

**MASTER PLAN FOR THE STATISTICS SYSTEM OF  
THE GAMBIA**

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**June 2004**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *Introduction*

The official statistics system in The Gambia has declined to a stage where it no longer provides an effective service to Government and other users of statistics. The principal causes of the problem have been the reduction of Government funding to unsustainably low levels and the complete inability of the Central Statistics Department (CSD) to attract and retain qualified personnel.

The aim now, working in a six-year planning time frame, is to re-establish a statistical system in The Gambia that meets the need of the country and is recognised as being efficient and effective. This Report describes actions required to achieve this objective.

### *Creation of a semi-autonomous agency*

A semi-autonomous statistics agency should be established, with new legislation that would leave the ultimate responsibility for the statistics system with the Secretary of State for Finance and Economic Affairs (SOSFEA).

The new agency would be headed by a Statistician General, appointed by the President, who would have responsibility for the organisation and administration of the approved work programme of the agency.

A seven-member Statistics Council would be established, to provide the interface between the SOSFEA and the new semi-autonomous agency, to recommend the work programme and budget, and to monitor progress to ensure that the objectives of the work programme are being achieved.

### *Statistics Legislation*

The new legislation, to be called The Statistics Act 2004, would put the fundamental principles of official statistics into effect. It would:

- provide a mandate for the national statistical system, and describe its role and principal functions
- define the status of the key players in the system
- define the obligations of data suppliers to provide information, and the penalties for non-compliance
- define the rights and responsibilities of the Agency's personnel in collecting data
- define the duties of the personnel of the Agency in preserving the confidentiality of individual data, and the penalties for non-compliance

### *Establishing a Work Planning Process*

A five-year Strategic Plan should be prepared, which would form the basis for the annual Work Programme and budget that the Statistician General will be required to

prepare. The Strategic Plan should be reviewed and updated annually, to take account of success or failure to meet targets, changed priorities and different perception of needs.

In the first instance, the Strategic Plan must take account of the priority needs of the Government of The Gambia. At the same time, the needs of other stakeholders, and the users of statistics throughout the community must be considered. For this purpose an annual Seminar on Statistical Priorities should be established.

The draft legislation specifies that the work programme and budget for the coming year must be submitted to the Council not later than 30 September. This then sets the time frame for the necessary steps to finalise priorities. The Seminar on Statistical Priorities should be held in about August each year, so that its recommendations can be considered for inclusion in the work programme. It should be the sole responsibility of the Statistician General to prepare the programme, and it is then the responsibility of the Council to review it, and to refer it back to the Statistician General if it is not satisfied with it. After the Council has endorsed both the work programme and the proposed budget, it will submit it to the SOSFEA for final approval and allocation of funds.

### ***Statistical Infrastructure Development***

The agency must give priority to developing statistical infrastructure to support the work programme.

A Business Register must be created so as to provide a framework not only for the planned Economic Census, but also for selecting the sample for ongoing Business Surveys that will be put in place after the Census has been conducted. It is highly desirable to use Global Positioning System (GPS) methodology to record coordinates of latitude and longitude of every business in the Register.

Plans are in hand for the digitisation of Census enumeration area maps and administrative boundaries. A household sampling frame can then be designed and a National Master Sample can be put in place, from which the sample for future Household Surveys would be drawn.

A priority is the creation of a comprehensive database of all statistics that are assessed as being suitable to be classed as “national statistics”. The database should contain detailed information, with summaries of the key social and economic indicators available from the agency’s web site.

A data archive should be set up, containing the detailed computerised records for households and individuals, at least for the Population Censuses and every Household Survey, but with identifiers such as name and address removed, so that no information in the Archive can be traced back to any particular person or household. These records are of great potential value for in-depth analysis in the future, especially for poverty studies.

### ***Priorities for Statistical Development***

The highest priority should be accorded to economic statistics, and in particular the restoration of the National Accounts to a high standard. It is necessary to conduct an economic census, and plans for this are already in hand. Emphasis should also be placed on price indexes. The CPI needs to be reweighted, using the expenditure data gathered in the 2003 Integrated Household Survey, and then rebased. And a Producer Price Index (PPI) should be established.

A second priority is the coordination of statistics produced by the agency and other data producers, and the development of a programme to make the information available to users. A comprehensive database of national statistics should be built up, the web site should be developed, a small range of publications should be prepared, and an efficient system of coordinating requests for information (whether in person or by telephone, mail or internet) should be established.

Dialogue with key Government planning authorities and other stakeholders should be maintained to set more detailed priorities.

### ***Organisational structure of the Agency***

The scheme proposed has three lines of control to the Statistician General, and the areas would be headed by

- A Deputy Statistician General, who would have overall responsibility for the development and coordination of the work programme.
- A Director of Information Services, responsible for the various general support services to the work programme.
- A Director of Administration and Finance, who would also be the Secretary to the Statistics Council.

### ***Human Resource Development***

An efficient statistical system requires higher staffing levels than are now in place, and the increase must be spread over a number of years. However in practice it may be difficult or impossible to achieve a rapid staff build-up.

The main constraint is that the existing staff members generally have low levels of academic qualifications. The most pressing need therefore is to recruit persons who will be strong candidates for senior posts, and who are graduates in economics (preferably with some training in statistics) or computer science. The available pool of academically qualified personnel is probably quite small. Therefore it may be realistic to aim for no more than a permanent staff of 70 when initial appointments to the agency are made, and to aim for a target of 100 persons after six years. This equates to an annual growth rate of six percent, with emphasis on recruitment of skilled professional staff.

The existing scheme of service for the Statistical Cadre allows for appointment as Cadet Statistician with only a higher diploma, with an appropriate University degree being a requisite for appointment to higher levels. In the circumstances in The Gambia, this strikes a sensible balance between needs and reality, and the scheme should be retained as the model for recruitment to the new agency.

The staff salary structure that needs to be put in place should be set as a compromise between competing forces. On the one hand, salaries must be high enough to attract and retain qualified and skilful people. That means that they have to be competitive with salaries paid to professional staff of like status in similar organisations. On the other hand, government budgetary constraints must be taken into account.

In principle, salaries should be aligned with those paid by other autonomous bodies. As an autonomous Revenue Authority is about to be established the salaries to be paid there should provide the key to the appropriate levels for the statistics agency.

With autonomous status, new arrangements must be put in place for social security. All permanent staff members of the new agency should automatically become participants in the Federated Pension Scheme administered by the Social Security and Housing Finance Corporation.

### ***Statistical Training Programme***

The essential requirement is to bring training to The Gambia, so that a group of people can be trained at the one time, rather than sending individuals overseas for expensive training. This is especially so as new recruits will probably have relatively little formal training in statistics, and little or no experience in the practical aspects of gathering data in surveys and censuses.

Courses can be envisaged in a range of topics, from basic manual and computer editing, to statistical concepts and standards, price index concepts and methods, through to sampling theory and practice. A programme for existing staff needs to be put into effect, and planning should commence immediately. Computer training will be of critical importance, and there would be value in bringing in a specialist to train the more senior personnel in planning, organisation and management of major censuses and surveys.

An internal study of training needs for existing staff should be made immediately. A more comprehensive Training Needs Assessment should be undertaken after appointments to the agency have been made

The maximum possible support should be given to the School of Economics and Management in the University of The Gambia, which is making a valiant effort to build up its teaching capacity in statistics.

### ***Investment and Financing Plan***

The World Bank funded Capacity Building for Economic Management Programme (CBEMP) is providing funding for a new building for the agency, a local area network (LAN) and computer hardware, and other physical infrastructure requirements. In view of the Project support for capital items, low Government provision needs to be made in the Development Budget over the next few years.

An indicative recurrent budget for the regular work programme of the autonomous agency, based on the staff numbers and salary levels proposed, gives an estimate of 14.4 million dalasis in 2005, rising to 17.1 million in 2008 and 19.7 million in 2011. These amounts are expressed in May 2004 prices, and take no account of inflation.

The recurrent budget will probably have to be met entirely by Government from the outset. When it is properly established, the agency should be able to raise some funds by sale of its products and its expertise, and any funds that are generated should be retained and used to help meet its operational costs.

Donors could be approached to fund a transitional arrangement whereby, in return for a written guarantee from Government that it would meet the full recurrent budget of the new agency from its own resources within a specified period, bridging donor support for the budget could be provided. This scheme has the dual advantage of (a) giving the Government some breathing space in providing the full recurrent funding of the agency, and (b) providing the donors with the guarantee of commitment to the agency that they are no doubt anxious to receive.

### ***Implementation***

The CSD should appoint a Steering Committee, of perhaps three senior staff members, to plot the path to semi-autonomy. Special consideration should be given to the budget for 2005, as the new agency will not be in place when the budget is prepared. Transitional funding should be provided, to ensure a smooth transfer to the semi-autonomous status.

The target should be to have all appointments to the new agency finalised by May 2005. This will give time to prepare for the planning cycle for the 2006 work programme.

The successful implementation of the agency will depend on commitment. The Government must commit itself to supporting the system with the funds it needs, the agency must commit itself to creating a viable and sustainable statistics service, and continued dialogue with the main stakeholders must be developed, so that the efficiency of the system is apparent to all.

# MASTER PLAN FOR THE STATISTICS SYSTEM OF THE GAMBIA

## 1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The official statistics system in The Gambia has declined to a stage where it no longer provides an effective service to Government and other users of statistics. The principal problems of the Central Statistics Department (CSD) of The Gambia over the past decade or so have been very well documented.

The two major Reports have been the FJP Report in 2000 and the “Report on strategic and operational measures required in the statistical system of The Gambia to effectively meet Government and public information needs” by Steve Kuzmicich in 2002. However the studies had been ongoing since well before then, as the FJP Report noted that it was already the third report on the subject.

The FJP Report concentrated on preparing a two-year accelerated work programme, with a major effort directed to two or three key surveys. It envisaged staff numbers being built up to 134 persons, but at least fifty of those were temporary employees for the duration of a particular survey, and apparently a total permanent staff level of about 80 persons was envisaged. An organisational structure of the Department was presented, with three lines of control to the head of the Department – Economic Statistics, Social Statistics and Corporate Services. On the basis of this structure, and the concentrated survey programme, a draft budget was given, showing funding requirements for years 2001 and 2002 only. The FJP Report considered four possible supervisory scenarios for a reformed CSD. These ranged from independence (in other words, semi-autonomy) with an expanded scope of work (including the functions of the Registrar-General and the Registrar of Companies) to a simple strengthening of the present status. It opted for an independent status within the existing scope of work. However in all options, salary and total budget levels were to be kept to the present levels.

The Kuzmicich Report took a broader approach, with an overview of the problems being faced, and presented in general terms a way forward to revitalise the Department. This Report recommended an immediate recruitment programme to bring staff number back to the level of 82 that prevailed in the mid-1990s, and then expansion of the numbers by 10% annually, to reach a level of 130 within 5 years. In his Report, Kuzmicich gave careful consideration to the merits of semi-autonomous status, but came out strongly in favour of the traditional structure in Western countries of remaining within the civil service. Instead, he recommended that the CSD should no longer be a component of the Department of State for Finance and Economic Affairs (DOSFEA) but should report directly to the Secretary of State, with enhanced status both for the agency and its head.

Despite this recommendation against autonomy, a decision has apparently been taken in favour of semi-autonomous status. The Terms of Reference for this mission specify that Statistics Gambia should be established “as a semi-autonomous body with new legislation that puts the fundamental principles of official statistics into effect”.

On balance this decision is fully supported. The move to semi-autonomy for the statistical agency is spreading to many countries in Africa. However since there are such divided opinions on this issue, it is probably useful to describe in some detail the main advantages and disadvantages that will be derived from semi-autonomy. This is set out in a separate Information Paper.

There is no need to delve further into the causes of the decline in the fortunes of the CSD. It seems apparent from both reports that the principal causes of the problem have been the reduction of Government funding to unsustainably low levels and the complete inability of the CSD to attract and retain qualified personnel. The aim now must be to move forward, and with that in mind some strategic objectives for the medium term have been set. These are:

- Within six years re-establish a national statistical system in The Gambia that meets the need of the country and is recognized as being efficient and effective
- Establish Statistics Gambia (SG) as a semi-autonomous body with new legislation that puts the fundamental principles of official statistics into effect
- Establish a Statistics Council to provide the interface between the Secretary of State for Finance and Economic Affairs (SOSFEA) and the new semi-autonomous agency, to recommend the work programme and budget, and to monitor progress to ensure that the objectives of the work programme are being achieved
- Reverse the decline in staff levels and budget and provide adequate incentives to attract and retain qualified staff with an effective human resource management and development process
- Strengthen coordination and management of the overall national statistical system
- Restructure the statistics agency to meet the needs of current and future users of statistics and put in place an effective management structure
- Expand the coverage of economic, social, demographic and other statistics so that The Gambia is able to meet the needs of users, generates the data needed to monitor the PRSP and progress towards the MDGs and follows international recommendations as set out in the GDDS.
- Develop an effective stakeholder consultation process and improve data dissemination
- Have an effective reporting and monitoring system in place, so that stakeholders are made aware of both current and planned developments and progress.

In his Report, Kuzmicich made a very valuable contribution by describing the most essential structural changes that are required to the Agency and the new features necessary to create a more modern and relevant service that relates better to data suppliers, and the users and producers of statistics. It also described in general terms the priorities for statistical development as he saw them.

