiding principles) established at a Regional Workshop, Conakry, Guinea 23-25 June 1999 and endorsed at the 16<sup>th</sup> Session of the FAO African Commission on Agricultural Statistics (AFCAS), Conakry, Guinea, 28 June – 1 July 1999 (annex 1).

5.2 The strategy is based on a partnership approach between the various producers of food and agricultural statistics, the producers and users of these statistics and between the national governments and the international community.

5.3 At country level, the starting point of the strategy will be to improve the use of existing data by pulling together available data, assessing its quality and making it available at a single source (one-stop-centre). This emphasis on data use is seen as essential for two main reasons. Firstly the objective of the programme is to use the data collected by the system for improved policy analysis and advice leading to poverty reduction and improved food security, and secondly it is the only way to ensure the sustainability of the data system.

5.4 National systems of food and agricultural statistics will be conceived within a comprehensive long-term development framework and adopt an integrated approach both within the sectoral statistical system and within the broader national statistical system to minimize duplication of effort and to maximise the usefulness (value) of the data. The place of forestry and fisheries statistics will be considered within the framework.

5.5 Co-ordination is essential for a successful programme. Co-ordination should take place both between the statistical activities within the country and between the Government and the donor community supporting statistical development. Donor coordination is also essential and external interventions should be conceived in support of the established national statistical programme and not as 'ad hoc' exercises designed to fill particular data gaps and with little or no prospect of sustainability.

5.6 While a common approach will be adopted, each country will be assessed as to its relative stage of development vis-à-vis its current food and agricultural statistics system, data needs, priorities and resource availability. National programmes will be flexible and designed to build on existing strengths. Of crucial importance is the formal adoption of the long-term national food and agricultural statistics framework by the Government to ensure ownership, the commitment of resources and long-term sustainability.

5.7 The Regional Technical Support Project will assist participating countries both for Phase I and Phase II. The support of the RTSP to Phase I is expected to be substantial at country level while for Phase II, it will be limited to technical supervision of the implementation of the national capacity building project.

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## 6. Elements of the programme:

### 6.1 Phase I – Preparatory Activities

The programme envisages a series of preparatory activities which will be undertaken in a 'step-wise' progression, as follows:

#### Element 1.1 Fact-finding mission

A short fact-finding mission will be undertaken for each participating country to obtain background information on the present system of food and agricultural statistics and to evaluate government and donor preparedness.

##### **Case Study: Uganda**

An identification mission was carried out to review the existing situation with regard to the availability and use of agricultural data and the institutional capacity for food and agricultural statistics. This will form the basis for the next 2 activities: data needs assessment and workshop and framework development. This identification mission was also instrumental in ensuring that the development of the national system of food and agricultural was included in the on-going formulation of the Second Economic and Financial Management Plan, under preparation for World Bank funding.

#### Element 1.2 Assessment of the existing system, institutional arrangement, data availability, needs and resources, constraints to the use of data, and an identification of data priorities; data users/producers workshop.

##### **Case Study: Malawi**

A data needs assessment was carried out, followed by a two-day Data User - Producer Workshop. National staff from different institutions prepared and presented 12 invited papers. The main output of the workshop was an agreed-upon listing of data requirements and an identification of priorities. This forms the basis for the formulation of the overall framework. The Government identified an existing Working Group in the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation for the first level discussion of the future framework.

#### Element 1.3 Development of long-term food and agricultural statistics framework and adoption by national government

This activity will include the assumption of national ownership of the development initiative, by the national government, including responsibility for the implementation and for the provision of resources.

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**Case Study: Tanzania**

Under the on-going ASMP project, a data needs assessment and a data user-producer workshop were undertaken. Subsequently, the Framework was prepared in Co-operation with an Agricultural Statistics Task Force, established for the purpose and representing the National Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives. This Task Force also provided a first feedback. Following a revision, the Framework was discussed for 2 days at a workshop of middle/higher level government staff. Subsequently, a second draft was prepared and submitted to Government for adoption. The main components of the framework are: Analysis and harmonization of existing data; Institutional capacity; Agricultural database; Vulnerability assessment and mapping; agricultural surveys; Household surveys; Agricultural reporting system; Methodological work.

**Element 1.4 Formulation of priority capacity building projects for components identified in the framework**

The national capacity building projects will be designed to provide support to institutional strengthening, data collection, processing, storage and dissemination systems and data analysis. In order to foster the concept of national ownership and sustainability, Governments will be expected to provide an increasing proportion of the recurrent costs from their national budgets as the national programmes progress.

