

Final Record of the Proceedings

Chairs: Pali Lehohla & Eckhard Deutscher

I. Welcome Statement

1. The DAC chair opened the meeting by welcoming participants. He commented that over the past few months, PARIS21 has been, as always, an active participant in the global development community. At the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held in Accra, Ghana this past September, partners demonstrated their commitment to ensure that statistical development is considered alongside other important issues. Statistics are an important element cutting across all five major principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness: ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results, and mutual accountability. The recognition that statistics received in this regard is due in no small part to the efforts of the PARIS21 Partnership. He then outlined the objectives of the day's meeting. Namely, these points relate to the future rounds of the Partner Report on Support to Statistics (PRESS), the timing of the next PARIS21 evaluation, proposals for work on fragile states and the Virtual Statistical System, and the dates for the next Steering Committee meeting.

II. Adoption of Agenda

2. The Secretariat Manager proposed that the representatives from Afghanistan and Sudan intervene after the agenda item on the PARIS21 work programme to present their recent experiences. The developing country co-chair proposed that the following day's donors meeting discuss the global economic crisis. These proposals were agreed. The agenda was adopted without further modifications.

III. Progress Reports

3. Several reports on progress in specific initiatives were then presented.

PARIS21 Progress Report

4. As an element of the overall tracking progress of activities and outputs, the Secretariat presented the activities carried out between May and September 2008. At regional level the Secretariat has participated in various international and regional meetings, has organised support to NSDS processes in 10 countries and supported regional events (SADC Statistics Committee in Botswana, UNESCO seminar on education statistics in Côte d'Ivoire, and a special NSDS day for the Caribbean in Belize). On advocacy, assistance to 10 countries has been provided on producing relevant booklets and NSDS synthesis documents, on the basis of the statistics advocacy toolkit (START) which is to be finalised in the coming months. In terms of partnership the two most important events have been the organisation of a side event at the Accra HLF — where the Statistics for Results Facility was launched — and the conclusion of the PRESS 2008 round, including the preparation of a Partners Directory. On statistical reporting, NSDS sheets have been updated, a beta version of a dedicated website on NSDS has been prepared, and a toolkit on country reporting produced while in the field of studies five new guidance documents have been drafted. Task team activities have been at a lower level over the reporting period.

5. As another element of the overall tracking progress of activities and outputs, the Secretariat presented the annual report on progress of the wider partnership towards its outputs and outcomes. The number of IDA countries having implemented their NSDSs increased from 22 to 37 since the baseline in 2006. In Africa 21 countries now have NSDSs (increased from 10). In terms of technical co-operation flows



the PRESS baseline shows that annual disbursements on statistical capacity building have increased between 2006 and 2007 but amounts consistent with NSDSs are uncertain depending on how flexible the criteria are set (ranging from 2 to 73%). Following the World Bank's Statistical Capacity Indicator (2006 baseline) the capacities to produce, analyse and use statistics have fallen in 2008 in comparison with 2007: this is explained by the fact that a significant number of African countries have rebased their national accounts and CPI in the last ten years (statistical practice dimension of the indicator) and that the number of countries having conducting a poverty survey since 2004 has also declined (data collection dimension). This decline is not compensated by the improvements in terms of indicator availability in 2008. Concerning the MDG indicators there is an overall improvement from 56% to 71% of countries with at least two data points for six indicators (excluding modelled data). However it should be noted that only 35% of countries have two national data points for \$1 a day. In summary, the trend is in general positive but with some reservations concerning the stalling of the statistical capacity indicator and the reduction of countries carrying out poverty surveys and some measurement issues such as the quality and successful implementation of NSDSs and the inadequate data on whether technical co-operation flows are consistent with NSDSs.