This Report sets out to build on the Kuzmicich Report. It takes a practical approach to the organisational issues, and aims to design, and to describe in some detail, a system that can be effective. It takes a longer-term view, as Kuzmicich recommended, and looks both at the short-term transitional requirements to establish



the new agency, and sets a six-year target to complete the transition and become firmly established. A draft budget, to give an indication of the likely cost of the regular work programme, at the start of operation of the new agency, mid-way through the transitional period, and at the end of the six years programme, is presented.

However the rapid build-up in staff numbers, as recommended by both Reports, is not supported. In the existing staff, which now numbers only 45 permanent and 15 temporary officers, the academic level is generally very low. Accordingly at this stage quality is considered to be more important than quantity, and the recruitment effort should be concentrated on skilled personnel, with sound academic background, to produce quality statistics in the areas of highest priority.

## **2. REGULATORY AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR STATISTICS**

The four key elements required to bring the semi-autonomous agency into being are:

- The preparation of new legislation, to be named The Statistics Act, 2004.
- The creation of the Statistics Council, a body that handles the interface between the Secretary of State for Finance and Economic Affairs (SOSFEA) and the Statistician General, and making appointments to the Council.
- The appointment of the Statistician General as head of the new agency.
- The creation of posts within the agency, and making of appointments to them.

### **2.1 Statistical Legislation**

New legislation, to replace the 1972 Act, is an essential first step in the transitional process to semi-autonomy. The main purposes of the legislation may be summarised as:

- to provide a mandate for the national statistical system, and to describe its role and principal functions
- to define the status of the key players in the system –viz. the Secretary of State for Finance and Economic Affairs, the Statistics Council, the new Statistical Agency and the proposed annual Conference of Statisticians
- to define the obligations of data suppliers to provide information, and the penalties for non-compliance
- to define the rights and responsibilities of the Agency’s personnel in collecting data
- to define the duties of the personnel of the Agency in preserving the confidentiality of individual data, and the penalties for non-compliance

Draft legislation, to be called “The Statistics Act, 2004” has already been prepared, and generally covers these topics very well. The main weakness is perhaps that there is some overlap in the responsibilities of the key players. Some more detailed comments on the draft Act will be found in Information Paper No. 2.

The next steps in the process are (a) to produce a final draft of the Act to the satisfaction of the CSD, (b) to submit it to both the SOSFEA and the Solicitor-General for comment and final approval, (c) to have it put forward as a Cabinet paper, and (d) to have it presented as a Bill to the National Assembly, to be passed into law.

The whole process is likely to take several months, and a target date to complete the process should be October 2004, although it has been claimed that the process can be completed more rapidly in The Gambia than elsewhere, and that a slightly earlier completion date may be achieved.

## **2.2 The Statistics Council**

The Statistics Council is a necessary body in a semi-autonomous agency, as it provides the essential interface between the Statistician General and the designated Minister (in this instance the SOSFEA) who has the ultimate authority.

In other African countries where an autonomous agency has been set up, and also in the parastatals and similar agencies in The Gambia, the term “Board of Directors” is used in preference to “Statistics Council”, but either term can be regarded as acceptable. However the term Advisory Council (used elsewhere) should be avoided, as this body will have much wider responsibilities than just an advisory role.

The wording of the legislation needs to be studied carefully, so that the best balance of responsibilities between (a) the Secretary of State; (b) the Council; and (c) the Statistician General is achieved.

For example, the draft legislation states that the Council will “appoint staff for the Agency” whereas probably the Council should only make senior level appointments, and the Statistician General should have responsibility for all appointments below the level of (say) Principal Statistician. The legislation in Uganda specifies only that their Board may “make or approve senior staff appointments”.

The legislation for other African countries that have established semi-autonomous agencies should be studied, in order to describe the Council’s role as precisely as possible.

The size and composition of the Council should be reconsidered. The FJP Report initially recommended seven members, of whom no more than three would be from Government. This was changed at the September 2000 Workshop to 11 members, as it was suggested that Government would require at least five members, but that it should not be in the majority.

First thoughts were probably best. It is recommended here that there should be no more than 7 members of the Council. The body will be unwieldy with the 11 members proposed in the current draft legislation. It is also suggested that *ex officio* members be avoided as far as possible.

A suitable structure could be:

- A chairperson nominated by the Secretary of State
- The Statistician General
- A representative of the SOSFEA
- A representative of the Central Bank
- A representative of data suppliers, to be nominated by the Chamber of Commerce
- Two representatives of the civil society, academic institutions and other private producers and users of statistics

This is a very similar structure to the Boards already set up in Uganda and Rwanda, each of which have 7 members. It may be noted also that in The Gambia the Civil Aviation Authority has 7 members on the Board, and the National Environment Agency has only 5 members, so there is widespread recognition that a fairly small Board, or Council, is to be preferred.

In addition, a senior official of Statistics Gambia should act as secretary to the Council. It would seem desirable for the Director of Administration and Finance to fulfil this role.

The draft Act restricts appointments (other than the Statistician General) to two terms (i.e. six years). This seems reasonable. However, elsewhere the first Council that was created was reappointed en bloc to a second term. Then at the end of six years, it became necessary under the provisions of the Act to terminate the appointment of all these members and all continuity was lost. It is desirable to avoid this situation. Perhaps some members of the first Council could be appointed for a maximum of one term, so that a pattern of rotating members every three years is established immediately. Alternatively the Secretary of State could be given the right to extend individual appointments for a third term in exceptional circumstances, to ensure continuity.

The Council needs to meet at regular quarterly intervals, with special meetings as the need arises, so Section 8(1) should be reworded to “at least four times in the year”. This is what is stipulated in the Acts of other countries with an autonomous agency.

It should be possible to establish the Council, and make the initial appointments to it, soon after the new Act is passed into law. The first task of the Council will be to recommend a qualified person to be the Statistician General. This also should be quickly achieved. A target of November 2004 to have both Council and Statistician General in place is suggested.

### **2.3 The proposed new statistical agency**

The draft Act specifies that the President shall appoint a qualified person to be the head of the new Agency on the recommendation of the Council. As already noted, he (or she) will operate under the direction of the Statistics Council, and will Report through it to the SOSFEA. However, as emphasised in the Kuzmicich Report, he (or

she) must have full responsibility for deciding the concepts and methodology for any subject-matter statistics that the Agency may produce.

Tentative decisions have already been taken to call the new agency Statistics Gambia, and to give the head of the Agency the title of Statistician General. These names are used throughout the draft legislation.

Both these titles are perfectly acceptable, but unfortunately the initials of both are SG, and it is feared that confusion would inevitably arise. Therefore it is suggested that one of these titles should be changed. The Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBOS) for the agency, and Executive Director (ED) for the head, are possible alternatives. In the absence of any firm decision, the titles in the draft Act are used throughout this Report.

A very different management approach and a new organisational structure for the new agency will be needed.

It is imperative for the Statistician General to have much greater freedom to plan and direct Statistics Gambia, than is possible within the civil service. As the Kuzmicich Report stated, he should have total control over how the work programme is carried out. Most importantly, he should be able to utilise the funds provided to the agency by the Government for whatever purposes he considers to be in the best interests of the agency, without being restricted to specific amounts for individual budget lines. If this flexibility is not provided, much of the potential advantage of autonomous status will be lost. Ideally, the total available funds provided for a three-month period should be at his disposition at the beginning of each quarter.

The organisational structure of the agency should have a number of new features. These include:

- An expanded role for the management team. With responsibility for handling the flow of money that is envisaged, tighter control of expenditure, with transparency and clear accountability will be essential, so an internal auditor should be appointed, although the final audit of the books should continue to be undertaken by the National Audit Office.
- Tighter control of personnel by the Administration section. An annual staff assessment system should be established.
- A training unit within the Administration section should be set up.
- A new Information Services division, with responsibility for IT functions and data dissemination should be created. The responsibilities of this unit will include functions not covered at present, including computer network management, software development, creation of a national database, web site management and publicity and public relations.
- A specialised division with responsibility for standards, coordination, research and methodology should be created. This should become the focal point for the entire work programme.

More detailed comments on these features are given in Section 5, where the proposed new organisational structure of the agency is described.

#### **2.4 Establishing a Work Planning Process**

The first essential will be to create a five-year Strategic Plan, which in turn will form the basis for the annual Work Programme and budget that the Statistician General will be required to prepare. The Strategic Plan should be reviewed and updated annually, to take account of success or failure to meet the targets specified in the Plan, changed priorities and different perception of needs. It is understood that UNDP has funds specifically allocated for assistance in strategic plan preparation, and might provide an expert to assist in preparation of the Plan for Statistics Gambia if that is wanted.

In the first instance, the Strategic Plan must take account of the priority needs of the Government of The Gambia. This will include:

- The key economic statistics required by the Department of Finance and Economic Affairs (DOSFEA), and especially up-to-date National Accounts estimates, for the efficient conduct of the planning process
- Information requirements for monitoring the success of the PRSP and progress towards the Millennium Development Goals MDGs)
- Statistics to enable the Government to demonstrate to key donors the progress that is being made towards the development goals that have been set.

At the same time, the Plan must take account of the needs of other stakeholders, and the users of statistics throughout the community. For this purpose, it is recommended that an annual Seminar on Statistical Priorities should be established. This is discussed in more detail in Section 2.5 below.

The annual work programme should be prepared within the framework of the Strategic Plan. The draft legislation specifies that this work programme and budget for the coming year must be submitted to the Council not later than 30 September. This then sets the time frame for the necessary steps to finalise priorities.

The Seminar on Statistical Priorities should be held in about August each year. This will give sufficient time for consideration of the recommendations of the Seminar, and to fit them into the work programme as the Statistician General decides. It should be the sole responsibility of the Statistician General to prepare the programme, and it is then the responsibility of the Council to review it, and to refer it back to the Statistician General if it is not satisfied with it. After the Council has endorsed both the work programme and the proposed budget, it will submit it to the SOSFEA for final approval and allocation of funds.

Suggestions for priority development in the subject-matter sections of Statistics Gambia are set out in Section 4.3 of this Report. Target dates for starting and completing activities and projects are put forward where possible. No doubt the final priorities will be somewhat different, following stakeholder consultation. The

decisions that are reached should be incorporated into the Strategic Plan, revised as appropriate.

## **2.5 Stakeholder Consultation**

The image of the CSD has suffered enormously in recent years. Its output is deplored by Government planners and international donors alike, it gets poor support from data suppliers, and it is virtually unknown to the general public. This is not a criticism, as the reasons are well known, but it is a problem that must be urgently addressed. The move to semi-autonomy should provide the means to start addressing the problem, and to win back the support of stakeholders.

Regular user-producer communications are a priority, and this could start with the annual Conference of Statisticians proposed in Section 19 of the draft legislation. However it is suggested that some aspects of the draft legislation should be changed. The Conference is given power that must belong solely to the SOSFEA, who has the ultimate right to decide on the work programme and budget.

It would seem preferable to change the title of this meeting to describe its actual role more accurately. It should be a meeting of key stakeholders, who may review the successes and failures of the agency over the past year, and may make recommendations on priorities for the coming year, but should not be able to dictate what goes into the work programme. Perhaps Seminar on Statistics Priorities or some similar title would more satisfactorily describe the role envisaged for it.

As noted in Section 2.4 above, this Seminar should be held in about August each year, as a lead-in to setting the work programme of the agency for the coming year. The first such meeting should be held in August this year, even though Statistics Gambia will not then have come into existence. This would at least set the dialogue in motion.

Meanwhile, some action could be undertaken at virtually no cost, to start the process of better recognition. The CSD is actually a better agency than it is perceived to be, and it is compiling some quite sound statistics, but by not circulating these statistics it is failing to influence the negative perceptions. For instance, the majority of stakeholders have no idea that a CPI with base year 1994/95 and two CPIs (for the poor and the non-poor) with base year 2000 even exist. They could be distributed to key users on a monthly basis, preferably accompanied by graphs to demonstrate the similarity of trends in all indexes. Some other ideas are put forward in Section 4.1, where it is suggested that the CSD should be more adventurous in releasing statistics.

Regular communication with data suppliers is also essential, especially in view of the Economic Census that is to be conducted shortly. The Chamber of Industry and Commerce could be the starting point for the process. It is recommended that the Chamber should be responsible for nominating one of the members of the Statistics Council, and if this body can be enthused about the activities of the agency that could make a significant difference to response rates in the Economic Census.

When Statistics Gambia is established, the publicity process can be enhanced by the speedy appointment of a public relations specialist. Media briefings and television

coverage for the release of important statistics now feature regularly in some African countries, and The Gambia should follow this example.

One possible focal point for publicity is Africa Statistics Day, held in November each year. Several countries are now using this day as a highlight of their promotional activity. In one country, the President himself gave the opening address, and emphasised the vital importance of statistics in the planning process, with television coverage of the address. It is a good way to get public recognition.

## **2.6 Strengthening Coordination with other data producers**

The statistical system that is in place in The Gambia leaves much of the responsibility for collecting, compiling, analysing and disseminating statistics to the line departments. Statistics on agriculture, health and education are examples where the responsibility lies with the relevant department.

Nevertheless Statistics Gambia must take the lead in coordinating with data producers. It plays the central role in the entire statistical system, and in the course of its activities it gathers a wide range of data, especially from Household Surveys, the Population Census and other major data collections, that may or may not correspond well with the statistics prepared by other data producers. It is necessary to set up small working groups, to assess the situation, and to come up with a cohesive set of reliable and believable statistics. Statistics Gambia also has the responsibility to help other data producers, with advice on international statistical standards that should be applied, and methodology that should be adopted. These aspects are discussed further in Section 4.3.

