

## Final Record of the Proceedings

Chair: Neil Fantom, World Bank

1. From 27–29 April 2011, PARIS21 held its Annual Meetings in Paris. A first session of the Board was held on the afternoon of 27 April. The following morning, PARIS21 held a seminar on the use of and access to data, followed by the second session of the Board in the afternoon. Finally, on the morning of 29 April, PARIS21 held a Meeting of Statistical Capacity Development Donors. All documents, presentations, and records from each session are available for download on the PARIS21 website (<http://www.paris21.org/PARIS21annualmeetings2011>).

### I. Welcome Statement

2. The representative from the World Bank expressed Mrs. Shaida Badiee's regret that she could not attend and announced that he had been asked to represent her as chair of this session. He announced that the Bank's presentation on the Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building will include a briefing on progress in the Statistics for Results Facility Catalytic Fund.

### II. PARIS21 Secretariat Funding Issues

3. The PARIS21 Secretariat Manager presented the overall funding situation of both the Secretariat's core and ADP/IHSN programmes. The 2011 budget of the core programme had to be reduced relative to the version that had been approved by the Board in 2010. The 2012, 2013, and 2014 budgets will be less ambitious. As for ADP/IHSN, the budgets for the coming years will increase to take into account the planned scaling up of Task 2. New grant agreements have recently been signed with Eurostat, Ireland, and the World Bank. Consequently, the expected gap for 2011 has narrowed. There is however still a need to make further efforts to reduce the expected gaps for 2012–14. PARIS21 is very happy to welcome Australia as a new donor. The grant agreement between AusAID and the OECD is currently under negotiation. The World Bank, on its side, is looking at continuing to provide funding in the coming years for both the core and ADP/IHSN programmes.

### *Discussion*

4. Australia expressed its satisfaction to join the group of PARIS21 and confirmed that the amount of their contribution has been approved. Eurostat announced their intention to continue to fund the work of the Secretariat in 2012–13.

5. The representative from Lebanon presented the objectives of the upcoming Fifth Forum on Statistical Capacity Building for Arab Countries (focusing on "Statistics, Media, and Policy Making") that will be held in Amman in July 2011. She called on international donor agencies to provide financial support in order to reduce the current budget gap.

### III. TFSCB Funding and Donor Issues

6. The Board considered three separate presentations on World Bank–managed funding mechanisms: (i) the 2011 progress report of the Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building (TFSCB), (ii) the report of the eighth meeting of the TFSCB Advisory Panel, and (iii) the 2011 annual report of the Statistics for Results Facility (SRF) Catalytic Fund.

7. The presentation on TFSCB progress outlined three key features of the Fund: (i) it is a great *catalyst* and central vehicle for funding NSDSs, (ii) it is *very adaptive* to emerging needs, and (iii) it is a *very tactical / surgical instrument* capable of disbursing funds quickly and easily. The TFSCB still remains in very high demand. In 2010, 34 projects (10 of which targeted NSDS development) were approved — the highest total since 2000. Several changes to the management of the Fund deserve mention: the project ceiling has been raised from US\$400k to US\$500k, the Fund’s closing date has been extended to the end of 2015, improvements to project monitoring have been implemented, and the processes to support participation of statisticians in international conferences has been streamlined. The TFSCB nevertheless currently has a weak financial situation. Three million US dollars remain to allocate to new projects; at current levels of demand, this is sufficient for one more allocation round. However, expected demand up to 2015 indicates a funding need on the order of US\$10 million. The presentation then focused on the TFSCB’s future directions, which include: re-orienting priority areas to include support to improve data accessibility and use; further improving monitoring and impact evaluation, including evaluation of past NSDS projects; continuing to focus on NSDS preparation/updates and acting as catalyst for large-scale initiatives such as SRF and STATCAP; and exploring options to reduce the amount of unused committed balances.

8. The Advisory Panel presented its findings from its 8<sup>th</sup> meeting held in March 2011. Although the TFSCB has seen a slight increase in the percentage of NSDS proposals received, it remains far below the 60% recommended by the TFSCB evaluation report and the Advisory Panel. Furthermore, fewer proposals are being received to fund the implementation of NSDSs. No proposals have been submitted on environmental statistics and only one targeting a regional strategy. In light of these findings and recent developments, the Panel recommended that DECDG and PARIS21 undertake advocacy to promote openness and accessibility of data and encourage the preparation of project proposals on “Open Accessibility of Data.” It also offered three other specific recommendations: (i) DECDG should encourage projects on agricultural statistics and carry out advocacy for that purpose; (ii) TFSCB should encourage NSDS applications that demonstrate flexibility to handle new and emerging needs; and (iii) DECDG and PARIS21 should collate and publish country case studies on the evaluation of NSDS implementation. The Panel closed with a main recommendation that the TFSCB continues, since it has been successful in providing a system-wide, long-term vision for statistical development.