NSDS Progress Report

6. The Secretariat introduced the NSDS Progress Report whose objectives are to monitor country progress in preparing and implementing NSDSs, to serve as an input for the design of programmes to countries and to inspire NSDS country teams to report themselves in greater detail on their strategic planning efforts. Sources of information are threefold: review of existing documentation, discussions with partners and direct contacts with countries. The NSDS summary table shows that 95% of African countries are currently designing, waiting for adoption or implementing a strategy while only 55% of countries in the regions of Asia & Pacific and Latin American & Caribbean are in the same situation. Main findings emerging from the analysis of NSDS status worldwide concern the design process, funding, and implementation. On the design process it is important to highlight that: (1) the process has to be continuous; (2) it needs to cover the full statistical system; (3) it has to be integrated into a larger development policy process; and (4) it must be results-focused. On the issue of funding and implementation, it is important to have identifiable costs and a financing plan linked with effective and realistic implementation plans where donors are fully involved in the design process. Three main recommendations for the PARIS21 Secretariat are proposed: (1) to prepare guidance to assist fragile states and small island economies in designing NSDSs; (2) to prepare guidance and facilitate training on preparing a sequenced and prioritised action plan; and (3) to develop guidance on preparing a costing and financing plan for an NSDS.

International Household Survey Network (IHSN) and Accelerated Data Program (ADP)

7. The Secretariat delivered a brief presentation on progress of the IHSN and ADP programmes. The two programmes have been evaluated as part of the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics (MAPS) in 2008. The role of the World Bank, as well as collaboration with other partners, was underlined. The IHSN is focusing increasingly on data quality and consistency and is developing appropriate tools and guidelines, building on the success of its Toolkit. The ADP has expanded its geographical coverage, and this should continue over 2009. The scope of the ADP is also widening as more countries are embarking on Task 2 activities. The sustainability of the results obtained at the country level was mentioned with (1) the capacity building approach of these two programmes; (2) the integration into the NSDS processes when appropriate; and (3) the development of regional communities of practice.

Discussion

8. The UNECA representative highlighted the interest to have available the knowledge base of PARIS21 for circulating the information on country statistical plans. He noted as well the importance of the consultative process and the necessary links with PRSPs for building the necessary capacities, improving



strategic planning, management and governance. The French representative recalled the importance to provide adequate support to the preparation of donor's round tables and highlighted the importance of PARIS21 support in this field. He also mentioned the importance of advocating statistics at the level of donors' local staff in each recipient country. The representative from CIDA-Canada encouraged the Secretariat to foster co-ordination through the sharing of a calendar of activities. All delegates congratulated the work of the Secretariat in monitoring the progress on NSDSs but there was some disappointment in the fact that existing indicators are not fully matching the needs of monitoring progress. Eurostat mentioned in particular the problem of MDG data points which are mostly estimates and not real data. In terms of measurements several proposals were made concerning the need to measure uses of statistics (UK), the need to measure quality (East Asia), while recognising the difficulty to implement such measurements (World Bank). The representative from South East Asia called on the Secretariat to systematically monitor more than just IDA countries in its reports. The developing country co-chair concluded with the comment that the Secretariat has achieved considerable work in translating principles into actions, the principles of NSDS being directly linked with the 10 UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.

IV. Reports from the Partnership

Statistics for Results Facility (SRF)

9. The World Bank representative provided an update on the progress of launching the SRF. The initiative's objectives are to scale-up investments to statistics, improve the links between statistical capacity improvements and the needs of development policy, strengthen national partnerships at country level to provide more effective support to statistical capacity building. So far, the UK and Netherlands have promised considerable financial support to the SRF. With them, the Bank has helped develop a charter to define the governance arrangements for the Fund. The key body governing the SRF will be a Council of donors with representatives from the Bank and PARIS21. The Council will make allocation decisions and monitor progress on the basis of agreed indicators. An initial pilot phase will include 5–6 selected countries who will be invited to apply for funds on the basis of a Council decision. Application will be in the form of a concept note, which will need to describe a national partnership, the arrangements for implementing the NSDS, as well as the need for funds (*i.e.*, the funding gap, after national resources have been allocated). Execution and implementation will be managed by recipient countries themselves. Still to be completed in setting up the SRF is the formal agreement with donors and the organisation of a first meeting of the Council. Once this is complete, countries will be asked to prepare applications, with support from the national partnership and World Bank administrative unit, then the Council will review the submissions. The Dutch representative commented that the current SRF funds are not as extensive as they might seem then called on other donors to come on board to join the funding of this important initiative. The European Commission representative welcomed this initiative and commented that, even if the EC is not contributing financially to the fund they are happy to contribute to the implementation of NSDSs, working together with the Facility. Although the EC work programme has already been set for the 2006–2013 period, they do have flexibility to work more with the SRF.