## **3. STATISTICAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT**

In order to develop the statistical programme efficiently and effectively, there are several statistical infrastructure supports that need to be put in place.

### **3.1 Business Register**

First and foremost is a Business Register. As noted in Section 4.3 in relation to the forthcoming Economic Census, there seems to be no alternative to complete field listing of all business establishments in urban areas, and indeed in the remainder of the country, if the decision is taken to cover rural areas as well.

The Register must be created so as to provide a framework not only for the Economic Census, but also for selecting the sample for ongoing Business Surveys that will be put in place after the Census has been conducted.

The Register must contain all relevant details of the structure of enterprises and their associated head office and individual establishments. As a minimum it must contain the name and address or other information to ensure that it can be identified later, a measure of size (probably number employed) and the ISIC Rev 3 industry code. This

will ensure that a sample selection stratified by industry group and by size can be selected.

It is highly desirable to use Global Positioning System (GPS) methodology to record coordinates of latitude and longitude of every business in the Register. Firstly, this will greatly facilitate locating selected businesses in the field when data collection for the Economic Census gets under way. Secondly, the follow-on Business Surveys will probably use area sampling techniques, and the GPS coordinates will then be of great value, as they should then enable new and closed businesses, and change of name or activity, to be pinpointed.

The GPS equipment is supposed to be able to determine coordinates to within about five metres, although in Uganda, where GPS was used in a major undertaking to create a Register by fieldwork, it was found that this level of accuracy could not be achieved in practice, but it was generally accurate to within 10 metres, which should enable the majority of businesses to be located for the subsequent surveys.

The Cartographer has 5 or 6 pieces of equipment in hand, but this will probably be insufficient, and more should be obtained by the Project. He would be able to produce digitised maps that would help stratification for future surveys.

The more normal way to compile a Business Register, of course, is from available administrative records, and no doubt some sort of Register could be constructed from existing records of various authorities. However experience in other African countries has shown that such lists generally have two major deficiencies. Firstly, the records are far from complete, and lacking the indications of size and principal economic activity that are required in order to constitute a sound sampling frame. Secondly, they tend to contain on the list a multitude of businesses that do not now exist, and have not existed for many years, thus leading to numerous selections in the sample that cannot be located in the field. This weakens the potential quality of the Census, and leads to frustrating waste of time.

Despite the doubts expressed above, available records should be examined and a few sample areas tested against field observation to assess quality. Even if records prove inadequate initially, they should be re-examined from time to time to assess improvements. This applies particularly to the planned Revenue Authority (if access is permitted under its legislation), which may well set up comprehensive records. In any case the Revenue Authority should be encouraged to conform to international standards in its coding, e.g. ISIC Rev 3 should be used to code industry.

If a satisfactory Register cannot be compiled from records at the present time, effort needs to be directed towards updating the Register created by fieldwork by whatever means are possible. Field updating is virtually out of the question because of the time and expense involved, although if there is large-scale business development in a particular zone or region, field updating there might be cost-justified. It can be anticipated that at least the larger new establishments will be recorded in records, especially when the Revenue Authority is well established. And if area sampling is used for the Business Surveys, the selected areas will be automatically updated in the field. But beyond that, little can be achieved. This highlights the weakness of



creating a Register by fieldwork, and at the same time highlights the importance of GPS coordinates to assist in area sampling.

### **3.2 National Master Sample**

Plans are in hand for the digitisation of Census enumeration area maps and administrative boundaries. Equipment is due to be delivered to the CSD in July 2004, and work can start immediately. It is expected to take 6 months to complete.

A household sampling frame can then be designed and a National Master Sample can then be put in place, from which the sample for future Household Surveys would be drawn. Technical assistance will be required for this purpose.

### **3.3 Statistical Database and Data Archive**

A priority is the creation of a comprehensive database of all statistics that are assessed as being suitable to be classed as “national statistics”. The database should contain detailed information, with summaries of the key social and economic indicators available from the web site, and more detailed data accessible on demand, with charges based on full cost recovery being levied where appropriate. It should cover statistics produced by other agencies as well as those produced by Statistics Gambia.

The present intention is to start creating the database after 2003 Population Census results are available. In principle work should be put in hand much earlier than that, although the Census results will constitute a core element of the database.

The data archive should contain the detailed computerised records for households and individuals, at least for the Population Censuses and every Household Survey, but with identifiers such as name and address removed, so that no information in the Archive can be traced back to any particular person or household. These records are of great potential value for in-depth analysis in the future, especially for poverty studies.

The legislation must contain provision for both the release of data to researchers on strict conditions, and for preservation of the confidentiality of the data. Specifically, it is proposed that the Statistician General should be authorised to release unit records with all identifiers removed, provided that (a) he is satisfied that this is for genuine research purposes; (b) he receives a written undertaking that the data will not be provided to any other party; (c) he receives a written undertaking that the detailed results of the research will be made available to the Agency for inclusion in the national data base; and (d) he is satisfied that the data so released cannot be linked to any individual or household.

At the same time, rules must be put in place as to who can access the detailed information in the Archive, and in what circumstances. Particular care must be taken with computer files that still contain identifiers (as will almost certainly be the case for business census and survey data) and for all hard copy records that are retained in the Archive. A fireproof and burglar-proof strong room is required to house these

records. Confidentiality must not only be preserved, but it must be seen to be preserved.

These two developments are considered together because there is no existing expertise in the CSD that could design the requisite systems. A consultant is required to develop these two programmes, and hopefully one specialist can be found to handle them both. Work on these projects should start as soon as a suitable consultant is identified.

### **3.4 proposed Outputs and Targets**

- Business Register for Greater Banjul prepared by July 2004
- Business Register for The Gambia prepared by September 2004
- Study on updating the Register from administrative records by December 2004
- Household sampling frame and national master sample in place by February 2005
- Enumeration area maps and administrative boundaries digitized and geographic information system (GIS) in place by December 2004
- Socio-economic database launched by July 2004
- Socio-economic database available on-line by December 2004
- Data archive established and survey data available in line with access policy by December 2004

## **4. UPGRADING/DEVELOPING STATISTICAL APPLICATIONS**

This topic is approached from two perspectives. First, trying to make the most of data that has already been (or is being) collected, in order to make improvements to the image of the CSD in the short-term. Second, establishing priorities for future statistical developments, and setting an action plan and targets for each of the subject-matter areas.

### **4.1 Making the best use of collected data**

The image of the Central Statistical Department is very poor, especially among key users of the data. The output of the CSD is scarcely used at all in the Government's economic planning process, the donors appear to have no confidence in the figures, data suppliers do not cooperate so response rates are extremely low, and the public seems to be unaware of the Department's existence. There are admittedly many constraints at present, and it is impossible to provide an efficient level of service with existing funding, and in the present work environment, with frequent power interruptions and no generator installed.

But the situation is not as bad as it appears to the users. There are some things that are being done well, and useful information could be quickly made available to key stakeholders, at virtually no cost, and with very little effort. The CSD needs to be more adventurous, and to make the best possible use of what it now has available, in

order to improve its image and to be seen to be serious about providing a better service. Here are three examples:

**Consumer Price Index:** The index now circulated has a base year of 1974. The actual price collection procedures are very sound, and that is far more important in measuring trends than is the weighting pattern. So all in all, it is quite a good index. But few, if any, users will believe in an index based on consumption patterns of 30 years ago. However, there is a 1994/95 index available, with weights derived from the 1992 Household Survey, and it is updated monthly. There are a few minor data gaps for earlier years, but these could be filled by interpolation. The IMF Adviser is just completing a more recent index again, based on the year 2000, with weights and an expanded regimen derived from the 1998 Household Survey. Separate indexes are available for the poor and non-poor. The price trends in the new indexes are remarkably similar to the 1974 index trends, so all series should be circulated to key stakeholders. The statistics should (if possible) be accompanied by illustrative graphs with the data, to show the comparability of the two indexes. This release would achieve two purposes. It would help to improve department's image, by being seen to be continually improving its output. And by demonstrating the similarity in trends, it would help to restore the image of the 1974 series. All indexes could be made available on the web.

**National Accounts:** Some very good quality effort is being put into compilation of the Accounts, despite the lack of sound basic data. In summary, the estimates for the main economic sectors suffer from a very common problem – the estimates of trends are far better than the estimates of levels. That is not such a bad thing, as trends are the principal focus of interest for key users of statistics. But these users will not believe in overall trends expressed in 1977 prices. The relativity between sectors has changed enormously in the past 27 years, and this changed relativity must be reflected in the estimates. Immediate action should therefore be taken to convert the constant price series to a recent base year. This can be calculated approximately, by conversion at the total sector level. This is not precise, but it would be very close to the results that would be obtained by the correct procedure of converting at the fine detailed level in the files. The rebased series would need to be carefully scanned to assess the believability of the estimates. But if the trends appear to be satisfactory, the information could be circulated to at least a limited group of stakeholders, together with a cautionary note that it is an interim measure only. The disadvantage of presenting approximate results would be far outweighed by the advantage of using present day relativities between economic sectors.

**External Trade statistics:** The statistics being produced from Customs data seem to be of reasonable quality. A quarterly summary publication, giving a time series of total imports and exports, plus simple totals by main commodity groups and partner country, should be produced, and distributed to a few principal users.

Plans should be put in place to start analysing and circulating results of the Population Census progressively, on a geographical basis. The schedule of data entry has been arranged so that the whole of Banjul is processed first, then Western Division, and so on. So as soon as Banjul data entry has been completed, the tabulation programme should be run, to produce some detailed tables for Banjul. These could be circulated, at least to key stakeholders, and made available on the web. Then the tabulation and

distribution process should be repeated for Western Division and so on. A note could be included with each distribution explaining that the statistics are not yet final, and setting out an expected schedule of future releases.

## **4.2 Priorities for Statistical Development**

It is the responsibility of The Gambia to determine its own priorities, and this should be done in close consultation with major stakeholders, as described in Section 2.5 above.

It is clear that highest priority should be accorded to economic statistics, and in particular the restoration of the National Accounts to a high standard. The Kuzmicich Report highlighted the serious decline in economic statistics that has taken place over the past decade or more. To some extent this has occurred across Africa, as donor emphasis on poverty alleviation has led to a concentration of funding on social statistics, especially for integrated household surveys, demographic and health surveys and so on.

Within the field of economic statistics, the first essential is to conduct an economic census, and plans for this are already in hand. A second priority area must be price indexes. The CPI needs to be reweighted, using the expenditure data gathered in the 2003 IHS, and then rebased. And a Producer Price Index (PPI) should be established. With these data sets available, the National Accounts can be put on a sound basis. In undertaking this work, it is imperative that these series, and any other economic series that may be prepared, should relate to a common base year.

A second priority is the coordination of statistics produced by Statistics Gambia and other data producers. This work should be organised and directed by the new Division of Standards and Coordination. In undertaking this project, the quality of the statistics available should be assessed, and the series that are judged to be of acceptable quality should be designated “national statistics”. Following on from this, the third priority will be to make the information available to users. A comprehensive database of national statistics should be built up, the web site should be developed, a small range of publications should be prepared, and an efficient system of coordinating requests for information (whether in person or by telephone, mail or internet) should be established.

More detailed comments on these developments are given in the next section.

## **4.3 A suggested Work Programme for Statistics Gambia.**

### ***National Accounts and Business Statistics***

The main tasks are:

- Create a Register of Businesses as a sampling frame for the Economic Census
- Conduct the Business Census, covering almost all economic sectors

- Incorporate new benchmark data for as many economic sectors and sub-sectors as possible, based on the results of the Economic Census
- Convert the constant price series to the reference period of the Economic Census
- Progressively revise the series for back years, based on the new benchmarks
- Design and implement a quarterly survey of business, as a sub-sample of the Census, to monitor economic activity
- Prepare estimates of Expenditure on the GDP in constant and current prices
- Compile quarterly National Accounts
- Convert from the 1968 to the 1993 SNA

The Economic Census can initially be planned and organised by the National Accounts section, but when the Business Statistics section is created it should take over the running of the Census, and then the ongoing survey work. There are concerns about the adequacy of the available funding for the Census. Also the time allowed for the field programme appears to be too short. Further comments are given in Information Paper No. 3.

As described in Section 3.1, a comprehensive Business Register should be created by field listing. This should at least cover all urban areas. As a minimum, the Register should contain name, address, employment size, ISIC code and coordinates of latitude and longitude, using GPS equipment. It also must also contain details of the structure of business enterprises, head office and their constituent establishments

Plans for updating the Business Register should be put in hand. Available records of various authorities should be examined to see if they could provide an acceptable basis for updating.

A regular series of quarterly Business Surveys should be put in place immediately after the Census, to ensure continuity of measurement. The Surveys will probably use area sampling techniques, so the geocoding of the Register should permit premises to be identified precisely in the field, so that changes of activity, new and closed businesses can be determined.

The expenditure side estimates of the National Accounts cannot be completed until the 2003 Household Survey results are available, but a start should be made in setting up estimation procedures for other expenditure items, especially Capital Formation. When the expenditure estimates are prepared, it will be essential to liaise with the Central Bank, to ensure that the data for exports and imports of goods and services in the Balance of Payments (which the Bank should continue to prepare) and the National Accounts are in harmony. In other countries in Africa, permanent working groups (usually with representation from the statistics agency, the central bank and Customs) have been established, and meet frequently to ensure that different sets of macro-economic statistics are fully harmonised. Statistics Gambia should follow the same procedure.

