



PARIS21 STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
15 October 2003
Paris, France

Record of the Proceedings

Session I

Chair: Richard Manning

Adoption of the Agenda

The meeting was opened by Richard Manning, chairman of the OECD/DAC and co-chairman of the PARIS21 Consortium. The agenda was approved as proposed.

Opening Statement

The PARIS21 Secretariat Manager delivered an opening statement to the participants, emphasising the need for a greater focus to judge the success of the PARIS21 programme. Specifically, PARIS21 should concentrate its efforts in the next three years on ensuring that countries have engaged in a process for implementing National Statistics Development Strategies (NSDS). A necessary first step for launching these strategies is securing a political commitment to the process. To do so, the strategies must take into account the needs of the policymakers; statistics must be viewed as a policy not a technical issue. Participation across all stakeholders is essential as well. An evaluation of the realistic, actual needs must be undertaken. It should be noted that countries are not starting from scratch; however, reporting on the MDGs and PRSPs will not be much better in 2005 than it was in 2000. The Manager then proposed that the Partnership focus its work programme on helping all countries to have an NSDS by 2006. He specified that countries are responsible for the implementation of the process and donors are partly responsible for the resources. PARIS21's role will be to report on the progress of the initiative.

All participants showed support for the Secretariat's NSDS proposal. The OECD representative commented that intermediate steps in the NSDS process between now and the MDG deadline in 2015 are necessary. This should be a long-term strategy with intermediate steps. The European Commission representative supported the OECD suggestion of intermediate steps and recommended the development of a "minimum package" for the creation of an NSDS. He expressed his concern about promoting this plan through regional workshops and suggested it may be better suited to national workshops. The Swiss representative emphasised the need for building *sustainable* statistical systems and not merely a product (such as the NSDS), as building capacities is PARIS21's ultimate goal. The Swedish representative cautioned that capacity building is a huge objective and emphasised that PARIS21 should focus on attaining political commitment and building the user-producer dialogue. The French representative insisted on the need for action plans—production action plans and investment action plans—to further the NSDS agenda. The Eurostat representative pointed out that there are already plans similar to the NSDS in place with other donors. PARIS21 must coordinate with these plans, as countries are often overburdened with different initiatives. The World Bank representative suggested that this strategy be placed in the larger picture of coordinating national and international statistical needs and commented that this approach is not intended to add to the countries' burdens with other plans. The UK representative cautioned that PARIS21 itself may be overburdened to launch this plan alone and echoed the need to coordinate with existing plans. Co-chairman Pali Lehohla emphasised that our reach has to be greater than our grasp. Our grasp should be the intermediate steps. Political support without an explicit outline of data use creates complications. There is a new set of users and needs to which statistical offices must respond. Several participants expressed the need to harmonise PARIS21's language and acronyms for the strategy with other initiatives, as some organisations refer to a "statistical master plan" and others to a "statistical development programme."

The chair summarised that PARIS21 must have a long-term approach while recognising the immediate international needs for data and that this process must be incremental with clear action plans. He noted the general consensus that the language should be standardised and commented that the international community has an interest in supporting this process and that the data must come from within the country.

Work Programme for 2004–2006

The Secretariat Manager presented the PARIS21 work programme for 2004 to 2006 (document# *P21-SC2-03-WP*).

Task Teams

The Manager reported that the **Census** task team will hold an “International Expert Group Seminar on Population Census Data Dissemination and Use” on 10–12 November 2003 in Pretoria, South Africa. The meeting will be co-organised with UNFPA, Statistics South Africa, the US Census Bureau, and DFID. While the November 2001 task team meeting had focused on inputs, the upcoming one will focus on outputs.

The **Rural and Agricultural Statistics** team has been very successful in promoting the use of this type of data. After the team’s “Technical Workshop on Rural and Agricultural Statistics for Policy Support: Best Practices and Emerging Methods” in Yaoundé, Cameroon from 23 to 25 October 2003, the team will probably be closed. The Manager announced that France is supporting an advocacy film promoting agricultural statistics.