Accra HLF

10. The developing country co-chair presented his thoughts on the Accra HLF. As a result of this meeting, the statistical community now has a great responsibility to execute its mandate in responding to data needs in the framework of aid effectiveness. The HLF has raised expectations for statistics. After Accra, there was a meeting on the MDGs held in New York, at which aid effectiveness was raised at that meeting. This demonstrates that attention is increasingly being paid to statistics. The World Bank representative called on the partnership to look closely at the Accra Agenda for Action¹, in particular paragraph 23a and c.

¹ See <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/ACCRAEXT/Resources/4700790-1217425866038/AAA-4-SEPTEMBER-FINAL-16h00.pdf>



The DAC chair underscored the need to integrate the statistics people with the aid effectiveness people. These communities should work hand-in-hand.

Expert Meeting on Agricultural Statistics

11. The Eurostat representative reminded participants of the food crisis and the effect it has had on the world. Many countries do not have sufficient capacity to track agricultural trends to combat this crisis. He then reported on the results of an expert meeting on a “Global Initiative to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics” held in Washington DC in October 2008. The meeting helped define a strategic plan to address the decline in data quality and availability originating from national and international agricultural and rural statistical systems, the low statistical capacity and lack of resources in countries to deliver the necessary data, and the emerging requirements for data. Long-term goals of the strategy are to (1) secure international and national agreement on core indicators and methodology, (2) establish a set of core and supplemental indicators for agricultural and rural statistics comparable across countries and additive to regional and global levels; (3) integrate the core agricultural, fishery, forestry, and rural statistics with overlapping data requirements from other sectors such as health, education, labor, and measurements of poverty; (4) provide a set of best practices and methodology to improve statistical capacity and provide comparability across countries; and (5) establish a governance structure to co-ordinate statistical activities that overlap with other sectors. The draft strategic plan produced at the meeting will be reviewed and refined at a satellite meeting to the 2009 ISI hosted by Mozambique. The strategy will then go to the 2010 UN Statistical Commission. If the UNSC endorses the strategy, the partnership will launch the implementation of the strategy in October 2010.

Global Project on Measuring Progress

12. The OECD representative presented the project to measure the progress of societies. The OECD Council officially established the project in July 2008; governance arrangements are being formulated. He highlighted a number of examples of the project’s growing partnership (World Bank, UNDP, European Commission, etc.). An increasing number of countries (including developing countries) are organising national roundtables to measuring progress. The ESCWA Statistics Committee has agreed to take part in the project. The World Economic Forum in Davos is also interested in the measure of progress and has agreed to host a session at the World Conference in January 2009 on the topic. The human development index is also considering expanding its coverage to indicators relating to environment and crime. This is in line with progress indicators. The OECD representative commented that, regarding connections with PARIS21, he would like to see the measurement of progress integrated into the NSDS framework. This would have the advantage of linking the NSDS with the non-official sources of statistics and expanding the breadth of stakeholders beyond the traditional components of the NSS. He expressed his desire to co-ordinate his work more closely with PARIS21, including co-organising training sessions to transfer information about the project’s new ICT tools to countries. He also hoped that PARIS21 would agree to be a partner for the project’s Third World Forum to be held in October 2009 in Korea, as they were for the Second Forum held in Istanbul.

13. In discussion, participants expressed their interest in and appreciation of the Global Project, in particular the idea of expanding the dialogue to a wider range of partners. The UK representative recalled the decision of the Steering Committee at a previous meeting that PARIS21 involvement should remain on a case-by-case level, as many developing countries have very low capacity to measure basic indicators, not to mention the higher-level progress indicators. The OECD representative clarified that the project is not proposing a specific list of indicators to measure progress, but instead assistance will be lent to help countries to produce them using best practices.