Conversion to the 1993 SNA is not seen as a priority task. It is better to get the estimates on a sound basis first, and undertake the transition later. The same comment applies to quarterly Accounts, although there will be a growing demand for

quarterly Accounts data, to facilitate the monitoring of the economy by the principal Government planners.

*Proposed outputs with targets*

- Interim constant price series by June 2004
- Economic census results disseminated by June 2005
- Business Survey sample drawn, and field collection started by September 2005
- Preparatory work for Expenditure estimates commenced by September 2004
- New national accounts series prepared and disseminated by September 2005
- Past national accounts series revised in line with new procedures by June 2006
- Quarterly national accounts estimates prepared by December 2006

***Price statistics***

The principal tasks are to prepare the new CPI, based on new weights from the 2003 Household Survey; and to set up regular price collection on an expanded regimen of items; and to consider, and perhaps implement, price collection and index preparation in one or more regional centres.

The new index cannot be constructed within the next few months, as first results from the Household Survey will not be available until late this year. However as soon as preliminary results for Banjul are available, they should be scrutinised to identify new items for the regimen, so that price collection can be initiated.

If coverage is to be extended to more distant regional centres it would be preferable to set up regional offices with at least a skeleton staff headed by a Statistician. Creation of one regional office, on an experimental basis, should be considered. The problems of communication could then be assessed, to determine whether further regional offices are cost justified.

A Producer Price Index would be an important addition to the range of outputs of Statistics Gambia, and would be of great value in improving the conversion between current and constant price series in the National Accounts. However work on updating and reweighting the CPI should be completed before any attempt is made to establish a PPI.

*Proposed outputs with targets*

- 1994/95 and 2000 indexes disseminated by June 2004
- New CPI in place, and rebased by February 2005
- One regional office established and staffed by April 2005
- Prices collected and CPI calculated, for one regional office, by June 2005
- Producer price index in place by June 2006

### ***External Trade statistics***

External trade statistics (or at least statistics of imports) seem to be one of the best of all the regular series at the CSD, with data entry in the ASYCUDA system at the major ports being undertaken by Customs, and then the analysis and tabulation programme being performed at the CSD, using the EUROSTAT programme. In addition the CSD gathers some information, especially on exports, that Customs fails to record. Information on re-exports seems to be particularly weak. Perhaps the proposed Regional Office, if established mainly for CPI purposes, could assist in gathering better export data for the region. Possibly, also, Senegal may keep its imports records more comprehensively than Customs in The Gambia records its exports. If so, data from that source may enable improved estimates be made.

The IMF Adviser is working with the staff of this section to prepare an index of Imports unit values. This will be very valuable for National Accounts purposes as a deflator when expenditure side estimates are prepared, and every effort should be made to bring this project to fruition.

#### ***Proposed outputs with targets***

- Quarterly summaries of trade data prepared and disseminated by July 2004
- Study of alternative sources of exports data initiated by August 2004
- Imports unit value index completed by December 2004

### ***Tourism and Transport***

The data being compiled on tourism should be continued, as this is a major industry. Periodic surveys of departing tourists at the airport would be useful for National Accounts estimation, although this may be difficult, as virtually all tourists travel on packages, and only part of the revenue accrues to The Gambia. The collection of monthly data on room occupancy in the main tourist hotels should be resumed when resources permit.

It has been suggested that the tourist operators should pay the cost of compilation of these statistics, as it is of benefit to them. There is some merit in this argument, but this information is also useful as an indicator of trends in the Hotels and Restaurants sector in the Accounts, so it should not be seen as of value only to the industry.

Collection of shipping and cargo statistics, which are now compiled by the port authority, could be continued, but the detailed collection of air cargo data should be discontinued, as external trade data are already available from Customs, and it seems a duplication of effort to continue with this collection. There is no Value Added for The Gambia, except for cargo handling operations, so it is of little use for National Accounts purposes.

On the other hand, data on road transport (especially passenger transport) would be very valuable. Regular data on the number of buses and taxis operating, and periodic

collection of information on receipts and costs from a small sample of operators, would enable a reasonable series of Accounts estimates for this sub-sector to be made.

*Proposed outputs with targets*

- Resume collection of hotels statistics by December 2004
- Start collection on passenger road transport operators by June 2005

***Employment and Earnings***

This topic can be examined from two aspects: (a) data on employment, and wages, salaries and other benefits, collected either through a special purpose survey of businesses, or as a component of a wide-ranging business survey, and (b) data on labour, collected through a Labour Force Survey.

Benchmark data on employment and earnings will be obtained in the forthcoming Economic Census, and subsequently data will be obtained from the quarterly Business Surveys that will be established after that Census. An index of wages and earnings should be considered as a priority development once the Economic Census results are available. It is not practicable to conduct a special-purpose survey in advance of that census.

It is recommended that a Labour Force Survey be incorporated as an important module in one of the next two Household Surveys. There will be competing interests for inclusion as a special module, and priorities will have to be established, but a target should be set for inclusion in the 2006 Survey. Preparatory work should be commenced in 2005.

*Proposed outputs with targets*

- Establish an index of wages and earnings by June 2005
- Commence planning for a Labour Force Survey in 2005

***Agriculture Statistics***

The Department of Agriculture has the responsibility for compilation of all statistics on agriculture. However such statistics will also come direct to Statistics Gambia from the major studies such as the Population Census, the IHS and (probably) the planned Economic Census. It is necessary to reconcile these results with the statistics provided by the Agriculture Department, to ensure that they are in harmony. There will also be important ongoing tasks such as provision of assistance to the Department on standards, methodology etc, and in evaluation of the quality of the statistics produced, to decide what can be classed as “national statistics” and hence included in the national data base.

Much of this work will fall within the ambit of the Division of Standards and Coordination. However it is preferable for this Division to handle this liaison through



a subject-matter section as this builds up knowledge within the Agency. Direct linkages with the Agriculture Department leaves the subject-matter areas, and especially the National Accounts section, isolated from developments.

One statistician needs to be appointed specifically for handling statistics on agriculture. The post would best be located in the Business Statistics section.

*Proposed outputs with targets*

- National statistics for Agriculture in the database by June 2005

***Population and Demography***

The processing, analysis and dissemination of results of the 2003 Population Census will be the predominant responsibilities of this section in the foreseeable future. As noted above, it is desirable to disseminate detailed tabulations progressively, for Banjul, Western Division and so on, as data entry and cleaning for these areas is finalised. It will be many months before final Census results will be available, and users will want to see results. Target dates for the various phases may be:

*Proposed outputs with targets*

- Processing for Banjul completed and tabulations disseminated by July 2004
- Census data entry completed by October 2004
- Final Census results disseminated by February 2005
- Fertility, mortality, infant mortality and life expectancy rates calculated and disseminated by June 2005
- Population projections prepared and disseminated by June 2005

***Household Surveys***

A programme for future household surveys should be set up as soon as possible. A realistic time schedule should be established, with the objective of conducting a survey every two or three years. In view of delays in the processing of the 2003 Survey, and with the constraints that will be imposed by organising the transfer to the semi-autonomous agency, it may not be possible to mount a survey in 2005, and the target should be set for 2006. As soon as the programme is in place, draft budgets should be prepared, and avenues for donor funding explored.

Core questions should be identified, and priority modules to be added on to the core questionnaire should be determined. Desirably there should only be one or (possibly) two modules for each survey. This would keep the questionnaire to a manageable size. The 2003 Survey was too long, and the complexity of data entry and linkages between the three household questionnaires has retarded processing.

For the 2003 Integrated Household Survey, data entry is still scheduled for completion by June 2004, but this is not feasible and August is a more realistic target. Data cleaning will take some time, and is unlikely to be completed before October 2004. Preliminary tabulations, at least for Banjul, should be prepared as soon as possible, so that the Prices section can identify new items to be priced for the revised CPI, and price collection for these items can commence.

*Proposed outputs with targets*

- Preliminary results for Banjul to Prices section by July 2004
- Data entry completed by August 2004
- Data cleaning completed by October 2004
- Final results prepared and disseminated by December 2004
- Preliminary planning for 2006 survey commenced by February 2005

***Education, Health other Social statistics***

The comments made above in respect of Agriculture statistics apply equally to Education and Health statistics, which are prepared by the relevant departments.

There should be at least one statistician for these two areas from the outset, to ensure that the liaison with the departments is made through the Social Statistics division, and not direct.

The detailed analyses of the 2003 Survey, including poverty profiles and preparation of poverty maps, should be the responsibility of this section. This should be undertaken in liaison with the Standards and Coordination Division.

*Proposed outputs with targets*

- National statistics for Education in the database by June 2005
- National statistics for Health in the database by June 2005
- New income poverty profile prepared and published from 2003/2004 HBS
- Poverty maps prepared and disseminated

***Migration and vital statistics***

Suggestions have been made that full-scale registration of vital events should be put in place, and the Statistician General given responsibility for directing the operation. One of the four options considered in the FJP Report incorporated the functions of Registrar-General as part of the responsibilities of the Statistician General, but this was not supported. The data that would flow from a full registration system would be of great benefits to Statistics Gambia, and for the Population and Demography section in particular, but the actual function of registration (whether of vital events or of businesses) does not come within the ambit of statistics.

Regular collection of migration statistics is not considered a priority, and this section should not be manned in the foreseeable future. The Population and Demography section will be able to make detailed analyses of migration when the results of the Population Census become available.

### ***Gender statistics***

A special-purpose gender survey as being a priority area for Statistics Gambia is not seen as a priority. This section should be set up from the time the semi-autonomous agency is created, with one or two professional staff, and it should have three important and continuing functions:

- Conducting in-depth analysis of the results of all data on gender collected by Statistics Gambia and statistics produced by other Departments, with emphasis on the Population Census and the Household Survey
- Preparing and distributing reports and analytical findings from these studies
- Studying plans for forthcoming major statistical projects, and especially the Economic Census, and making recommendations for the inclusion of questions that would assist in future analysis.

### ***Environment statistics***

This is an important, but rather difficult field, and may not be accorded the priority that it warrants. Nevertheless a start could be made with some of the more simple series. For example meteorological data could be incorporated in the database. Perhaps this section could initially be combined with Gender statistics.

### ***Data dissemination***

It seems impossible to get the Data Dissemination unit properly functional until Statistics Gambia comes into being, and therefore the target dates for outputs are set relatively far into the future. As soon as it is possible to appoint staff, the post of Public Relations Officer should be created, so that Statistics Gambia can commence to promote itself as a vital new entity from the start. Priority should be given to setting up the proposed service for response to enquiries, so that there is an immediate perception of interaction with stakeholders and the public. General purpose statistical publications should be designed and compiled, desirably starting with a quarterly Key Economic Indicators, followed later by a comprehensive Statistical Abstract. It will also be necessary to have an Advance Release calendar prepared and disseminated, and updated at least annually.

#### **Proposed outputs with targets**

- Web site is already in operation
- Dissemination policy agreed and put into effect by December 2004

- Public relations officer in place and campaign operating by March 2005
- Assembly of national database commenced by March 2005
- Centralised enquiry and information service in place by May 2005
- Key Economic Indicators prepared and disseminated by June 2005

#### **4.4 Creation of Regional Offices**

Regional offices should be seen as a mixed blessing. They are valuable when regular and frequent data collections are made in the region, and this applies especially to the CPI. Also they are useful as a centre for field activities in a major undertaking such as a Household Survey. And if a major programme of decentralisation of Government authority and planning is put in place in The Gambia, as has been the case elsewhere in Africa, each local government area would need its own planning and statistics office, so a regional office would greatly assist as a focal point for training, and for providing advice on standards and methodology.

A disadvantage is that a feeling of isolation develops through lack of contact, and a regional office tends to lose the identity of the agency, and to be unaware of development activity in the central office. Also it is difficult to build a full workload, so that regional offices may be busy on activities such as price collection for several days each month, and with little or nothing to do for the rest of the month. Control can also be difficult, and there is a risk of misuse of the agency's assets and funds.

If such an office is established principally as a centre for price collection, there will be a requirement for periodic supervisory visits to ensure that correct procedures are being followed. The regional statistician should also visit Banjul periodically for sensitisation to the agency's planning process. When the cost of these visits, plus rental of premises and the cost of providing and maintaining equipment is taken into account, a regional office is a fairly expensive venture.

On balance, it is recommended that no more than a very limited number of regional offices should be established. If the CPI is to be extended to more distant areas, it is suggested that initially just one regional office be set up, possibly at Basse Santa Su, which is too remote for data collection by central office personnel. However at centres such as Mansa Konko or Kerewan it may be more economical and more efficient for price collection to be handled monthly by central office staff.

### **5. PROPOSED ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE AGENCY**

The organisational structure suggested by the FJP Report has been adopted for the present by the CSD, in the absence of any other recommendation. The Kuzmicich Report indicated that "the transformed Statistics Department needs to be organisationally restructured to allow it to operate more effectively in developing needed new statistics" but it was beyond the scope of that mission to design a new structure.