**Element 1.5** Establishment of institutional arrangements and coordinating bodies

**Element 1.6** Reconciliation, rationalization and evaluation of existing data based on an analysis of the supply/ utilisation accounts and the economic accounts for food and agriculture

**Element 1.7** Design of food and agricultural data bank (one-stop-centre)

While the first five elements follow a natural progression, the last two (1.6 and 1.7) can be implemented at any stage during the preparatory phase following completion of element 1.2.

**6.2 Phase II - Implementation****Element 2.1: Institutional strengthening**

Appropriate institutional arrangements will be set-up in support of the system of food and agricultural statistics. Functions, duties and responsibilities will be defined at all levels of the system and linkages established. Coordinating mechanisms will be put in place. Skill levels will be enhanced to ensure adequate managerial and technical capacity exists to enable the system to operate efficiently.

**Element 2.2: Data collection system**

An integrated data collection system is a key component of the FASS. The system should comprise 'core' (minimum set of priority data) and 'ad hoc' modules to provide continuity of information and comparisons over time as well as the flexibility to respond to urgent/'ad hoc' data needs. Data collection exercises (surveys) should be integrated, to the extent possible, to enable the widest possible use of the data. Master sample frames, panel surveys and extended household surveys will all be considered within the FASS. Appropriate methodologies will be developed to provide cost efficient and reliable data at various levels of disaggregation, including gender disaggregation. Crop forecasts and early warning information should all be integrated within the FASS. Likewise, agricultural production data should, to the extent possible, be comparable with food consumption data.

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### Element 2.3: Data processing system

An efficient data processing system is an essential component of the FASS. In order to promote ownership of the data at the sub-national level, decentralized data capture, editing and validation will be encouraged where facilities and resources permit. Likewise vertical information flows will be designed as two-way with information flowing from the sub-national authorities to the national authorities and the processed data flowing back for use by the sub-national administrations for analysis and policy formulation.

### Element 2.4: Data storage and dissemination system

Data storage and dissemination are key factors in providing access to the data. Advantage will be taken of recent technological developments in data transmission, to the extent that facilities allow and resources are available. A data bank (one-stop-centre) will be established to provide a single source of food and agricultural statistics and designed as a sectoral data bank within the larger national statistical information system. Focus will be placed on the widest possible dissemination of information within the country as well as establishing external data flows.

### Element 2.5: Data analysis and data use

The use of the data is the point at which value is attached to the data. If the data is not used it has no value and should, therefore, not have been collected. In order to maximise the value of the data, emphasis will be placed on data analysis for a wide variety of purposes. As well as providing a direct input to decision making and a better understanding of development issues, the analysis of the data can be expected to highlight weaknesses in the present system and lead to improvements in the future systems thus creating a continuous analysis and improvement cycle.

## **7. Programme Implementation**

7.1 A phased approach is proposed to take advantage of the 'learning curve' and to ensure adequate support is provided at each stage of the development process. For the first phase covering a period of five years, activities will be implemented in some 20 countries including a continuation of activities in those countries already included in the pilot phase. Furthermore, 12-15 of these countries are expected to have national sub-programmes formulated and under implementation by the end of this period. Typically the preparatory phase is expected to last between 1 and 2 years in each country following which the national sub-programme would come on-stream and be supervised by the regional project.

7.2 Selection of participating countries will be based on their readiness (government commitment) to this initiative as well as their potential for success. As the programme will adopt a step-wise progression of activities, countries failing to meet their partnership obligations, as established under the 'guiding principles', may experience some delays in progressing through all the stages of the preparatory activities within the time-frame established and national sub-programme implementation would in these cases also be delayed.

7.3 The sharing of experiences and the transfer of skills between participating countries will be a particular feature of the programme. This will be achieved through the exchange of national experts and the organization of workshops/training opportunities at both national and regional levels.

7.4 Institutional support from FAO, WB and USDA will be provided through the programme. Other international institutions will be encouraged to join the programme to provide additional resources and technical expertise and to ensure a coordinated approach from the international community.

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## **8. Programme Monitoring and Evaluation**

8.1 Both the Regional and the National Projects will be subject to performance monitoring and evaluation according to established procedures. In all cases, performance indicators will be established at the time of project formulation. For the regional project, a mid-term review will be undertaken in year 3 and a final evaluation in year 5. Similar arrangements will also be established for the national projects.

## **9. Funding and Support Requested**

### Regional Technical Support (RTS) Project

9.1 The pilot phase (currently in operation) is expected to initiate activities in up to ten of the twenty countries proposed for participation. In some cases it is anticipated that the preparatory activities will have been completed during this pilot phase and a number of the proposed national capacity building projects will be ready for funding/ implementation (4 countries). For the other six countries, preparatory activities will be at varying stages of completion. During the Regional Project's life (5 years), on average two new countries will join the initiative each year.