V. Partner Report on Support to Statistics



14. The Secretariat delivered a brief presentation on progress of the Partner Report on Support to Statistics (PRESS). PRESS is intended to provide reporting and exchange of information on statistical activities being carried out and planned in recipient countries. The PRESS activity was launched within the context of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and of the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics. PRESS is reporting on who is doing what, where and when in the field of support to statistics. Its ultimate goal is to improve collaboration. At the country level, it can, for instance, help to identify financial gaps. It can also contribute to defining partners' work programmes on statistics and thus avoid duplication. Finally, it can help countries advocate for greater support to statistics.

Discussion

15. The chair reminded participants that an in-depth discussion on PRESS had already taken place at the Seminar the previous day. He therefore asked the Steering Committee to look at the discussion points highlighted by the Secretariat and to agree on the principles. Consequently, the Steering Committee unanimously agreed that PRESS become a regular activity of the PARIS21 Secretariat. Information will be published on an annual basis (by 31 October) and will have a thematic focus. Future PRESS rounds will include non-OECD bilateral donors. It was also agreed that the PRESS task team act as a Quality Advisory Group to provide guidance on future PRESS rounds. UN specialised agencies were strongly encouraged to provide information, as they are so decentralised.

VI. Forward Work Programme for 2009

16. The Secretariat presented the activities of the forward work programme for 2009, which had been updated since the last Steering Committee meeting to take into account new priorities and orientations. At country level, the facilitation of NSDS design and implementation will focus on less-developed countries in Africa, and new activities will be launched in Asia and the Caribbean. National partnerships, based on what has been accomplished in Mali, will also be encouraged. The target is to assist at least 15 new countries with NSDS implementation. The peer review approach will be consolidated in Anglophone (three sets of countries) and Francophone countries (Niger, Burkina Faso). On-demand support to advocacy will be provided to less developed countries in Africa, and support will be enlarged to Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. The objective is to cover 25 countries in 2009. Statistical reporting will be encouraged at national level. Country reporting guidelines are now available. Support will be given to National Statistical Councils for the development or the improvement of portals on statistical systems. The aim is to cover two countries for 2009.

17. At the regional level, more specific programmes will be developed in the Arab States, island countries, and fragile states. For the Arab states, a Maghreb workshop will be held in December 2008 and the 4th Arab Forum in Cairo will be held in May 2009. Statistical capacity building will be reinforced in small island developing countries. A workshop for the Caribbean and Pacific will be organised as a side meeting of the UNSC in 2009. An NSDS workshop will be held in June 2009 in the Caribbean, and there are plans to organise a high-level seminar with policy-makers and statisticians in the Caribbean. The Secretariat proposes to establish a reflection group on fragile states with terms of reference and a reporting back of progress in a PARIS21 seminar.

18. NSDS progress reporting tables will be produced regularly, and the next round of PRESS will be carried out in 2009. A number of new studies will be launched and ongoing ones finalised. It is thought that it would be useful to have the results of the PARIS21 evaluation as one of the main inputs for the Consortium. It is proposed to launch the evaluation at the beginning of 2009 (rather than 2010 after the Consortium). The organization of the PARIS21 consortium will also be at the heart of the PARIS21 work programme in 2009. On the funding side, relations with DAC delegations and donors outside the OECD will be strengthened.



Discussion

19. Discussion centred on fragile states, building national partnerships, and peer reviews. The Committee agreed to the establishment of a PARIS21 reflection group on *fragile states*. Several members agreed to participate in the group: the Netherlands, IMF, African Development Bank, UNECA, and World Bank. The developing country co-chair agreed to convene the group on behalf of PARIS21. The Canadian representative urged the group to liaise closely with the DAC group on the topic.

20. The representative from France said that given the importance of having *national partnerships in statistics*, even for the SRF, support to these groups should be considered a full-time activity. It is useful for the co-ordination of the statistical system. PARIS21 should consider this work more closely. The representatives from Afristat and World Bank supported this idea, in particular as it is fundamental to the SRF.