The World Bank mentioned that the work of the **Improved Statistical Support for Monitoring Development Goals** team is now divided into two subprojects: country studies and international studies on gaps. The task team will meet at the UNDP/UNECE Interagency Technical Meeting on MDG indicators in Geneva, 10–13 November 2003. It is intended that the team’s work be wrapped up very quickly after the studies are complete in 2004, at which time a final report will be drafted.

The work of the **National Statistics Development Strategies** team, formerly known as “Strategic Statistical Development Plans,” will be absorbed into the PARIS21 Secretariat in December 2003. The proposed NSDS guidelines will be circulated to team members before the end of 2003 and finalised in early 2004. A draft version of the guidelines in French is already available. After approval by the team, the guidelines will be translated and placed on a CD-ROM for dissemination. Training of national statistical representatives will then be organised at regional events. Mr. Lehohla recommended that implementation guidelines also be drafted.

It is intended that the “**Measuring Democracy, Human Rights and Governance**” (METAGORA) project will begin operations early next year. Certain legal issues are being ironed out at the OECD and should be settled soon.

The UK representative presented a proposal for the “**Stimulate Better use of multisectoral data, especially for decentralised governance and local accountability**” (InterSect) team. The purpose of this team is to maximise the use of data at the local level through better methods of collection and the integration of various information sources at the subnational level. He affirmed that there is no need for new initiatives and new actions to achieve the goals of this team and ensured that there will be strong buy-in from the international organisations. There are already several existing initiatives (e.g., the health metrics network). He recommended that a full-time coordinator be assigned to work on this team. A programme and budget is provided at the end of the TOR.

The Secretariat Manager announced that the Secretariat will draft proposed TORs for a team on Costing statistics and that a new TOR for a team on “Improving Regional and Global Partnership in Training for Official Statisticians” is available for the Steering Committee’s review.

The OECD suggested exploring the creation of a new task team on the use of management information systems and new technologies and how they might assist the management of statistical systems. The UNDP representative suggested that task team work ought to be placed in the larger context of all of our work. The

World Bank invited the Steering Committee to enforce the need for a task team exit strategy and a follow-up work plan for the period after the team's lifecycle.

Advocacy and Knowledge Base

The Secretariat Manager proposed that PARIS21 be more systematic in delivering the Partnership's message, as advocacy is the core of PARIS21. He recommended that PARIS21 continue to develop materials and implement them at global and regional levels and proposed that a communications expert be hired in the Secretariat to drive this advocacy programme.

The convenor of the former task team on advocacy presented the revised *Why Statistics* materials (see www.paris21.org/htm/task/advocacy/HOMEPAGE.HTML). The convenor invited participants to provide good and bad examples of the use of statistics to complement these materials. The Anglophone Africa representative praised the materials but suggested that more personal interaction is needed. Specifically, he asked how PARIS21 can reach the political authorities and convince them to allocate resources to statistics.

The Secretariat Manager commented that PARIS21 is developing a universal message film and has already collected clips shot at several recent events for a PARIS21 film library. He called on all Steering Committee members to encourage high-level figures to participate in this universal message film.

The chair suggested that the Secretariat be proactive in developing a strategy for advocating to the major international meetings and communicating to high-level figures. The World Bank and Italian representatives echoed the need for advocacy, especially to donors. The chair suggested a joint World Bank–PARIS21 presentation to the OECD/DAC on advocating for investment in statistics. The OECD representative supported this recommendation.

Partnership and Information Exchange

The Secretariat Manager proposed that PARIS21 continue and improve on its previous activities in partnership and information exchange. He asked the Steering Committee for comments on Memoranda of Understanding.

The UNSD representative commented that the PARIS21 newsletter is very long. He appreciated that it was made available on the website but recommended that its content be reduced to the minimum.