The FJP proposal had three Directors reporting to the Statistician General, viz, Economic Statistics, Social Statistics and what it called Corporate Services, which

covered a variety of support services to the subject matter directorates. This structure is considered unsuitable for the new agency, for three main reasons:

- (1) With the additional administrative and financial responsibilities that will certainly be encountered with autonomous status, it seems essential to have the head of these sections reporting straight to the Statistician General. This is the case in all other known autonomous statistical agencies. It would not be appropriate for the head of Corporate Services, who has many other responsibilities, to take direct control of all the administrative and budgetary matters as well.
- (2) The proposed new division of Standards and Coordination is intended to become a focal point for all subject matter areas, and would be too distant from them if it were to be in the Corporate Services directorate. And it could hardly be placed in either Economic Statistics or Social Statistics, as it is designed to service both of them. This is seen as such a key unit that it should be a separate directorate, with equal status to the other directorates.
- (3) If only the above recommendations were to be accepted, there would be five directors all reporting to the Statistician General. Such a structure would become unworkable, as this one person would have to bear full responsibility for coordinating all aspects of the work programme, as well as the remaining components of Corporate Services (which should be renamed Information Services) and Administration and Finance. Therefore a Deputy Statistician General should be inserted into the structure. It would be preferable for this person to take direct control of the coordination of the work programme, i.e. the two subject matter directorates and the new directorate proposed in (2) above. A possible alternative would be for Information Services to be brought under his/her control as well, leaving the Statistician General with more freedom for management of the Agency.

The scheme proposed also has three lines of control to the Statistician General, and the areas would be headed by

- (a) A Deputy Statistician General, who would have overall responsibility for the development and coordination of the work programme.
- (b) A Director of Information Services, responsible for the various general support services to the work programme.
- (c) A Director of Administration and Finance, who would also be the Secretary to the Statistics Council.

### **5.1 Development and Coordination of the Work Programme**

There would be three divisions, each headed by Directors, which report to the Deputy Statistician General, viz. Economic Statistics, Social Statistics and Standards & Coordination. The subject-matter areas would be divided into sections, following the normal grouping found in all statistics agencies. In the table on Target staff numbers in Section 6.1 below, a structure with 7 sections in the Economic Statistics division and 6 in the Social Statistics division have been proposed. However no doubt some

of these will be combined initially, and the exact number of sections created will depend on the final priorities that are set for the work programme.

As noted earlier, sections should be established for Agriculture statistics, and Education and Health statistics, even though the relevant Departments collect the statistics. Important statistics in these subject-matter areas will be collected by Statistics Gambia, for example in population censuses, economic censuses and household surveys, and a coordinated set of reconciled statistics must be compiled, disseminated and incorporated in the central database. Initially these posts could possibly be left vacant, and the liaison with the Departments handled by the proposed Standards and Coordination Division. However the recommended approach is for all coordination with other departments to be directed through the relevant subject-matter areas. Therefore it would be preferable to fill these posts at an early stage.

The Standards and Coordination Division should become a centre of knowledge for the agency, and should be staffed with statisticians of high quality. It should be seen as the “think tank” of Statistics Gambia. This specialised division was strongly recommended in the Kuzmicich Report. Five main functions are seen for this division.

- Coordination: This applies firstly to coordination with other producers of statistics, to ensure that a comprehensive national database can be created. The assessment of the quality of the statistics so produced, to determine suitability for inclusion in the central database should be the responsibility of this unit. As already mentioned, coordination should be via the relevant subject-matter areas, and not direct to the producers of the statistics.
- Standards: The division should be responsible for the promotion and use of international standards and classifications, both within and outside Statistics Gambia. It would study new and revised international classifications, frameworks and concepts, to assess their relevance.
- Methodology: Advice on survey methodology, including sampling techniques and the design of samples, and mathematical techniques such as seasonal adjustment should be provided, and again this would apply both within and outside the agency.
- Research: The division should be the focal point for statistical research, and should participate in the development of new projects and the improvement of existing data collections.
- GDDS metadata: The division should promote the more effective use of GDDS as a framework for the development of the statistical system. It should have the responsibility for bringing the current metadata up to date, and subsequently for the annual review and updating process.

The precise name for this division needs to be decided. It has been tentatively called Standards and Coordination Division in this report, but that does not give a complete picture of its full role, and this should be reviewed.

## **5.2 Information Services Division**

The functions covered by an Information Services division in a modern statistical office are varied and currently include:

- data processing
- software development and maintenance
- hardware and network maintenance
- maintaining a backup and archiving system
- maintenance of the computer interface to the outside world (website, internet)
- creation and maintenance of a comprehensive statistical database
- computer training

Furthermore, the activities with respect to cartography, including determining locations by GPS, have become very much computer-based and would be best housed within the IT Department. Likewise the dissemination of data, whether by computer media or otherwise, and the interaction with users of data, including publicity and the coordination of response to requests for information fit naturally into this Division.

It may be noticed that the pace of development in information technology continues to be fast and major adjustments to systems and processes are required from time to time.

The organisation of the Division could be along the lines given below. Computer training and the selection of office software for use are cross-cutting issues that need to be addressed at the overall level by or under direct supervision of the head of the Division.

Head of Department

- Training coordinator
- Software/system coordinator

Data processing section

- Software development and modification/adaptation
- Census and survey processing
- Maintenance of production software

Computer system maintenance section

- Computer maintenance
- Network maintenance
- Internet access maintenance
- Backup system maintenance and operation

Information and dissemination section

- Development and maintenance of the official statistics website
- Maintenance of computer archives containing electronic copies of all published reports and their supporting data sets
- Development of interactive database with time series
- Preparation and distribution of published materials
- Publicity and public relations
- Coordination of responses to specific information requests

Cartography section

- Maintaining enumeration maps and location information (GPS)
- Providing cartographic materials for use in publications

In terms of staff requirements for computer related services, three different types of specialists are required, namely:

- hardware engineers for computer and network maintenance;
- programmers and system analysts for production work; and
- programmers and developers for the website.

In addition, operators are required for the backup and archiving systems as well as for regular, ongoing data entry activities.

The head of this department will need to have a strong computer background, preferably in software development. A staff target in a six-year time frame would be:

- Training /software coordinator
- Three computer programmers/system analysts for data processing operations
- Three hardware maintenance specialists
- Two web developers
- Five data entry and computer operators and clerical staff
- Two professional Statisticians, especially to coordinate response to enquiries
- A public relations officer
- A cartographer and two assistants

This gives a total of twenty staff, of whom thirteen should be professionals. A considerable proportion of these will need to be recruited from the outset, as the computer related expertise, in particular, is almost totally lacking in the CSD at the present time.

Staff for large-scale infrequent operations, such as the population census and household surveys would be recruited as and when needed for the processing of such surveys.

### **5.3 Administration and Finance Division**

If the semi-autonomous agency is developed as envisaged in this Report, the funds at the disposition of the Statistician General would be progressively made available to him to be spent as he considers are in the best interests of the agency. This would give him the freedom to run Statistics Gambia with maximum efficiency. At the same time, it would impose a burden of responsibility to have a programme of accountability and transparency that is not envisaged in the operation of the CSD.

The negligible staff at present in place to handle administrative and financial matters would have to be built up accordingly, and would have to develop an administrative system that would pass all serious scrutiny. There are three streams in the system that is proposed to provide the required transparency:

- **Financial:** A new accounting and reporting scheme will have to be devised for the agency, in line with the increased responsibility for management of funds, including the management of any funds generated by the agency and retained for its own use. The scope of the system should be considered now. The system set up in the Tanzanian legislation is worthy of study. It insists on commercial style accruals accounting, with a register of its assets when its



NBS was created, and agreed capitalisation value and depreciation criteria. This may seem to be too sophisticated for The Gambia, but it would enable both Statistics Gambia and the SOSFEA to understand the true full cost of its operations and output.

- **Administrative:** A small section of perhaps two persons is required, to relieve senior management of having to cope with administrative detail. This section should handle all personnel matters, including the performance-reporting scheme for staff that needs to be set up. It should take care of all matters concerned with the upkeep and maintenance of the premises, vehicles and equipment, and should also be responsible for organising the training programme described in section 6.4 below. It should also arrange for deployment of drivers, as this seems to be arranged by the drivers themselves at present.
- **Internal audit:** With the added accounting responsibility envisaged, there will be a need for an internal auditor, although the National Audit Office would retain responsibility for the eventual audit of the books.

It is proposed that a Director of Administration and Finance to coordinate these roles, and the appointee would automatically become Secretary of the Council. This post may well be left vacant initially, with the three lines of control reporting directly to the Statistician General. If so, the head of the Administration section would probably be made Secretary to the Council.

#### **5.4 Flexibility in the Organisational Structure**

It is recommended that as much flexibility as possible be preserved in the organisational structure of Statistics Gambia. In particular there should be flexibility in the classification level for particular posts.

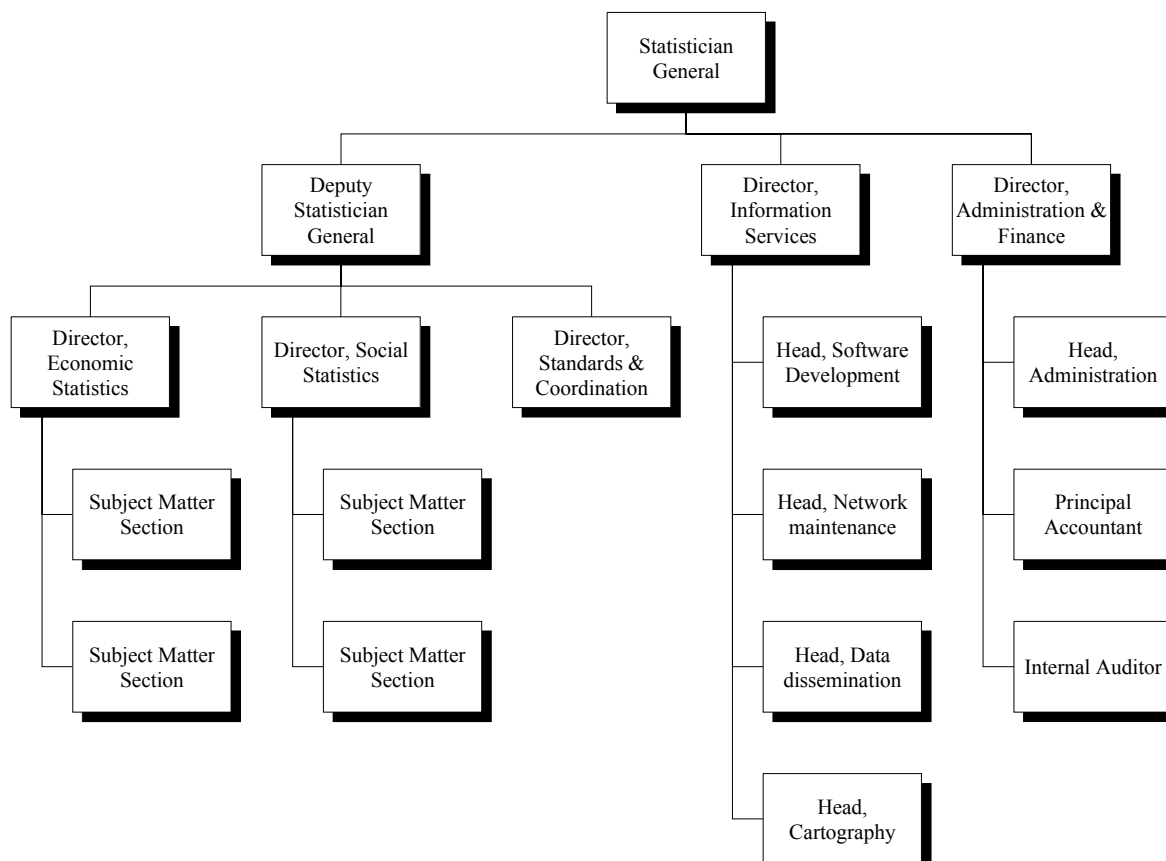
By way of example, the suggested target for staff numbers in Section 6.1 below simply shows a “head” for each Section. This could be either a Principal Statistician or a Senior Statistician, depending on the qualifications and experience of the appointee, and the complexity and scope of the work in that Section at the time. And the level could be changed; for example a Senior Statistician could be promoted to Principal Statistician due to high quality of work, but remain in the same post.

Similarly, the classification level of the occupants of other professional posts could be changed from time to time. For example a Section with three professional posts (below the head of the section) might initially be allocated two Statisticians and one Cadet Statistician, and later (either by promotion or by replacement) could have one Senior Statistician and two Statisticians.

And if, for instance, a suitable appointment to the post of Director of Information Services could only be made at a salary equal to that of the Deputy Statistician General, then the Council should have the authority to offer that level. This sort of flexibility may be very valuable in the early years of Statistics Gambia, when skilled and experienced personnel are hard to find.

### *Organisational charts of the proposed structure*

An organogram showing the proposed structure of Statistics Gambia is set out below. This is intended to demonstrate the proposed lines of control rather than classification levels. In practice, for example, the Deputy Statistician General would probably be one level higher than the Directors of Information Services and Administration & Finance, and all five posts described as Director would be at the same level.



It seems necessary to reach a decision on the final structure of the agency very soon, as plans for the layout of offices in the new building for Statistics Gambia need to be finalised as soon as possible, and clearly the size and location of offices within the building will depend on the organisational structure finally approved. Further comments on the design of the new building are given in Section 7.1 below.

Procedures for implementation, and for managing the transition to a fully operative autonomous agency, are discussed under the heading of Implementation in Section 9 of this Report.

## **6. INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES**

### **6.1 Staffing Requirements and Levels**

#### ***The approach to recruitment***

At present the staff numbers of the CSD have fallen to about sixty, and of these only 45 are permanent, with the remaining 15 being temporary workers. In addition to this there are drivers, cleaners, messengers and short-term workers engaged mainly on processing the Population Census and the 2003 Integrated Household Survey. This group is excluded from the discussion that follows.