21. Participants also supported PARIS21 involvement in facilitating *peer reviews*. The Afristat representative proposed to present a summary of the situation in conducting peer reviews by end of March or beginning of April 2009. He suggested adding two more countries to the programme in 2009. The UNECA representative called on PARIS21 to look beyond peer reviews to develop a peer support mechanism for South–South regional co-operation.

22. Some participants also called on PARIS21 to reflect on how to support areas such as the informal economy and gender statistics.

VII. Country Experiences

Afghanistan

23. The Afghanistan representative presented his country's five-year plan for the Central Statistical Organization (CSO) and their efforts to strength the country's statistical capacity. He outlined his country's efforts to implement this work plan in the midst of a war. This plan is the first phase of a 15-year plan. He commented that the CSO compares unfavourably with those of neighbouring countries. Capacity building and institutional development are seriously needed in Afghanistan. The country will conduct a population and housing census in 2010, which will also include an agricultural census. To lead up to these activities, they organised a user–producer workshop in October 2008, which brought together a very wide range of partners. This has led to a recommendation to organise a follow-up workshop on gender statistics. The CSO structure is being streamlined and is participating in training sessions to build in-house capacity. He outlined some of the activities of the CSO over the coming years, including the programme of surveys. He showed the budget the CSO is requesting to support their plan. He asked for partners to help out with financing and implementing the plan.

Sudan

24. The Sudanese representative presented his country's efforts to conduct a census in a fragile environment. He commented that the census is a key tool to re-establish normalcy and stability to a country after a conflict situation. A Monitoring and Observation Committee was established to oversee the census execution at all stages and at all levels. The committee is composed of representatives from a wide range of public and private national bodies as well as donors. Committee members were posted throughout the country. The statistical office engaged in a publicity campaign on the census to raise awareness among the population. The census was highly politicised, so the campaign was designed to allay the population's concerns. The census was postponed for political reasons. He called on partners to support his country's census process.



VIII. Consortium Meeting Preparations

25. The representative from Senegal confirmed the firm commitment, pleasure, and determination of his government to host and co-organise the PARIS21 Consortium meeting in November 2009. The PARIS21 Secretariat's team who visited Dakar in the previous week met both the President and Prime Minister of the country and was informed about the country's experience in hosting large meetings. The PARIS21 delegation met other development partners — including the World Bank, UNDP, and the French Embassy — who all agreed to support the event. The Senegalese representative said that a local organising committee has been set up and that he looked forward to welcoming Steering Committee members to Senegal. The PARIS21 Secretariat advised that the dates of the Consortium meeting have been set as 16–18 November 2009 and will be followed in the same week by the African Symposium on Statistical Development (ASSD), which will also be held in Dakar. The venue will be the Hotel Méridien-President. A dedicated website and e-mail address will be established for the Consortium meeting. Ideas were invited for a logo and slogan (to be sent to sylvie.walter@oecd.org). A scientific committee will be established which will be tasked with discussing the agenda and identifying high-profile speakers. Other planned activities include deciding on the list of invitees, preparing a background paper and posters for a market place, and deciding on social events. The Consortium is a unique opportunity for all of the various types of partners involved in statistics for development to discuss the status and way forward for statistical co-operation, leading to a Dakar Declaration on the development of statistics.

Discussion

26. The developing country co-chair noted that November 2009 will be the tenth anniversary of PARIS21, and he expressed his pleasure that the Consortium meeting and ASSD will be held in Dakar during the week of African Statistics Day (18 November). Several participants — in particular, Afristat, France, and UNECA — echoed this sentiment and offered their support to the preparations. The representative of Canada noted the large number of meetings in 2009 and cautioned against overloading countries with participation in too many international meetings.

IX. Proposal for the Virtual Statistical System

27. The World Bank representative presented an update of the Virtual Statistical System (VSS) task team. He reminded participants that a discussion was held in June 2008, at which the Steering Committee agreed in principle with the team's proposal, requesting updates on the issues of sustainability and management of the VSS. The current document is an update of the previously presented paper. He said that the team is ready to proceed with phase 2 (VSS design), but the issue of sustainability has yet to be resolved. The TORs for the task team mandated the development of a proposal. This task has been completed, so he recommended that the team be formally closed. He announced that the World Bank would carry on with the work of phase 2. He thanked the team's participants and the Committee for their support.