Reporting

The Secretariat Manager described the Partnership Library of Statistical System Documentation (PARLISTAT) and presented a pilot test of the system for Mali (see www.paris21.org/parlistat/mali/index.html). He mentioned that the Statistical Capacity Building Indicators (SCBI) and peer reviews are also useful tools for reporting. The International Comparison Programme has already used the SCBIs to report on 30 African countries. And at the May 2003 Committee on Development Information (CODI) meeting, PARIS21 put forth a proposal that peer reviews be implemented to systematically review statistical systems. The Secretariat Manager then proposed a global report that would give an overview of the issues relating to the use and state of statistics and national statistical systems. Rather than a small annex in existing documents, it would be a separate, stand-alone document produced perhaps every two years. This report should not merely be a PARIS21 initiative but should be driven by all its partners. Reporting activities are crucial to PARIS21 operations; PARIS21 therefore needs a commitment from its partners.

Several participants commented that the proposed PARIS21 reporting programme places an additional burden on countries. The countries themselves would be responsible for the bulk of the work for PARLISTAT, SCBI, and the global report. The proposed programme might be drawing too heavily on country resources.

The Norwegian representative questioned if PARIS21 was the appropriate host for PARLISTAT. As it is intended to be a country-level product, the UN ought to be the body driving the initiative.

The IMF representative commented that the SCBI questionnaire may need to be simplified in order to make it lighter and therefore conducted more frequently. The African Development Bank representative supported the simplification of the SCBI as it is a heavy burden on countries. The OECD commented that conducting the SCBI survey annually may be excessive, as the national statistical systems do not change significantly over the course of a single year.

Some participants requested more clarification on the global report's objectives and the questions it was intended to answer. The OECD suggested that the users and audience for the report must also be clearly identified. Perhaps a consultation should be implemented before proceeding further. The focus of the report should be to demonstrate if the statistical system situation in country is improving or worsening. Norway commented that if the goal of the report is to demonstrate that national statistical systems do not adequately respond to national and international data needs, then the report is not necessary as this message has already been delivered through other mechanisms. The World Bank commented that reports of this nature are tremendously resource-consuming and expensive. She recommended that the PARIS21 Secretariat provide basic support and overall guidelines to other institutions for the production of the report. Switzerland strongly supported the idea of the global report but acknowledged that the idea is perhaps a little too vague. He noted that after six years of activity (by 2006), PARIS21 will need to have something that independently identifies the capacity of the international community to monitor the MDGs. PARIS21 will need to have a product that is visible internationally, and the global report can achieve that. The OECD commented that the report, highlighting as it would the use of statistics and the evolution of statistical systems, would be a unique product. He did not see the report as a terribly voluminous document and therefore not overburdening to the countries. It is important for countries to report on their status themselves, as it would force them to answer important questions. The OECD and France commented that the global report could be a very strong tool in PARIS21's advocacy efforts and could also address the issue of reporting on how donors are improving the overall statistical system.

The Secretariat Manager commented that PARLISTAT, the SCBI, and the global report are not intended to be an added burden but instead a tool for national systems to help themselves. He thanked the participants for their comments on the global report and agreed to fine-tune the proposal.

The chair summarised that PARLISTAT has general support from the participants and that it should be pursued and, in particular, within the framework of PARIS21. He recommended that its efforts be linked with the World Bank's Country Analytical Work website. He noted that many participants recommended the simplification of the SCBI and also concluded that we do not have a proposal for the global report that is yet ready for approval or rejection. It needs to go back to the drawing board and perhaps be the subject of another meeting. He proposed that the global report be not merely a PARIS21 product but a joint product of all of the Partnership's founding members, i.e., World Bank, United Nations, OECD, European Commission, and International Monetary Fund.

Session II

Chair: Pali Lehohla

Regional Programmes

The Secretariat Manager commented that all of PARIS21's regional work should be driven by the NSDS process. The success of the programme will be measured by the number of countries that have implemented a strategy. He acknowledged that the programme for Asia is not well defined because PARIS21 does not have an Asia regional advisor. He pointed out, however, that PARIS21 has strong relations with several organisations working in the region. The programme for the European region is also vague as there currently is no advisor.

