Belize

National Strategy for the Development of Statistics

Horizon 2010 - 2030

Horizon 2030 proposes the long term development framework for Belize. A bottom up approach was taken in the preparation of a strategic plan that now seeks the government's approval. The objective of the Horizon 2010 – 2030 Framework is to clearly establish a set of long-term development goals, targets and indicators that will guide the concerted action by all stakeholders involved in the development, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of both long term and intermediate sector programs and government's long and medium term development strategies. Critical to the development of these goals, targets and indicators are statistics that evidence the current socio-economic state of the country. In addition, statistics are also key to the monitoring and evaluation of government programs to measure development and determine strategies.

Why Does Belize Need Good Statistics?

- Good use of statistics leads to sound and informed government policies
- Good statistics promote development, which benefits the citizenry
- Good statistics improve the transparency and accountability of policy making in various sectors
- Good statistics help to ensure that our scarce and limited resources are used efficiently
- Good statistics improve capacity to diagnose, analyze and treat problems

What is a National Statistical System?

The National Statistical System (NSS) is a partnership including the major producers and users of a country's official statistics established primarily to harmonize statistical work programs and to improve the quality, coherence and governance of their statistical outputs. The NSS refers to the agencies/institutions in charge of producing statistics and, more broadly, to official bodies analyzing and using statistics. It includes the statistical output produced and the people involved, including both producers and users of statistics. The main functions of a statistical system are to collect data from a variety of sources, process and analyze this information, and disseminate it in various forms according to the needs of different users. The efficiency of a statistical system is determined by the outputs and products it produces, considering quality fit for purpose, but it also depends on the system's organizational structure and coordination.

Role of the Statistical Institute of Belize:

To coordinate the production of official statistics' systems, including the necessary methodologies, with a view to meeting users' requirements through ensuring timelines and standardization of information, as well as to provide appropriate classifications and conformity with international requirements and standards; To supply the information necessary to evaluate the quality of official statistics, and make accessible to the public the methods used for their production, and how the principles, under which such statistics are gathered, and compiled.

Why does Belize Need an Efficient National Statistical System?

An efficient National Statistical System will provide more and better statistics to users. It is therefore necessary to strengthen production, coordination, and dissemination to improve official statistics. An assessment of the current state of the National Statistical System presents an opportunity to confront the challenges that have affected statistics production, coordination, and dissemination. A well-coordinated NSS will therefore allow us to deal with the difficulties that have long affected the improvement of official statistics in Belize.

The NSDS: A Powerful Framework for Improving Statistics

The goal of the strategy is to decide on the function of the NSS and improving it in the mid to long term. Through the NSDS, the NSS becomes more efficient. NSDS presents clear decisions on how to get the system better over time.

The National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) is a strategic planning approach that allows countries to identify and prioritize statistical activities covering the entire National Statistical System (NSS). Its objective is to reinforce the statistical capacity of the country to enable timely, reliable production of data to facilitate sound, informed decision-making.

It brings together users and producers, through a participatory process: the NSDS document analyzes the demand and supply of statistics by all the actors in the NSS. It permits constructive dialogue to develop statistical priorities resulting in goals that are embodied in the Plan of Action (5-10 years).

At the international level, the need for developing countries to design and implement an NSDS was agreed on during a meeting of the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics (MAPS) in 2004. Meetings of the PARIS21 Consortium in Dakar, in 2009 emphasized once again the importance for all the NSS actors to coordinate and align their actions with the NSDS Framework.