9. The presentation on the SRF highlighted its role in targeting large, co-ordinated funding for broader, more ambitious projects across national statistical systems. The NSDS is a pre-condition for SRF support. The initial five country pilots have provided valuable experience in designing and launching large-scale statistical capacity development projects. The pilot experience suggests that the NSDS process is robust and flexible; however, transitioning from strategy design to strategy implementation is not straightforward. Furthermore, the timescale needed for project preparation and for the delivery of support is long, particularly in difficult circumstances. In addition to the five

pilots, two new applications are expected very shortly: one for Lao PDR and another for Senegal. Expected expenditures for the current pilot countries is approximately US\$70M, which leaves a further US\$50M for other countries with the current envelope of funds. To accelerate progress, SRF administrators propose to review the country selection criteria and implement some improvements to the administrative processes, including simplifying the application process, streamlining administrative processes, improving the results frameworks, and mainstreaming SRF projects within the World Bank and with other partners. An evaluation will be conducted in 2013.

### **Discussion**

10. Participants raised several issues in reaction to the TFSCB and SRF presentations. The Partnership should consider what must be done to ensure that as many TFSCB applications as possible are acceptable and not rejected. In particular, the submission of applications from NGOs should be encouraged and assisted to improve their chances of acceptance. TFSCB managers should be wary of NSDSs drafted by consultants, while recognising nevertheless that many are of high quality and implementable. The PARIS21 Secretariat proposed to share a document intended to outline modalities for co-ordinating the funding of developing country statisticians in international conferences over a two-to-four year period. Discussions on conferences to target and individuals to fund could be held in the annual PARIS21 donors meetings. Regarding the SRF, participants cautioned against replacing local staff with donor experts. However, it was recognised that these in-country statisticians can play multiple roles — providing on-the-ground technical assistance as a complement and reinforcement of local expertise. The key role of national (country–donor) partnerships was also underscored to ensure the success of SRF projects. Lastly, the representative from South Asia (*i.e.*, SRF pilot country Afghanistan) proposed that the five pilots be brought together to share experiences on project implementation.

### **IV. Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural Statistics**

11. The representative from the FAO presented the global strategy to improve agricultural statistics, highlighting the need to provide a vision for national and international statistical systems to produce the basic data and information required to answer key policy issues such as the volatility of markets and prices, to provide food security and reduce hunger, to increase income and well-being of the rural population, to reduce the impact of agricultural activity on the environment, and to facilitate climate change adaptation and ensure the sustainability of land and water resources. The strategy is also intended to answer emerging data needs, sustain capacity to produce basic agricultural statistics, and better mainstream the agricultural sector into the national statistical system. The strategy, prepared under the auspices of the UN Statistical Commission, is a long-term plan aiming at responding to the agricultural statistical needs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It should be understood as a partnership between international agencies and developed and developing countries and a basis for a renewed initiative of capacity development leading to a better mobilisation of resources. The proposed strategy rests on three main pillars: (i) a minimum set of core data produced on a regular basis; (ii) the integration of agricultural statistics into the national statistical system through the use of a master sample frame, integrated data collection, and survey framework and integrated data dissemination; and (iii) a sustainability dimension through improved governance and statistical capacity development. The implementation plan contains the following components: (i) a technical assistance programme, (ii) a training programme, (iii) a research agenda, (iv) a resource mobilisation strategy, and (v) specific

governance arrangements at global, regional, and already existing national levels. The strategy will be rolled out at the regional level (with regional organisations as drivers of the implementation plans), focusing on institutional and long-term statistical development with a strong ownership of beneficiary countries. In terms of regional implementation, significant progress has been made in Africa (in partnership with AfDB and UNECA), and partnerships have been formed in Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia, the Pacific, and Western Asia. Global and regional consultations will continue to consider the global and regional implementation plans (FAO conference, ISI meetings for example), and a strategy for mobilising resources has also been set in motion (ICAS meeting, donors conference planned in Rome in September 2011). Trust fund mechanisms have also been put in place with the World Bank and the AfDB (for Africa).

### ***Discussion***

12. Participants highlighted the importance of the agricultural sector and recognised the urgent need to provide support to developing countries in the field of agricultural statistics. The representative from Norway insisted on the importance of co-ordination within the national statistical system and the availability of production statistics to address food security data needs. The question of integration was also highlighted by the representatives from Belgium and South Asia. The representative from South Africa stressed the specific sensitive dimension of agriculture statistics in countries where rural populations rely heavily on agricultural production and where agricultural activity is the main leverage on poverty reduction. The Secretariat Manager indicated that the pilot project being conducted in collaboration with FAO in three countries will provide better guidance on how to better mainstream the agricultural sector into the NSDS approach. The FAO representative commented that co-ordination at national level is a key point and needs in particular to involve the existing community of practice (for example NSOs have knowledge on tools and techniques which should be made available to ministries of agriculture). He also indicated that FAO is working closely with the Gates Foundation on this strategy and gave the example of common work on the Integrated Household Surveys approaches. On questions linked to better integration, he highlighted the existence of tools allowing such integration: the NSDSs, master sample frames, systems allowing the linkage between statistical units (parcels and households). Finally, he invited donors to participate in the planned donors conference for the strategy in early September in Rome.

### **V. Closing Statement**

13. The chair highlighted the main issues that emerged from the session's discussions such as data accessibility, hunger, and food prices but emphasised that the key issue for the Partnership will be to continue to support the implementation of NSDSs. While there exist some indications that prospects for funding statistical development are improving, the Partnership must remain vigilant, particularly as the 2015 MDG deadline approaches. The High Level Forum to be held in Busan represents an excellent opportunity to renew our strategy beyond 2015.