In the recommendations for revitalising the statistical system, the approach taken in the FJP Report was to concentrate on recruitment of new personnel to a very few key areas, where statistics for policy making were most urgently needed. It recommended a “two-year strategy and budget for the implementation of the restructuring of the CSD to work on a high priority core of statistical activities”, and made suggestion for a total staff level of 134 persons. However this included an undefined number of temporary workers for one-off censuses and surveys to be conducted over the two-year strategy period, and it is not clear exactly how many permanent posts were proposed.

The Kuzmicich Report recommended that the CSD “should have its professional staff restored to 82, and then expanded by 10 percent annually for the following five years”. This would bring the total of professional staff to 130. He estimated that it would probably take some six years for the statistical system to complete its transformation to a fully viable and efficient organisation. (This reference to “professional” staff presumably includes skilled workers who can handle important clerical duties, but who do not have academic qualifications of higher diploma or degree. Such persons should perhaps be more correctly described as sub-professionals).

It is apparent that an efficient statistical system requires higher staffing levels than are now in place, and that the increase must be spread over a number of years. It also seems clear that the initial effort must be directed mainly towards a few major projects. However in practice it may be difficult or impossible to restore staff levels to the targets set out in the Kuzmicich Report.

#### ***Constraints to Recruitment***

The main constraint is that the existing staff members generally have low levels of academic qualifications. The most pressing need therefore is to recruit persons who will be strong candidates for senior posts, and who are graduates in economics (preferably with some training in statistics) or computer science, and who have already graduated, or are about to do so. This is the only way to make Statistics Gambia a professional outfit with high quality personnel.

And it is doubtful whether there exists a sufficient pool of academically qualified people that will be suitable for recruitment at professional level. The first graduates

from the School of Economics and Management at the University of The Gambia will only receive their degrees this year. There will be no more than twenty graduates in economics, and they will have had relatively little formal training in statistics, as the capacity for statistical training has only recently been developed. If the present Scheme of Service for the statistical cadre is retained (as is recommended) entrants to the level of Cadet Statistician/Programmer/Analyst must have at least a higher diploma in Statistics, Mathematics, Economics, Demography or Computer Studies. Entrance at higher levels requires a minimum of a University degree in one of those disciplines, with a Masters degree being required for direct entry at the Principal Statistician level. This may prove to be a major constraint when recruitment procedures commence.

A related issue should be raised here. Apparently at least one quarter of the present professional officers in the CSD, at the level of Cadet Statistician and above, lack the minimum qualification of a higher diploma in one of the areas specified in the Statistics cadre. It would be unthinkable for such persons to be denied a post in Statistics Gambia because of the lack of such academic attainment, as there is already a serious shortage of experienced staff. Therefore special dispensation needs to be provided at the time of recruitment to the autonomous Agency, so that none of these persons are disqualified on academic grounds. But this must mean that a number of the existing professional staff will require more training (perhaps involving courses overseas, to bring them up to the minimum cadre level).

So even if there were a sufficient pool of suitable candidates applying, a large intake of such persons would exert great pressure on Statistics Gambia to satisfy the specific needs for training in statistics and computer operations that are relevant to a national statistics agency.

The above considerations have implications for the statistical training programme, and are discussed under that heading.

By contrast, it should be quite easy to find suitable candidates for posts at the sub-professional level. However a balanced staff structure has to be achieved, and in present circumstances, significant recruitment of sub-professionals will not resolve the problem. Indeed it may well exacerbate the problem.

A further constraint to staffing levels will of course be the total Government budget that can be allocated. It is inevitable, if the recommendations in this Report are accepted, that there will be a sharp increase in the total recurrent budget. Salaries will constitute a high percentage of the total funds that can be provided, and budgetary constraints will automatically impose a limit on staffing.

### ***Staffing Targets***

In view of these considerations, it may be realistic to aim for no more than a permanent staff of 70 when initial appointments to Statistics Gambia are made. The proposed staff numbers in the table on page 33 of this Report are based on a target of 100 persons after six years, and this equates to an annual growth rate of six percent. Furthermore the proposal has 64 professional posts in the six-year target, reflecting a

marked change of emphasis from the existing situation. The draft budget for the autonomous agency that is presented in Section 8.1 below is based on these assumptions.

It is suggested that the organogram presented in Section 5.4 should form the basis for making initial appointments, and posts left vacant, as warranted by the statistical priorities that are established, and the recruitment levels that are eventually achieved. It may well be desirable to combine two or more subject-matter areas into a single Section at first, and then separate them out when priorities accorded to those areas indicate the need for that.

<b>PROPOSED STAFF NUMBERS, BASED ON A SIX YEAR TARGET</b>						
Sector	Head	Profess	Sub-profess	Secretarial	Other	TOTAL
<b><u>TOP MANAGEMENT</u></b>						
Statistician General	1			1		2
Deputy SG (subject matter)	1			1		2
Director, Information Services	1			1		2
Director, Admin and Finance	1			1		2
<b><u>SUBJECT MATTER STATISTICS</u></b>						
<b><u>Economic statistics</u></b>						
	1			1		2
National Accounts		4	2			6
Business Enterprises		4	2			6
Prices		3	5			8
External Trade		2	1			3
Tourism Transport & Communications		2	1			3
Employment and Labour		3	1			4
Agriculture		1				1
<b><u>Social statistics</u></b>						
	1			1		2
Population and Demography		4	1			5
Household Surveys		4	2			6
Education, Health, Other social		4	1			5
Gender		2				2
Environment		2				2
Vital statistics and Migration		1	2			3
<b><u>Research, standards, methodology</u></b>						
	1	4	1			6
<b><u>INFORMATION SERVICES</u></b>						
<b><u>Information technology</u></b>						
Network Management		3				3
Web and database development		2				2
Programming and Analysis		3				3
Data entry pool			5			5
<b><u>Data dissemination</u></b>						
Publications and Information Service		2	1			3
Public relations		1				1
<b><u>Cartography</u></b>						
		1	2			3
<b><u>ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE</u></b>						
Administration		1	2			3
Finance		2				2
Internal Audit		1				1
<b><u>REGIONAL OFFICE</u></b>						
		1	1			2
<b><u>SUPPORT SERVICES</u></b>						
Drivers				1	16	17
Messengers					4	4
Cleaners					3	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>124</b>

### ***Starting the recruitment Process***

In view of the uncertainty concerning the pool of potential staff resources that can be tapped, the recruitment process should be started almost immediately, by placing advertisements for vacant professional posts within the CSD. There is no point in advertising posts at present salary levels, as past experience has shown that no applicants will be attracted. An example is quoted in Section 6.3. However as soon as the Permanent Secretary of the DOSFEA has given provisional approval for the approach to semi-autonomy, advertisements for graduate staff could be placed, without quoting salary levels, but with the promise of attractive salaries and bright career prospects. The full situation could then be explained to applicants at interview.

This could have two important advantages. Firstly, it would give a good indication of the available pool of talent, and thus the prospects for full recruitment when the new agency is established. Secondly, some suitable applicants may well accept posts in the CSD in the short term, with the prospect of better remuneration to come. This would enable a training programme for new personnel to be put in place quickly, and would help to spread the burden of training.

### **6.2 Scheme of Service for Statistics Gambia**

A scheme of service for the Statistical Cadre, for the whole civil service, was put in place several years ago. This is a very nice document. As noted above, it does allow staff to be appointed as Cadet Statistician with only a higher diploma, and then to progress to more senior levels without a degree, whereas most countries would restrict appointment to these grades to graduates. However in the circumstances in The Gambia, it strikes a sensible balance between needs and reality. It is recommended that this Scheme be retained as the model for recruitment to Statistics Gambia.

### **6.3 Proposed staff remuneration**

The impossibility of recruiting and retaining personnel at existing levels of salaries and conditions has already been noted. By way of example, some time ago (on the initiative of the IMF) approval was given for a campaign to recruit graduates to the Department, and advertisements were placed for a number of posts at Statistician level and above. Only two applications were received, neither of whom were statisticians.

The staff salary structure that needs to be put in place should be set as a compromise between competing forces. On the one hand, salaries must be high enough to attract and retain qualified and skilful people. That means that they have to be competitive with salaries paid to professional staff of like status in similar organisations. On the other hand, government budgetary constraints must be taken into account.

The principle that has been followed successfully in semi-autonomous agencies elsewhere is to align salaries with those paid by other autonomous bodies, and in particular with the Revenue Authority and the Investment Authority. In The Gambia,

it appears that an autonomous Revenue Authority is about to be established, so the salaries to be paid there should provide the key to the appropriate levels for Statistics Gambia.

It is understood that the Revenue Authority salaries will be closely aligned to those being paid by the Gambia Public Procurement Authority. According these provide the basis for preparing the indicative budget in Section 8.2 of this Report.

An alternative might be to base remuneration on the Public Enterprise Pay Scale, which is used, with some variation in allowances, by a number of parastatals. However it is hard to believe that those salary scales would attract the high quality personnel that the agency desperately needs. The rates have remained unchanged for several years, and cannot be considered competitive. Available information indicates that specialist computer programmers, for example, who are urgently needed, command significantly higher salaries elsewhere.

With autonomous status, new arrangements must be put in place for social security. All permanent staff members of the new agency should automatically become participants in the Federated Pension Scheme administered by the Social Security and Housing Finance Corporation. The agency will contribute the standard rate of 19% of salary to this scheme. All appointees to the new agency who are in the civil service at the time of appointment should retain the full pension rights they have accumulated in the service. Therefore on retirement they will have two separate benefits due to them. This is how it has been organised in other agencies, such as the Investment Authority and the Civil Aviation Authority, that have achieved autonomous status.

Special consideration should be given to field allowances involving overnight stay away from home, as fieldwork is a core activity of a statistics agency. The standard public service allowance of 30 dalasis per day is far below the cost of even the most basic meals and accommodation, and acts as a strong disincentive for staff members to undertake any fieldwork at all. Special rates should be set for Statistics Gambia, on the principle that they should be high enough to cover the cost of meals and accommodation of acceptable standard, but not so high as to make all staff members eager to be included in field activities because of savings that they would be able to make.

Provided the Statistician General is afforded the flexibility to run the agency along the lines he considers most appropriate, he should always have at his disposition sufficient funds to cover the costs of ongoing activities. Therefore he should put in place procedures to pay field allowances in advance, so that staff members are not under pressure to meet field costs.

The costing for the semi-autonomous agency, with indicative levels of total funding requirement, has been prepared, and is found in Section 8.2. This costing relates to the recurrent budget for the regular work programme only, and does not cover major statistical censuses and surveys, which will have to be budgeted separately.



## **6.4 Training and Skills Development**

### ***Training programmes within The Gambia***

The FJP and Kuzmicich Reports both stressed the need to bring training to The Gambia, so that a group of people can be trained at the one time, rather than sending individuals overseas for expensive training. This is undoubtedly so, especially as it seems probable that new recruits will have relatively little formal training in statistics, and little or no experience in the practical aspects of gathering data in surveys and censuses, which is the core activity in an official statistics agency.

Courses can be envisaged in a whole range of topics, from basic manual and computer editing, to statistical concepts and standards, price index concepts and methods, through to sampling theory and practice. It is almost impossible to plan a training programme accurately at the present time, as it is not known how the recruitment programme will work out, and what the actual needs of newcomers to the agency will be.

Meanwhile a programme for existing staff needs to be put into effect, and planning should commence immediately. Computer training will be of critical importance. The level of competence of the CSD staff seems to vary from excellent for a few of the more senior people to very low for many others. Special attention should be given to teaching the efficient use of the main software packages such as Microsoft Word, Excel and perhaps Access. The local internet provider, Quantum, is able to provide training in these packages, and an early start could be made in presenting courses to existing staff of the CSD, and also statistics staff in the main departments. It is understood that the CBEMP has funds available for this purpose.

There would seem to be value in bringing in a specialist to train the more senior personnel in planning, organisation and management of major censuses and surveys. The CSD staff members have very limited experience in this, and the main tasks of listing, data collection, editing, coding, data entry etc are performed sequentially, instead of being overlapped. This leads to unnecessary delays in producing the final results, and is frustrating to users.

### ***Training for data users***

It appears that awareness of the value of statistics for decision-making is not widespread in Government, even in the principal policy making departments. A programme of training for such personnel should be put in place in the first instance to sensitise them to the role and importance of statistical data and information and secondly, to demonstrate how policy-makers can use data from a range of sources to improve both policy and day-to-day management. The training should target decision makers in key Ministries

### ***Overseas training programme***

Despite the heavy emphasis on bringing training to The Gambia, it seems that overseas training will be an essential component of the programme. As already noted,

there are a number of the present staff who are in professional posts, but who do not possess the basic academic requirements of the Statistical Cadre. At least the majority of these will be appointed to comparable posts in Statistics Gambia, and all of them should be given the opportunity to obtain the minimum specification in the cadre of a higher diploma. This will in all probability involve at least one year of overseas study. Possibly linkage with an institution such as the Statistics Institute in Calcutta would provide the most economical way of bringing people to an acceptable academic standard. Donor funding should be sought for this programme. Training needs for this category of stakeholders should be determined during the Training Needs Assessment described below.