9.2 The main focus of the support required under the RTS Project will be Technical Assistance in the form of International and National Consultancies and Technical Cooperation between the participating countries. It is envisaged that the core 'RTS Project Team' will comprise three full-time professional staff. In addition, it is estimated that some 70 months per year of international consultancies will also be required of which about 40% would be provided through partnership arrangements (TCDC) to encourage the sharing of experience between the countries and support the accumulation of 'know how' in the region. Considerable use of national consultants is also envisaged (some 60 months per year). The RTS Project is expected to draw heavily on existing technical capacity in national and regional institutions and centres supporting statistics.

9.3 Workshops will be held at the national level as part of the data needs assessment and data priority setting exercise under Activity 2. Regional or 'country group' workshops will also be organised to exchange experiences, to promote strategies and to provide group training on selected methodological issues. A regional workshop is also envisaged for countries, not participating in the first phase project but interested in joining a subsequent phase, should this materialise. Regional training activities will be organized, as far as possible, in co-operation with regional institutions and training centres.

9.4 Support will also be given to research and development of methodological guidelines on technical issues of concern to the countries of the region .

9.5 Funds will also be required to provide for official travel, local support staff, computing and office equipment necessary for the efficient functioning of the project office as well as to cover general operating expenses and review/ evaluation.

### National Capacity Building Projects.

9.6 The national capacity building projects are expected to be funded, at the request of Governments, by the World Bank as part of their programme of loans in support of agricultural sector development. Such projects could form a component of the Agriculture Sector Investment Programmes (AGSIP) or Adaptable Programme Lending (APL) arrangements. National capacity building projects could also be funded by other donors interested in supporting this initiative.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR STRENGTHENING NATIONAL SYSTEMS OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS IN AFRICA**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The following 'Guiding Principles for Strengthening National Systems of Food and Agricultural Statistics in Africa' were discussed and developed at the Joint FAO/WB/USDA Workshop on Strengthening National Systems of Food and Agricultural Statistics, Conakry, Guinea, 23-25 June 1999.
2. On the same occasion, a Steering Committee was formed to carry forward the work and to further develop the implementation plan for an Africa-wide initiative.
3. These guiding principles have been developed from, and lie within, the broader framework of the 'Guiding Principles for Good Practices in Technical Cooperation in Statistics', Statistical Commission, United Nations Economic and Social Council, October 1998 and the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.
4. These guiding principles were adopted by the FAO African Commission on Agricultural Statistics at its 16<sup>th</sup> Session, 28 June – 1 July 1999, Conakry, Guinea.
5. The guiding principles set out below are based on the broad consensus reached by the Workshop. They are conceived within the context of a partnership approach between:
  - (a) The producers and the users of food and agricultural data,
  - (b) The different producers of food and agricultural statistics,
  - (c) The sub-national and national institutions concerned with the development of such national systems of food and agricultural statistics, as well as regional and international institutions.
6. It is also recognised that uncoordinated approaches have led to the proliferation of special purpose surveys which have tended to be wasteful and have undermined the capacity of the statistical systems of the countries. As in other areas of development assistance, this uncoordinated project approach has to be replaced by a programme approach in which national stakeholders play the lead role.
7. These guiding principles aim to encourage countries to make optimal use of the statistics available and commit themselves to improving their national systems of food and agricultural statistics, such as by guaranteeing the availability of adequate staff, equipment, financing, management and other resources and by allowing professional independence.

### **II. GENERAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

8. Getting better data on food and agriculture issues is not an end in itself; rather, it is an essential means to the end of better understanding the problems of poverty, food security and malnutrition and being able to more effectively design and monitor policies, programmes and projects which seek to address these problems.
9. A good information base is a valuable asset and has many uses: national accounts; policy analysis and advice; sector performance analysis; food security and poverty monitoring; and impact analysis for policies and programmes.
10. The following guiding principles, as they relate to general policy considerations, are considered relevant to the Strengthening of National Systems of Food and Agricultural Statistics in Africa:
  - (a) It is the task of the national system of food and agricultural statistics to make available to government, the public and the private sector, relevant, reliable and timely statistical information related to the agricultural sector and to associated issues;
  - (b) The statistical system should provide data allowing gender analysis;