Discussion

28. The Committee took note of the VSS report and expressed its appreciation for the team's work. The Committee agreed to the proposal to close the team. The Secretariat Manager requested that PARIS21 remain involved in the next phase of VSS work.

X. Management Issues

29. The Eurostat representative presented the results of the recruitment process for the new PARIS21 Secretariat Manager. Four final candidates were identified. A panel interviewed them this week and is in the process of drafting its recommendations to the OECD director responsible for hiring the new manager.



XI. Seven Years with PARIS21

30. The Secretariat Manager offered his thoughts on the past seven years of his service with PARIS21. He commented on the modest beginnings of the Partnership and how it has grown into a major player in statistical development. The partnership has been the strength of PARIS21, so he called on participants to expand the partnership to include more policymakers. Another objective for PARIS21 for the future would be to review the job of statisticians, to ensure that enough statisticians are trained. Advocacy in the future has to be more organised, more focused, and a continuous process. But the Secretariat cannot do this alone; the partnership must lend a hand. He thanked DCD management, the DAC chair, and everyone else within the OECD who makes the life of the Secretariat easy. He thanked past and present Secretariat members. He urged the Steering Committee continue NSDS work in the future and in particular at country level.

31. Participants applauded the Secretariat Manager's efforts over the years to steer the PARIS21 ship to work at the country level and help give birth to the NSDS process. Africa, in particular, has greatly benefited from the establishment of PARIS21, and the African statistical community is very appreciative of PARIS21 efforts and of Antoine's personal commitment and passion for developing statistical systems. The DAC chair said that the healthy financial situation of the Partnership is an excellent indicator of the Secretariat Manager's success. He concluded that statistics and PARIS21 will remain relevant for many years to come.

XII. Other Business

32. The Eurostat representative requested that the UNSD's proposal for a World Statistics Day be raised at the next Steering Committee meeting. The developing country co-chair called on participants to support and attend the ISI session to be held in Durban, South Africa in August 2009. No other points were raised under this agenda item.

XIII. Overview of Decisions Taken

33. The chair reviewed the decisions taken by the Committee over the course of the meeting's proceedings. An overview is available in Annex I below.

Annex I: Overview of Decisions Taken

#	Decision for the Steering Committee
1	<p>Does the Committee agree to the proposals for future rounds of the PRESS (<i>i.e.</i>, regarding the partners covered, the questionnaire, the frequency of report, and encouraging partners to monitor their support to statistics)?</p> <p><i>The Committee agrees to the Secretariat's proposals for the future work of PRESS.</i></p>
2	<p>Does the Committee agree to the organisation of the PARIS21 evaluation in 2009, to be completed in time for the Consortium meeting in November 2009?</p> <p><i>The Committee agrees to the proposal of conducting the PARIS21 evaluation in 2009.</i></p>
3	<p>Does the Committee agree with the recommendations for PARIS21 work on fragile states?</p> <p><i>The Committee supported the proposal to establish a reflection group on fragile states. The Secretariat should ensure that they integrate their activities with the work of the DAC Fragile States Group, as well as other relevant groups. Several members agreed to participate in this PARIS21 group. A convenor will be identified at a later time.</i></p>
4	<p>Does the Committee agree to close the VSS task team and that the World Bank take the lead in implementing the proposal?</p> <p><i>The Committee took note of the report and appreciates the task team's work. The Committee agreed to the proposal to close the team.</i></p>
5	<p>Does the Committee agree to hold the next Steering Committee from 28–29 May 2009 in Paris?</p> <p><i>The Committee requested that the Secretariat organise the meeting more closely with the Conference of European Statisticians (8–10 June 2009, Geneva). The meeting is therefore now tentatively scheduled for 4–5 June 2009 in Paris.</i></p>