Current Challenges for Belize

Both national stakeholders of the NSS (National Statistical System) and the FTP's (Financial and Technical Partners) agreed that it is urgent to develop a statistical system capable of addressing the various statistical needs of development policies in Belize (with particular reference to the "Horizon 2030 Framework"). There is strong need for:

1. High political commitment to support, follow-up and implement the NSDS
2. Coordination within the ministries but also between various entities of the NSS
3. Qualified human resources and capacity across the NSS including the Statistical Institute of Belize.
4. Relevant advocacy to allow better understanding of the use of statistics and indicators
5. Strong potential improvements in data collection, analysis, methodology, disaggregation and long-term planning
6. Provision of sustainable financial resources to promote sector development strategies

Principal Stages of NSDS

1. Political Commitment

2. Road Map: Describes how the NSDS will be **designed**: How? Who? When? How much?

3. Design :
   - **Assessment**: seeks to establish the state of statistics in the country (**strengths and weaknesses**) and shares it with all the actors
   - Vision and Selection of the best strategy: establishes a list of strategic data and the corresponding capacity necessary to **produce them**. This vision states where the country would like to be in medium or long-term with statistics
   - Plan of Action: is a long-term program of activities and budgets. It also includes monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

4. Implementation: executing the plan of action through the integrated institutions of the NSS **and in coordination with technical and financial partners**.

M. Glenn Avilez,
Director General of SIB

There is no country in the world where the production of official statistics is the responsibility of a single entity. What we have are varying degrees of centralization or, if you will, decentralization. It is generally the case that the National Statistical Office is the single largest producer of official statistics in a country. Even if an agency produces only 5% of the total demand for statistics, that amount is significant since those statistics are invariably not produced by any other agency and serve to inform important development objectives.

In assessing the strength of a country's statistical system, consideration must be given to all producers of official statistics and not only to the National Statistical Office. There are many examples of countries investing great deal of resources in their National Statistical Offices, but paying very little attention to other producers of official statistics. The idiom that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link is especially true of National Statistical Systems. The challenge is therefore to strengthen our weakest producers of official statistics to the level of strength we would desire of the entire NSS. It should also be considered that users are important constituents in a National Statistical System, and therefore their needs should be afforded as much as attention as developing the technical capacity of producers.

The design and implementation of an NSDS that we are embarking on with the participation of other key producers and users of official statistics and with the support of the Government of Belize and international partners such as PARIS21 is aimed at addressing the systemic challenges that plagued and hindered the development of official statistics in Belize. The main goal of this initiative is to have a fully integrated and coordinated National Statistical System that is highly responsive to the demand for high quality statistics.

While the Statistical Institute of Belize is poised to provide appropriate leadership in realizing this goal, the full commitment of all stakeholders is absolutely necessary if we are to achieve any measure of success as a country. I look forward to the full support of our many partner agencies in government and to the assistance of our resident and non-resident international partners.

To sum up:

The NSDS will help because:

- ☐ **It addresses data limitations**
- ☐ **Prioritizes use of limited resources for statistics**
- ☐ **Integrates statistics within development policies**

Key Indicators in Belize

	Indicator	Value	Year	Source of Data	
1	Population (Number of inhabitants)	312698	2010	Population and Housing Census	SIB
2	Economically Active Population	100537	2010	Population and Housing Census	SIB
3	Unemployment Rate	23.10%	2010	Population and Housing Census	SIB
4	Percentage of Indigent Households	10.40%	2010	Population and Housing Census	SIB
5	Percentage of poor/not indigent Households	20.60%	2010	Population and Housing Census	SIB
6	Percentage of Households not poor	69%	2010	Population and Housing Census	SIB
7	Percentage of Households with piped water	85%	2010	Population and Housing Census	SIB
8	Percentage of Households with electricity	89.10%	2010	Population and Housing Census	SIB
9	Literacy Rate	76.50%	2000	Population and Housing Census	SIB
10	Average School attendance 6 years +	32.30%	2010	Population and Housing Census	SIB
11	Annual Inflation Rate	0.90%	2010	Consumer Price Index	SIB
12	Quarterly Inflation Rate	0.90%	first quarter Feb. 2011	Consumer Price Index	SIB
13	Infant Mortality Rate (per 1000)	17.9	2009	Belize Basic Health Indicators	MOH*

* MOH: Ministry of Health.

STATISTICAL INSTITUTE OF BELIZE

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