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- (c) The Government, all national partners, and the international institutions need to be committed to the programmes and processes being developed, and this commitment should show in policy dialogue and resource allocation;
  - (d) The importance of the national system of food and agricultural statistics needs to be recognized by national authorities, such as by:
    - (i) Being aware of the fundamental principles of official statistics;
    - (ii) Supporting a workable legal and institutional setting and commitment to good management practices;
    - (iii) Providing adequate resources (financial, motivated staff, accommodation, equipment, etc.);
    - (iv) Supporting the processing, storing, analysis and dissemination of the data;
    - (v) Agreeing to put the data and all relevant documentation in the public domain.
  - (e) An integrated framework approach, including agriculture surveys, household surveys, panel surveys and qualitative data, should be adopted based on a thorough assessment of data needs and priorities; as far as possible, donors should minimise the creation of separate monitoring and evaluation units, but rather rely on and strengthen, existing statistical capacity;
  - (f) Both producers and users of statistical information should play an active role in the formulation of the work programme.
  - (g) The development process should be structured with clearly identified long-term goals, intermediate targets and performance indicators.

### **III. COORDINATION**

11. As resources for statistical activities are scarce in most African countries, better coordination is needed in order to make best use of available resources, to avoid conflicting data production, to seek synergy and to create optimal conditions for various institutions working together in partnerships. Also, the time has come to consider the principle of multiple accountability (to the Ministry of Economy, the National Directorate of Statistics, the Ministry of Agriculture, professional colleagues, users of data and the public at large).

12. This coordination is best achieved by:

- (a) The National Institution responsible for Statistics playing the key role in the overall coordination process;
- (b) Appropriate institutional structures being established or strengthened within a formal framework and linkages and responsibilities for production of food and agriculture statistics being defined;
- (c) User/producer committees being established or strengthened to enable them to work together and share responsibility regarding the food and agricultural statistics programme;
- (d) Coordination between donors and between different players in the national statistical system in a proactive way to avoid duplication of effort and encourage complementarity and synergy.

### **IV. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

13. International cooperation should be demand-led and:

- (a) Well coordinated among the International Institutions;
- (b) Based on assessments of user requirements for food and agricultural data and relative priorities, including national, regional and international needs;
- (c) Set within a well balanced framework and work programme for the development of food and agricultural statistics within the overall strategic framework and work programme for the national statistics system;
- (d) Aware of policy environments in areas of human and resource development strategies and institutional development needs;
- (e) Ensure both government and donor commitment complement national resources, while empowering recipient national food and agricultural statistical systems and Governments to take the lead;
- (f) Promote full participation and address the concerns of all main stakeholders;
- (g) Support well designed and implemented programmes according to professional statistical standards using the most appropriate approach;
- (h) Address the needs of regional groupings of countries where a common approach can be effective, while recognising that the heterogeneity of countries means that they have many different needs and priorities, even when producing similar outputs; take advantage of existing skills within the region and promote technical cooperation between participating countries;

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- (i) Ensure good coordination within the International Community to maintain integrated and cost efficient programmes;
  - (j) Use appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to facilitate effective programme implementation, exchange of experience and lesson learning;
  - (k) Recognize that developing a statistical system takes a long time and that intermediate targets are an essential element of a structured framework approach.

Conakry, Guinea  
1 July 1999

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## **ANNEX 2**

List of countries proposed for Phase I and the present state of their agricultural statistics system based on an assessment of the crop and livestock production data available to FAO.

- Group A:** No statistics, due to civil strife/war which has disrupted data collection systems (No countries proposed to be included from this group for Phase I)
- Group B:** Very limited statistics available due mainly to lack of resources and unsustainable data collection systems.
- Group C:** Incomplete statistics regarding the range of commodities and geographic coverage
- Group D:** Basic statistics are generally available

### **Countries proposed for Phase I:**

<b>Group B:</b>	<b>Group C</b>	<b>Group D</b>
Côte d'Ivoire <sup>1</sup>	Burkina Faso	Cameroon
Ghana <sup>2</sup>	Ethiopia <sup>3</sup>	Guinea <sup>2</sup>
Malawi <sup>2</sup>	Madagascar <sup>2</sup>	Mali
Mauritania <sup>1</sup>	Nigeria	Senegal <sup>1</sup>
Mozambique	Swaziland	Togo
Niger	Uganda <sup>2</sup>	Zambia
Tanzania <sup>2</sup>		Zimbabwe

Also under consideration:

- Benin (Group C)
- Gambia (Group C)
- Kenya (Group C)
- Lesotho (Group C)

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<sup>1</sup> FAO/WB preparatory activities planned

<sup>2</sup> FAO/WB preparatory activities under implementation

<sup>3</sup> USDA and FAO/UNDP preparatory activities under implementation