The OECD felt that a programme for the Baltic States could be left to the European Union but that OECD would be happy to support the Balkan and CIS programmes. The UNSD and UK commented that the structure and objectives of the regional programmes were very attractive and its underlying logic firmly founded. However, the UK suggested that the work programme is too large for the available resources. Sweden echoed the sentiment that PARIS21 cannot be everywhere all at once. As for the question of working at the national

level, the UK stated that PARIS21 was never intended to be an operating entity but more of a coordinating body. The chair commented that PARIS21 can only be the catalyst and that the countries have to drive the process forward.

Steering Committee Governance Arrangements & Terms of Reference

The Secretariat Manager presented the proposed governance arrangements and terms of reference for the Steering Committee (document# *P21-SC2-03-GOV*). He said that the election terms relate to the next three years (2004–2006) and that new arrangements would therefore have to be approved for the period after 2006 if PARIS21 were to be extended beyond that date. He recommended that Germany be added back into the Steering Committee bilateral donors list, which would bring the grand total of membership to 25.

Several participants requested that the logic behind Steering Committee representation be made more explicit and that rules for representation be outlined. The UK recommended, however, that a flexibility be retained in the arrangements and terms of reference. Switzerland commented that the greatest weakness on the Committee is the lack of policymakers.

Regional Representatives

France commented that it is through the Consortium that Steering Committee elections are determined and that it is not for the Secretariat to decide. He then asked if PARIS21 would cover the charges for both the developing country representative and alternate to attend meetings. The UK followed up by asking if there would in fact be alternates for the developing country representatives. The OECD suggested that a nomination committee could select the regional representatives.

Bilateral and Multilateral Donors

France and Switzerland recommended that all current and potential donors be invited to attend Steering Committee meetings as observers. France suggested that for the donors if the representative is a data user, the alternate should be a data producer. If a donor accounts for more than five percent of the budget, it could automatically be made a member. Another suggestion was that the top five donors to PARIS21 be automatically elected to the Steering Committee. The OECD commented that the PARIS21 founding members ought to be permanent members of the Steering Committee. He recommended that either a certain level of donation could determine bilateral representation or a rotating team could represent. The OECD also suggested that the DAC chair present the TORs and governance arrangements to the DAC members for them possibly to elect Steering Committee members.

The OECD noted the absence of a process for electing Steering Committee chairs in the document. He said that in the last meeting it was agreed that the current chair structure should be maintained. The Secretariat Manager agreed to add a paragraph to the governance arrangements document outlining the policy regarding chairmanship.

The chair summarised that the terms of reference are generally approved with modifications. It is to the Secretariat to decide how to revise/distribute these TORs. He also declared that there appeared to be consensus that a rule for donor membership must be established, but he cautioned that tabling the issue until the next Consortium meeting may be too late and that financial contributions ought not be the only criteria for representation. He stated that final decisions could not be made today and that they should be concluded at the June 2004 Steering Committee meeting.

The Secretariat Manager agreed to incorporate into the TORs France's suggestion of having a data user for representative and a data producer for alternate or vice versa. He then proposed that by the end of November 2003 the Secretariat outline options for Steering Committee representation. The current Steering Committee will approve or revise the proposals by December 15, and the new system will be implemented for June 2004. The chair supported this proposal. The chair closed the discussion by emphasising that continuity is an important aspect of Steering Committee membership.

Decisions for the Steering Committee

2004–2006 Work Programme and Logical Framework

The Secretariat Manager asked the Steering Committee for guidance in setting priorities in the work programme. The UNSD approved the work programme subject to the revisions suggested in the morning session. He recommended that the Secretariat produce a second work programme taking into account the real funding situation. The World Bank recommended that a joint funding strategy for the World Bank Trust Fund and PARIS21 be developed. That process would help define the future work programme. The UK felt that perhaps the work programme document should assume two forms: a strategic document and an operational document. He noted confusion in the logical framework about what referred to the Consortium work/outputs versus what referred to Secretariat work/outputs. Task teams in particular should be removed from the logframe if the logframe refers to the Secretariat, as they are more the responsibility of the institution convening the team.

Dates and location of the next meetings

The Secretariat Manager proposed that the next Steering Committee meetings take place in June 2004 then in December 2004. He proposed that the Consortium meeting be held in concert with the December 2004 Steering Committee.