### ***Training Needs Assessment***

There is a need to make a comprehensive assessment of training requirements of existing staff now, and there will almost certainly be an even greater need for such an assessment when recruitment to the new agency has been completed, and the skills and lack of skills of new appointees can be gauged. It is suggested that an internal study of needs for existing staff be made immediately, and that a professional be brought in for a more comprehensive Training Needs Assessment after appointments to Statistics Gambia have been made. Professor Ben Kiregyera, the present chairman of the Board of the Uganda, is an expert in this field, and could be considered for this assignment.

### ***Linkages with the School of Economics and Management***

The maximum possible support should be given to the School of Economics and Management in the University of The Gambia, which is making a valiant effort to build up its teaching capacity in statistics. It is now offering some training in applied statistics and econometrics, but is not yet in a position to produce graduates majoring in statistics. Future recruitment of professional statisticians is likely to be focussed on graduates from this School, so close liaison should be maintained in the agency's interests. Consideration could be given to appointing the Dean of this School to one of the two seats in the Statistics Council reserved for representatives of the private sector.

## **7. INVESTMENT IN PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND EQUIPMENT**

### **7.1 Office Accommodation**

Considerable progress has been made in providing suitable new premises for Statistics Gambia. A plot has been located, on which new premises are to be constructed. This replaces an earlier plan for a building to be occupied jointly with the Revenue Authority in a central location in Banjul. It is probably better that the two authorities will not be located together. There is a widespread fear in many African countries that data supplied to the statistics authority may be made available to the taxation agency. Such fears would be exacerbated if the statistics and taxation agencies were to be located side by side.

Plans for the new building have been drawn up, tenders have been called and evaluated, and it is understood that the winning bidder has been selected. In the expectation that construction will take some 18 months, there appear to be good prospects that the new building will be ready for occupation early in 2006. This should coincide quite well with the setting up of the semi-autonomous agency.

It is important that the total space initially provided in the building will meet the needs of the agency for many years to come. The plans have been drawn with structural reinforcement so that an additional floor can be built above the first floor when needed. However, while the World Bank has been very helpful in various African countries in funding the initial construction of premises for Statistics, it seems highly improbable that it (or any other donor) would provide a second round of funding. Government funding is obviously very constrained already. Therefore, while additional office space can be easily provided later in theory, it will probably be very difficult in practice.

The space available with the present design will be adequate for the first few years of the existence of Statistics Gambia, provided staff numbers do not exceed those recommended in this Report. However within three to five years its capacity may be exceeded. Comments are given in a separate Information Paper, where a suggestion is made on how to provide extra space on the ground floor, probably at quite low additional cost if it is incorporated in the original design of the building.

The allocation of rooms in the present plan is based on the FJP proposal for the organisational structure of the Department. The new structure that has been recommended in this Report is quite different, and it is proposed that several new divisions or sections be created. The layout should be modified to correspond to the needs of the organisational structure that has been described in Section 5 of this Report, before the actual construction work is commenced. The architect has advised that this can be done.

In the existing design, it is intended that all internal partitions will be fixed. Therefore it will be very difficult to change the layout once the partitions are in place. An official statistics agency is very different from the majority of Government agencies and Departments. Its work programmes are constantly changing, as priorities change, and as different censuses and surveys are conducted. Accordingly, as much flexibility as possible in the office layout is desirable. If some of the partitions could be made demountable, there would be more flexibility than is provided by the present design.

It is noted also that there have been recent indications that the Central Bank requires the Statistics Department to move out of its present location, so that renovation of the whole building can be undertaken. This would involve the move to temporary accommodation until the new building is ready for occupation. Every effort should be made to persuade the Bank to allow the Department to remain in situ for the time being, so that just the single move to the new accommodation will be involved. It would be very disruptive to the work programme to have to move twice, with risk of losing valuable records. It would also be inefficient, especially as the existing computers are networked. It is improbable that networking facilities would be

available in temporary premises, and it would seem wastefully expensive to install a LAN and internet access for such a short period.

## **7.2 Information Technology and Computing**

There is quite generous provision in the CBEMP work programme for computing equipment for the semi-autonomous statistics authority. It should be possible to install an efficient LAN system in the new building, with a powerful server and an ample number of terminals and peripherals. The funding should also permit the present range of software to be extended and updated.

However, care should be exercised in the selection of this software. For a relatively large network installation, as is being envisaged, annual rental charges for sophisticated packages such as SPSS (or SAS as the Kuzmicich Report recommended) are now very high, and even for fundamental software such as Windows and Microsoft Office, high annual fees may apply. It would be quite devastating if a sophisticated network system were to be put in place, and then there were insufficient funds to cover the ongoing software licence costs.

It may be asked whether either SPSS or SAS is really necessary. Good database software such as *Paradox* and *Access*, *Excel* as a spreadsheet, *X12* as a seasonal adjustment package (possibly obtainable free of charge), and one or two specialist data entry programmes such as *CSPRO* would probably serve almost all the agency's needs, without the need for a costly statistical package. In view of the familiarity of the staff with SPSS it should probably be retained, although SAS is undoubtedly superior in the quality and range of operations provided. Expert advice on this topic should be obtained before final decisions on software are taken.

## **7.3 Vehicles and Office Furniture and Equipment**

In respect of vehicles, there are six Government vehicles (5 double cabin pick-ups and 1 sedan) and five vehicles with World Bank or UN plates (all double cabin pick-ups) in reasonable to good condition. In addition there is one Government Nissan Patrol, not roadworthy at present, which is probably repairable. The other Government vehicles have been assessed as non-repairable. The CBEMP is expected to provide two more vehicles for the Economic Census. Provided all these vehicles are vested in Statistics Gambia, there appear to be sufficient vehicles for all fieldwork requirements of the agency, at least until field activities for the next Household Survey are commenced.

Vehicle allocation for senior personnel should be considered. At present the Director has a sedan and the Deputy Director a pick-up that may possibly be more appropriate for general office use. So if the Deputy Secretary General and the four Directors in the proposed new organisational structure are each allocated a vehicle, there would be a requirement for either four or five additional vehicles, probably sedans. If only the Statistician General and Deputy are allocated vehicles, possibly one extra sedan would be needed.

When the agency is transferred to the new building, public transport may be a problem, as taxis do not currently service the route. In that case, the purchase of one or two vehicles to ferry staff between the office and central residential places may be considered.

A motorcycle should be provided for any regional offices that are established.

No attempt has been made to cost these items, as the number required depends on Government policy.

The office furniture and equipment in the CSD at present is in generally very poor condition, and quite inappropriate for installation in the new building. It is understood that CBEMP has funds allocated for this purpose. A study should be made to determine requirements when the building is occupied, to ascertain whether these funds are adequate.

#### **7.4 Transfer of Assets and Liabilities to Statistics Gambia**

The draft legislation provides that “all assets and liabilities which at the date of commencement of this Act were vested in the Central Statistics Department are hereby transferred and vested in the Agency”. It is not altogether clear whether the vehicles provided by the CBEMP to the CSD are “vested” in the Department, or whether they belong to the Project, and could be reallocated elsewhere. Provided these vehicles are indeed considered to be vested in the CSD, this clause in the legislation should ensure that all such assets now held will be transferred.

However the transfer of liabilities may be of concern. There seem to be significant amounts of arrears in accounts that are supposed to be paid centrally, and these bills are issued in the name of the CSD. It would not seem reasonable to burden the new agency with these liabilities. The 1999 legislation for the establishment of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in Tanzania may be considered as a model for Statistics Gambia. Under the heading of Assets and Liabilities it is stated that “The NBS inherited the land, buildings and all movable and immovable property and materials formerly vested in the Government Department out of which it has been created. On the other hand responsibility for all liabilities accrued previously has been taken over by the Government before the launching of the agency to give the NBS a fair start”.

A policy should be implemented for the disposal of unwanted or worn-out vehicles and equipment. It impacts on the agency’s image if unsightly and useless equipment is left lying around because no procedures are in place to dispose of it.

## **8. INVESTMENT AND FINANCING PLAN**

### **8.1 Capital expenditures**

Provided the funding provisions currently recorded by the CBEMP for the new building and computer network installation are maintained, no short-term capital expenditure for these items is foreseen.

On the assumption that the CSD will be able to remain in the Central Bank building until the new premises are ready for occupation, no immediate capital outlays are foreseen, but if a move to temporary premises is required, additional costs, including the cost of renovating the premises, would have to be found.

In view of the Project support for capital items, very low Government provision needs to be made in the Development Budget over the next few years.

### **8.2 The Recurrent Budget**

In the discussion below, only the funding required for the regular work programme is considered. Major projects such as Population Census, Household Surveys and the Economic Census must be budgeted separately.

In the Government Recurrent Budget for 2004, the total allocation to the CSD was 2.84 million dalasis. An additional 0.46 million has been authorised to be drawn from the Development Fund for recurrent expenditures, and many services, including telephone and electricity bills, vehicle service and repairs are paid from a central fund. The actual amount paid centrally in respect of the CSD is not known, but it is estimated to be just over 1 million dalasis. The true total recurrent cost of the CSD therefore is estimated to be 4.5 million dalasis in 2004.

It is recommended that the agency should be responsible for paying its own bills once it becomes semi-autonomous, and all staff members should automatically be covered by the Federated Pension Scheme.

An indicative budget for Statistics Gambia has been prepared, and is set out below. Since, as discussed elsewhere, it will not be possible to create and staff the new agency by the end of 2004, in practice the budget for 2005 will presumably be prepared for the CSD rather than for Statistics Gambia. Accordingly, this draft budget represents an estimate of what the costs would have been in 2005 if the new agency were to be fully established. This is taken to be the beginning of the six-year development cycle and 2008 and 2011 as the mid-point and end of the cycle respectively. It is based on the following assumptions:

- Staff numbers (other than drivers, cleaners and messengers) will reach 70 in year 2005, rising progressively to 100 by the end of the cycle. Distribution of staff by salary level will be as shown in the table below, reflecting an increasing proportion of staff being professionals. This would reach the target staffing by classification level shown in Section 6.1 above.

- Salaries and wages will be in accordance with the basic salary paid by the Gambia Public Procurement Authority where comparable posts exist. However since there are few senior professional staff listed on their schedule, estimated levels have been used in the costing.
- The standard 19% for the agency's contribution to the Pension Fund run by the Office of Social Security has to be included.
- The total cost of allowances (Responsibility, Car, Residential and so on) will be 25% of salary and wage costs. In the Public Procurement Authority the proportion is higher than 25%, so this is only an indicative level.
- All other costs, including field operations and allowances, travel, repairs and maintenance and so on, will cost 50% of basic salaries and wages. This proportion has been used because it has been found to be realistic in other countries that have set up autonomous agencies. This is intended to cover fees and allowances paid to members of the Statistics Council, and all accounts that up to now have been paid centrally, as with autonomous status the agency should be required to meet its own costs from the budget allocation it receives.

On the basis of these assumptions, the recurrent budget requirement will be about 14.4 million dalasis in 2005, rising to 17.1 million in 2008 and 19.7 million in 2011. These amounts are all expressed in May 2004 prices, and take no account of inflation.

#### TARGET STAFF NUMBERS AND PROVISIONAL BUDGET, 2005, 2008 AND 2011

Classification	Target for 2005			Target for 2008			Target for 2011		
	Number	Salary (dalasis)	Cost (dalasis)	Number	Salary (dalasis)	Cost (dalasis)	Number	Salary (dalasis)	Cost (dalasis)
Statistician general	1	260,000	260,000	1	260,000	260,000	1	260,000	260,000
Deputy SG	1	210,000	210,000	1	210,000	210,000	1	210,000	210,000
Division Head	5	180,000	900,000	5	180,000	900,000	5	180,000	900,000
Section Head	16	134,640	2,154,240	18	134,640	2,423,520	20	134,640	2,692,800
Other professional	20	100,000	2,000,000	28	100,000	2,800,000	35	100,000	3,500,000
Statistical officers etc	15	60,000	900,000	18	60,000	1,080,000	22	60,000	1,320,000
Secretary	6	50,160	300,960	6	50,160	300,960	6	50,160	300,960
Coder, data entry operator	6	32,240	193,440	8	32,240	257,920	10	32,240	322,400
Driver	12	29,700	356,400	14	29,700	415,800	16	29,700	475,200
Cleaner, messenger	6	29,700	178,200	6	29,700	178,200	6	29,700	178,200
Total, excl drivers etc	70		6,918,640	85		8,232,400	100		9,506,160
TOTAL	88		7,453,240	105		8,826,400	122		10,159,560
Pension fund at 19%			1,416,116			1,677,016			1,930,316
Allowances at 25%			1,863,310			2,206,600			2,539,890
Non-staff costs at 50%			3,726,620			4,413,200			5,079,780
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>			<b>14,459,286</b>			<b>17,123,216</b>			<b>19,709,546</b>

NOTE: (1) All costs are expressed in 2004 prices.

Special consideration needs to be given to the recurrent budget for the CSD in 2005. It is anticipated that the autonomous agency will come into existence in the first half of that year, and at that time the new scale of salaries and allowances will apply to the appointees, and significant additional costs will be incurred. There will also be expenses for moving to the new premises, if that should occur before the end of 2005. It is not possible to calculate these costs at this stage, as the timing of implementation is not yet known, but it will be necessary to make provision in the budget.

