



STATISTICAL ADVOCACY AT COUNTRY-LEVEL

Background

Since its creation in 1999, PARIS21 has been seeking to achieve its goal through facilitation, knowledge development, information-sharing, resource mobilisation, and last but not least, advocacy action. The PARIS21 team has undertaken advocacy reviews, produced and disseminated materials such as advocacy videos and papers delivered through various meetings and events. Hitherto the focus has been mainly on international and regional events and the PARIS21 Secretariat and its partners have contributed in raising the profile of statistics among policy makers. There has been an increased awareness among governments and their development partners but also civil society of the need for reliable and timely statistics in development processes.

Still, much remains to be done and it appears obvious that even higher priority has to be given to statistical advocacy within the PARIS21 programme and that this needs to be intensified at the country level. National governments, donors and representatives at country-level need to be further convinced that the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) is helping to break the “vicious circle” of weak production, use and funding of statistics and that they need a well-prepared, well-financed and well-implemented NSDS as an efficient tool for strengthening their National Statistical System (NSS) and improving the quality of statistics. As such, the NSDS appears as one of the main opportunities for statistical advocacy. Every opportunity should be taken to show how the implementation of the NSDS will contribute to statistical development in the country and therefore to development itself.

Objectives

One of the objectives of PARIS21 is therefore to step up its advocacy efforts at country-level. Advocacy activities will from now on be focused on supporting the countries to develop advocacy material tailored to their own situation. The team will collaborate directly with National Statistical Offices (NSOs) of developing countries to produce general advocacy material but also well-written and well-presented NSDS related documents. These documents will be adapted to suit the purpose and audience and then be disseminated to key targets during important events, such as NSDS round tables or consultative groups. PARIS21 will also help the countries to build up but also follow-up their own advocacy actions. A Statistics Advocacy Resources Toolkit (START) is thus underway. It includes a number of relevant tools and guidelines for developing adequate advocacy material and strategies. Developing an advocacy strategy will help determine goals, audiences but also assess resources and need for adjustment. It also implies that the advocate will carry out solid analysis, careful planning and qualitative research, before picking up the right tool for a given situation.

On-going activities

On a short-term basis, PARIS21 already offers its support to the countries whenever the need arises. PARIS21 has also started to produce a specific toolkit (START) as a long term and evolving tool at country-level.

A. Direct support to the countries

The PARIS21 team already assists countries in the drafting and production of a general advocacy booklet called “Why does country X need good statistics?”. PARIS21 helps to prepare round tables by proof-reading, improving the presentation, co-ordinating the translation and printing of NSDS related-documents.



In partnership with the UNECA, PARIS21 has produced an advocacy padfolio with a specific message on the cover and some advocacy material inside (CDs on development, on the African Statistics Day, documents, etc.). This padfolio was distributed during the joint UNECA-AU ministerial meeting. Interviews are also carried out in order to be used during relevant meetings or to produce specific advocacy films.

Here is a list of the countries and partners with which PARIS21 has already produced specific advocacy material : Burkina Faso, Gabon, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Zanzibar, UNECA and ESCWA. Several advocacy projects (e.g., documents, films) are also underway and planned with other countries over the five regional activity programmes.

B. Statistics Advocacy Resources Toolkit (START)

The “Statistics Advocacy Resources Toolkit” (START) aims to help NSO managers and statisticians start or to improve their own advocacy work and show them the advantages of planning advocacy systematically. It gathers in a single package a number of relevant tools to develop efficient advocacy material and guidelines to set up well-planned and carefully thought out advocacy strategies.

As there are many different ways to conceptualise advocacy and no internationally agreed definition, the introduction proposes a common definition of advocacy right from the start. “Advocacy is pleading for, defending or recommending an idea before key people in order to obtain change. Whenever change is sought, advocacy is concerned”. The START focuses on statistical advocacy as a means to convince policy-makers and representatives of multilateral and bilateral agencies in developing countries of the importance of statistics in development and, in particular, of the necessity for developing countries to have a well-prepared, well-financed and well-implemented National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS).

The toolkit, to be finalised during the second half of 2008, will be composed of three sections:

- The **Advocacy guidelines** (Section I) will show how to shape an advocacy strategy and the various key issues the advocate has to be aware of during this process.
- The **Instructions and Messages** (Section II) will provide a table linking ready-to-use key messages to targets, events and tools. It will also present the importance of statistical messages and provide some background to help the advocate develop new ones.
- The **Tools** (Section III) will be composed of two parts:
 - The Advocacy booklets will aim to help the user to draft advocacy booklets by providing a structured template which will be linked to reference sheets.
 - The Tips will include a collection of tips on how to make good advocacy material. Tips cover various themes such as: drafting attractive press releases, carrying out interviews, improving a Website’s communication potential, and preparing a press conference.

Next steps and contribution of the partnership

It is planned to finalise the START toolkit during the second half of 2008 (including its translation, packaging and dissemination). During that process, the collaboration of PARIS21 partnership is highly welcome for reviewing, in particular the advocacy messages proposed and the overall proof-reading process. The PARIS21 Secretariat will engage Public Relations/ communications expertise in these processes to supplement the statistical and development skills of the Secretariat.