

## **A Brief History of Contributory Events Leading Up to the System-Wide Approach to Statistical Capacity Building**

### **1990: Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s**

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The Addis Ababa Plan of Action (AAPA) was adopted by the ECA Conference of Ministers in May 1990. The AAPA was prepared by the UN's Economic Commission for Africa because, by the end of the 1980s, the level and quality of statistics in most African countries had deteriorated over the previous decade due to a variety of factors. The objectives of AAPA were comprehensive, including to improve awareness of the importance of statistics among users and to improve the timeliness, quality and relevance of statistics produced in African countries.

**The AAPA recognised that making the transition to evidence-based policy-making and improving statistical systems can best be achieved through designing and implementing a demand-driven, user-focused national statistical development plan, referred to then as Needs Assessments and Strategy Development (NASD).**

An evaluation in 2001 of statistical development in Africa in the context of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action noted that:

- The Addis Plan had not been effectively followed up or publicised, popularised and owned by stakeholders within countries and lacked government commitment
- Policy and decision-makers had not recognised the strategic importance of statistics and NSOs were largely marginalised in national policy formulation
- A number of countries had produced national statistical development plans but generally these were not sufficiently flexible to address the new challenges and did not tackle institutional/organisational issues, or attract increased resources for statistical capacity building
- Although donor programmes played a key role in keeping important statistical activities running in a number of countries, they focused mainly on immediate data needs rather than longer term statistical development and not all donor assistance had been well coordinated between donors

### **1996: IMF Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS)**

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The SDDS was launched to set internationally accepted standards for quality and timely economic and financial data. The objective was to encourage transparency and economic and financial policy discipline among countries accessing international capital markets. While subscription is voluntary, it comes with requirements to disseminate metadata and a broad range of economic and financial data, which meet international standards, on the national data dissemination page. Such data dissemination is based on advanced release calendars and meets specified periodicity and timeliness requirements.

### **1997: IMF General Data Dissemination System (GDDS)**

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The GDDS was launched to help low-income countries, which generally do not have access to international capital markets, adopt a holistic approach to developing their statistical systems. Participation is voluntary but participants are expected to adhere to the dissemination of metadata, including plans for improvement for specified economic, financial, and socio-demographic data categories to meet suggested coverage, periodicity, and timeliness.

## **November 1999: Launch of the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21)**

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PARIS21 was founded by the OECD, the World Bank, the European Commission, the IMF, and the United Nations. It was established in response to the UN Economic and Social Council resolution on the goals of the UN Conference on Development to act as a catalyst for promoting a culture of evidence-based policymaking and monitoring in all countries, and especially in developing countries. The consortium is a partnership of policymakers, analysts, and statisticians from all countries of the world. It focuses on promoting high-quality statistics, making these data meaningful, and designing sound policies. The role of PARIS21 is to foster more effective dialogue among those who produce development statistics and those who use them, through facilitating partnership between donors and partner countries; advocacy; resource mobilisation, information exchange and promoting strategic planning.

## **May 2001: IMF Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF)**

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The DQAF was developed by the IMF in July 2001 (and updated in July 2003) to extend the dissemination standard/system to incorporate a more comprehensive basis to assess the quality of data. It entails the prerequisites for quality and five dimensions comprising assurances of integrity; methodological soundness; accuracy and reliability; serviceability; and accessibility.

## **June 2002: First International Roundtable on Managing for Development Results, Washington**

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The Roundtable took stock of ongoing efforts in countries and agencies to manage for results, with a focus on the actions needed to build demand for and increase capacity to adopt results-based approaches in developing countries. It stressed the need for development agencies to offer coordinated support for capacity-building and to harmonize approaches to results-measurement, monitoring and reporting. Further, it discussed ways for development agencies to develop results-focused corporate cultures and incentives.

## **October 2003: PARIS21 Steering Committee adopts target for all countries to have a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) by 2006**

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This target became the central objective of the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics (see below) which stressed the importance of strategic approaches to statistical capacity building and set a target for all low income countries (where appropriate) to have NSDSs by 2006 and to have started to implement them by the following year with a view to producing better statistics for national and international use by the time of the next Millennium review in 2010.

## **February 2004: Second International Roundtable on Managing for Development Results, Marrakech**

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The second Roundtable launched the **Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics (MAPS)**: MAPS stressed the intent of PARIS21 partners to help developing countries to establish sustainable statistical capacity and national commitment to statistics. MAPS aims to accelerate progress in improving development data, based on actions to help both national and international statistical agencies.

The six actions of the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics address both national and international needs, as follows:

The first set of actions addresses national needs:

1. Mainstream strategic planning of statistics, incorporating target for NSDSs
2. Prepare for the 2010 population census round
3. Increase investment in statistics

The second set addresses international responsibilities:

4. Set up an International Household Survey Network
5. Improve MDG monitoring
6. Improve international accountability in statistics

### **2004: Launch of Health Metrics Network (HMN)**

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The HMN started work in 2004 but was launched formally by the World Health Assembly in May 2005. The partnership brings together users and producers of health data with the aim to improve health outcomes through better availability and use of strengthened health information systems.

### **March 2005: Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness**

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The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness recognises the need for better statistics for more effective development aid. Ministers of developed and developing countries responsible for promoting development and Heads of multilateral and bilateral development institutions stressed the need to put control in the hands of partner countries; to align donor support with partner countries' development strategies, institutions and procedures; to harmonise donor actions to be collectively more effective; while monitoring implementation and outcomes within a framework of mutual accountability between development partners.

### **February 2007: Third International Roundtable on Managing for Development Results, Hanoi**

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The third Roundtable gave strong support to the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics, but identified inadequate investment in statistics as a key constraint on managing for better development results. Participants recognised the centrality of well designed National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDSs), which address priority data needs and provide a plan for investing in statistical systems, as well as the need for a coordinated process to implement NSDSs.

Participants in both the Hanoi and subsequent meetings emphasized that to be successful any scaling up of support to statistics must be grounded in and directly linked to national poverty reduction strategies or other national development plans, must be based on well prepared and realistic NSDSs, and must involve harmonized and coordinated donor support based on well-established principles. In particular, donor support for statistical capacity building must be delivered in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

### **April 2007: First Meeting on Scaling-Up Investment in National Statistical Systems, Washington**

At the suggestion of a World Bank vice-president at the Hanoi Roundtable, a special meeting on “Scaling Up Efforts to Improve Statistical Capacity” was held in the margins of the IMF / World Bank Spring Meetings in April 2007 in Washington, DC. The World Bank, working together with the PARIS21 Secretariat and other development partners, presented a proposal for increasing financing and improving co-ordination, consistent with the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics and the discussions at the Hanoi Roundtable. Participants expressed strong support, noting that NSDSs need to be integrated into PRSPs and that a “sector-wide” approach to statistical capacity building is needed.

### **November 2007: Second Meeting on Scaling-Up Investment in National Statistical Systems, Paris**

A special meeting was held in Paris in mid-November 2007 — hosted by PARIS21 and co-chaired by the World Bank, the UK Department for International Development, and the OECD — to follow-up on the recommendations of the April 2007 meeting in Washington. Representatives from 40 bilateral, regional, and multilateral donors and developing countries discussed concrete steps forward, and donors considered countries in which they were prepared to take a lead or co-operate with other donors in scaling-up efforts.