It is understood that when the Investment Authority obtained autonomous status several years ago, a special provision was made in the Government recurrent budget, to cover the transitional costs, and this enabled a smooth transfer to be made. It is suggested that the same approach should be made for the transition to Statistics Gambia. A reserve fund, perhaps of the order of 5 million dalasis, in addition to the normal CSD budget, should be provided. The amount actually needed for this reserve fund should be calculated towards the end of 2004, when progress towards semi-autonomy is known. It is imperative that sufficient funds are made available to ensure that the transition process is not impeded. Donors could be approached to provide bridging funds, since it is a special case for year 2005 only. Otherwise the provision should be made in the Government budget.

### **8.3 Funding for major projects**

Funds for projects such as the Population Census, Household Surveys, the Economic Census and any other major one-off undertaking have to be found separately.

The funding will no doubt be divided between Government and donors. Until now donors have provided a high proportion of these costs, but there are clear indications that they expect Government to take on an increasing share of the burden.

It is very difficult for Government to have to inject very substantial amounts when these major projects, and especially the Population Census, come around. The conduct of the Population Census every ten years is mandatory under the provisions of the draft new legislation, so these funds must be found.

An approach that has been mooted in some other countries is for a reserve fund for the Census to be established. At the time of one Census, the cost to Government for the next Census could be estimated. Government could then pay one-tenth of that amount into the reserve fund each year (desirably indexed for inflation) so that the payment would be treated like a normal component of the recurrent budget. In that way funding for the Census would be guaranteed, and the sudden impact of having to provide a large injection of funds over one or two years would be avoided. This scheme seems worthy of consideration.



## **8.4 Financing the semi-autonomous agency**

### ***Government budget***

The Recurrent budget will probably have to be met entirely by Government from the outset. When it is properly established, the agency should be able to raise some funds by sale of its products and its expertise, and any funds that are generated should be retained and used to help meet its operational costs. This is discussed in more detail below.

From discussions with the major donors, it would seem unlikely that Direct Budget Support would be provided to the agency. However donors could be approached for transitional support for the recurrent budget, as discussed below.

### ***Donor Support and the financing gap***

Donor funding for Statistics Gambia is likely to come in any of three main forms:

- Full or partial support for a major undertaking such as a Household Survey, a Population Census or an economic census
- Capital equipment, including new premises, vehicles and computer equipment. This will often, but not necessarily, come as a component of the funding for a major statistical undertaking
- Technical Assistance and Capacity Building.

Strong support has already been provided by the World Bank, through the CBEMP, for the new office premises and a Local Area Network (LAN), and little additional funding of a capital nature is foreseen for some years. Attention should therefore be focussed on the other two areas.

There is some concern that the forthcoming Economic Census is under-funded, and if no additional funds can be provided from the CBEMP, supplementary funding from another donor should be urgently sought. Planning for the next Household Survey should begin soon, and discussions with donors should be initiated. It does not seem likely that a Survey of this nature can be organised for calendar year 2005, so a tentative schedule for either 2005/06 or calendar year 2006 should be drawn up.

There are a variety of technical assistance requirements described in this document, especially in regard to training. In addition, longer-term assistance is needed in respect of the development of the National Accounts and economic statistics generally, including some probable need for assistance in the design and organisational aspects of the Economic Census.

As a transitional arrangement, a scheme developed in one or two other countries in Africa, to ease the burden imposed on Government by the sudden increase in costs arising from autonomous status, could be considered. In this scheme, in return for a written guarantee from Government that it would meet the full recurrent budget of the

new agency from its own resources within a specified period, a donor would provide bridging funding to the budget, in a diminishing proportion, and reaching zero when the guaranteed date for full Government funding was reached. This approach could be discussed with potential donors. It has the dual advantage of (a) giving the Government some breathing space in providing the full recurrent funding of the agency, and (b) providing the donors with the guarantee of commitment to the agency that they are no doubt anxious to receive.

It is recommended that a coordinated approach to donors be put in place. This is best achieved by having one nominated donor as the principal contact point. In The Gambia it would appear that the UNDP is best positioned to fill this role.

### *The CBEMP*

#### *Charging for the agency's services*

If the CSD were to sell any of its publications and services, the proceeds would have to be paid into the central revenue of Government. In such circumstances there is no incentive whatever to raise funds, because any revenue that is generated simply disappears. However Statistics Gambia should have the right to retain any funds that it earns to help fund its operations. To the extent that this is possible it takes some of the pressure off the Government budget.

It is unlikely that the agency will ever generate a high proportion of its cost through such sales, but some revenue sources can be developed. In particular, access to the database of unit records of Household Surveys and Population censuses could be sold to major research institutions. And when it becomes fully proficient, it could design and/or implement surveys on behalf of Government or private instrumentalities and sell its services. There is a current proposal for the CPI to be extended to rural areas or more distant urban centres, and for Statistics Gambia to be reimbursed for the costs incurred.

A charging policy should be designed immediately. The principle should be that statistics should be provided free of charge to those who provide the funding – in effect the central planning organs of Government and donors. When charges are to be levied, the principle of full cost recovery should apply. This means that charges would be levied to cover not only the direct cost of supplying the product or service, but administration of the agency and other overheads as well. However if the statistics generated from the product or service are directly beneficial to the agency, a proportionate reduction could be applied.

The FJP Report contains more detailed suggestions for charging policy.

## **8.5 Cost comparisons for a statistics agency**

The question arises as to whether the increase in the recurrent budget funding, from an estimated 4.5 million dalasis (plus pension rights that are being earned) in 2004, to over 14 million dalasis in 2005, and over 19 million dalasis when the agency is fully established in 2011 is cost-justified.

The Kuzmicich Report addressed this issue and made some very appropriate comments. It acknowledged the impact that the decline in the statistical system has had on the quality of economic analysis and on decision-making. It then assessed that “the opportunity cost of the resultant inferior level of community decision-making must be, even if it cannot be precisely quantified, well in excess of the saving in government spending on official economic statistics”.

This is undoubtedly true. The benefit to be derived from having an efficient statistical system cannot be measured in terms of money. It lies essentially in the value of greatly superior data provided to Government, and in particular to the DOSFEA, for its vital economic planning responsibilities, and to all the users of statistics throughout the country. It has been amply demonstrated that the Central Statistics Department is unable to operate effectively in present circumstances, and since it is totally unable to recruit qualified personnel, it will not be able to work effectively in the future. This is not a situation that is unique to The Gambia. The statistics agencies in many other African countries have been in the same situation. And in those countries that now have established semi-autonomous agencies, it is being demonstrated that the service does work far more effectively. In Uganda, the Chairman of the Board of the Bureau of Statistics described this as a transformation from the worst statistical service in Africa to one of the best.

Some comparison of costs should be made. The draft budget for the agency in 2005 represents about 1.2% of the Government’s total recurrent expenditure on administration in 2004. This is a low percentage, in both an African and a world context.

Comparison can be made with Rwanda. The draft budget for its autonomous agency, which was accepted by Government last year, was close to \$1.6 million in 2003 prices, for an agency of similar size in terms of staff numbers to the proposed target for The Gambia at the end of the six-year planning period. The cost estimates for The Gambia are equivalent to \$0.48 million in 2005, rising to \$0.65 million after six years. Other comparisons should be made, especially with those countries that now have autonomous agencies already in operation.

## **9. IMPLEMENTATION**

The path to finally converting the programme described in this Report into practice, and to having Statistics Gambia established as a viable and well-functioning Agency is not altogether clear-cut. Many steps must be taken, and a logical sequence of events followed, in order to create a viable entity.

## **9.1 Consultation with stakeholders**

As soon as Government, in the person of the Permanent Secretary of the DOSFEA, gives its approval to the approach to semi-autonomy, and has agreed to the key issues raised above, the Plan (with whatever changes are required) should be presented to the staff of the CSD for consideration.

The next step is to present the plan to the workshop for stakeholders that was due to be held in May 2004, but which has been postponed. The decision to postpone was clearly necessary, because at this stage Government has not committed itself to the programme and the cost that has been outlined, and it would have been undesirable to present to the main stakeholders a plan that may or may not be ratified.

## **9.2 The timetable for conversion to Statistics Gambia**

The CSD should appoint a Steering Committee, of perhaps three senior staff members, to plot the path to semi-autonomy. An outline of the procedures follows:

The first steps should be clear from comments in Section 2 of this Report.

- The legislation must be accepted by the SOSFEA and the Department of State for Finance and Economic Affairs, reviewed and cleared by the Solicitor-General, presented to Cabinet as a Cabinet paper, and finally presented as a Bill, to be passed by the Assembly. It then becomes an Act of Parliament, and Statistics Gambia comes into existence on that day.
- The SOSFEA must select and appoint the Statistics Council, with representatives selected according to the Act.
- The Council must nominate a candidate for Statistician General, to be appointed by the President.

It is only after these formalities have been completed, that the task of recruiting to the posts in the newly created Statistics Gambia can begin. The length of time it will take to go through these preliminary steps cannot be estimated accurately. The process of reaching the stage where the draft legislation becomes an Act of Parliament will be the most time-consuming. Experience in other countries indicates that at least five to six months should be allowed, but there are indications that progress may be a little faster in The Gambia. It should then be relatively easy to appoint the Council, and to have the nomination of the Statistician General approved, and the appointment made. The suggested timetable is:

- Act of Parliament passed by October 2004
- Statistics Council selected and appointed by November 2004
- Statistician General nominated and appointed by November 2004

The next step is to select senior officers, down to the level of section head, as these appointments must be made by the Council, with the Statistician General one of panel

for all interviews. This will take some time, as the advertising campaign needs to be well organised, so as to reach all potential appointees. The target date for completion of senior level appointments may be set as March 2005. Statistics Gambia should then be able to make the remaining appointments without Council participation, although it would be desirable for Council to give its approval to the final selection.

It should be understood by staff members that there is no guarantee of being appointed to the new agency, as selection must be strictly on merit. In practice, however, experience in the CSD will count for a lot, and few of the existing staff will be rejected.

The target should be to complete the appointment process by May 2005, and June should be an absolute limit, as it will be necessary to have the agency in place and functioning well, to begin the planning cycle for the 2006 work programme, as described in Section 4.3 of this Report.

The method of release of funds during 2005 must be a policy decision of Government. The appointees to the new agency should be paid new salaries from the date of their appointment, and the recommended reserve in the 2005 budget is primarily for that purpose. From that date onwards, the standard payment of 19% of salary to the Federated Pension Scheme must begin.

The ownership of vehicles and equipment in the CSD will presumably pass to Statistics Gambia from the date the new Act is passed into law. From that date onwards, therefore, the cost of vehicle service should be borne by the agency, and should not continue to be paid from the central fund. Likewise Statistics Gambia should commence to pay its own electricity and telephone bills. In practice, however it will probably be more convenient to continue with the same central payment system, either until the end of 2005, or until the move to the new building takes place. There will be many such decisions to be made during the transition phase. It is for that reason that the three-person steering committee was recommended.

### **9.3 Sustainability**

The system described in this Report will work, and an efficient statistical agency will come into being, provided proper commitment is made. The Government must commit itself to supporting the system with the funds it needs, the agency must commit itself to creating a viable and sustainable statistics service, and continued dialogue with the main stakeholders must be developed, so that the efficiency of the system is apparent to all.

Progress must be monitored at all times. This will largely be achieved by the Work Planning Programme described in Section 2.4 of this Report. In addition, it is recommended that a mid-term review be undertaken in about 2008, to ensure that the programme remains on track to provide the efficient statistics system that is needed.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many officials in The Gambia provided valuable assistance to the mission, and grateful thanks are extended to the following:

### Central Statistics Department

- 1) Mr. Alieu Ndow, Director
- 2) Mr. Ali Ceesay, Deputy Director
- 3) Mrs. Juldeh Ceesay, Principal Statistician, Head of Gender and Development
- 4) Mr. Ousman Dibba, Principal Statistician, Head of Price Statistics
- 5) Mr. Malang Keita, Principal Statistician, Head of National Accounts
- 6) Mr. Sedia Bayo, Principal Statistician, Head of Demography
- 7) Mr. Alieu Sarr, Principal Statistician, Demography
- 8) Mr. Momodou Tunkara, Principal Statistician, Head of External Trade
- 9) Mrs. Lolly Kah, Principal Programmer/Analyst, Head Data Processing
- 10) Mr. Edrisa Ceesay, Senior Statistician, Head of Transport Statistics
- 11) Mr. Lamin Fatty, Senior Statistician, Household Surveys
- 12) Mr. Babucarr Daffeh, Senior Statistician, Head of Cartography
- 13) Mrs. Isatou Lowe Njie, Cadet Statistician, Tourism Section

### Other Agencies

- 1) Mr. Eric Jenkinson OBE, British High Commissioner
- 2) Mr. Israel Dessalegne, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP
- 3) Mr. Thierry Mattice, Charge d'Affaires, European Union
- 4) Mr. Lie, Dean of the School of Economics and Management, University of The Gambia
- 5) Mr. Yaya Kassama - Director, Free Zones, GIPFZA
- 6) Mr. Momodou Sarr, Executive Director, National Environment Authority
- 7) Mr. Abdoulie Jammeh, Deputy Managing Director, The Gambia Civil Aviation Authority
- 8) Mrs. Forster, Deputy Director, National Audit Office
- 9) Mrs. Fatou Leigh, Project Director, CBEMP
- 10) Mr. Alieu Bittage, Deputy Director, CBEMP
- 11) Mr. Momodou Cham, Procurement Specialist, CBEMP
- 12) Mr. Modou A.K. Secka, Director of EMPU, DoSFEA
- 13) Mr. Alhagi Taal, Economist, DoSFEA
- 14) Mrs. Sohna Jarra, Personnel Management Office (PMO)