



Consortium Meeting, 17–18 October 2002

PROCEEDINGS

Thursday, 17 October

1.0 Welcome by Chair and Adoption of Agenda

Jean-Claude Faure, Chairman of the DAC, opened the meeting by welcoming participants. He emphasised that statistical capacity building ought to be one of the major priorities of development and that PARIS21 can play a key role in this effort. He also mentioned that he is very confident that PARIS21 will continue to succeed in the future.

The participants adopted the agenda, and the co-chair of the PARIS21 Consortium, Mr. Pali Lehohla, thanked the Consortium for the confidence in appointing him co-Chair.

The PARIS21 Secretariat presented an advocacy film that it had made recently, “Measuring the Change in World Poverty”. The film features key political advocates of statistics and speakers from anglophone Africa. A French version of the film is in the pipeline. Copies of the film (as DVD-enabled CD-ROM as well as European and American format videos) are available in both 25-minute and 12-minute versions. An order form was distributed to participants. Copies can also be obtained by contacting the PARIS21 Secretariat at contact@paris21.org.

2.0 PARIS21 Work Programme

The manager of the PARIS21 Secretariat reminded participants that the purpose of the meeting was for Consortium members to express their views on the work of the Consortium. The work programme, which will be covered during the meeting, includes regional workshops, country-level follow-up, task team meetings and activities, information exchange, and Secretariat management.

3.0 PARIS21 Regional Activities Lessons Learned and Outcomes of the Andean Regional Workshop

3.1 *Bolivia*

PARIS21 held a regional workshop in Santa Cruz, Bolivia 13-15 May 2002. The workshop was the first occasion that brought together users and producers of data, including Bolivian and other Andean governments, plus international organisations. Among the lessons learned from the Santa Cruz workshop:

- Teamwork is essential in a multidisciplinary approach of users and producers
- Supply has to be adapted to demand.
- Statistical methods are an investment and it is important to have the full backing of government.
- Grass roots involvement in socio-economic policy has input into statistics.

Pursuant to the Santa Cruz workshop, Bolivia made the following recommendations:

- Develop short- and medium-term strategies for data collection.
- Develop municipal statistical structures to respond to the needs of local authorities.
- Ensure that statistics are geared toward policy development and evaluation and make sure that decisions are sound and properly implemented.
- Obtain sufficient financing that is critical in disseminating statistical information.
- Identify what kind of information that users need and how to better process it.
- Generate a statistician's culture.

The representative proposed the following:

- Continue to organise national workshops.
- Use funds from the Trust to help countries in the Andean Pact plan national statistical programs.
- Develop a comprehensive set of criteria for impacting public policy.
- Develop a medium-term national statistical plan.

3.2 *Ecuador*

Ecuador reported that it is making progress on the technical side of statistical capacity development, but that areas of improvement remain. Specifically, there is a lack of a sound statistical culture in Ecuador that implicates the ways in which data are collected and disseminated. While ministries have very little recourse to statistics, they are charged with formulating public policy. Ecuador's responses to these challenges include:

- a) Diagnosis and planning activities – determine what users need and look at which statistics satisfy that demand from the supply side. Also need to look at how to get users on board in developing analysis and dissemination methods.
- b) Building a strong leadership structure and a statistics culture.

3.3 *Peru*

Peru reiterated the importance of statistics by drawing on the example of child poverty. Statistics between Peru and Brazil were cited as an example to suggest a disparity in each country's quality of statistics and the lack of basic measures to identify accurate levels of child poverty.

3.4 *Venezuela*

PARIS21 facilitated a major change in the way statistics are viewed in Venezuela, which are now recognised at the national level. It was suggested that the Andean community develop a co-ordinated, supranational statistics action plan. Toward that end, Venezuela has already adopted legislation enacting a public statistics office, based on its new republic and on international practices.

Each of Venezuela's twenty-two states is divided into over 100 municipalities. It was decided to build up a statistical system that takes into account the needs at both the state and municipal levels while based on national criteria. It is hoped that official statistics will be produced by the different agencies involved, reiterating the importance of developing a national statistical plan.

3.5 *Secretaria General de la Comunidad Andina (Andean Community)*

The representative reported that the process of regional integration of statistical systems is taking place under the precedence of each country's president. Countries are developing the legal means to develop supra-national statistical bodies, as discussed in the first PARIS21 regional workshop. While uncommon in the Andean community, this sort of dialogue allows countries to develop a statistics methodology for specific targets, i.e., on poverty reduction.

Each country is now to develop its own national strategy and reach medium-term statistics goals. National and regional workshops will provide the discussion on analysis and dissemination, taking into account the needs of users and producers. Also seminars in training and thematic workshops on international agreements will lead to the

development of a medium-term statistical plan, the focus of which is on social and economic development for the next five years.

Subsequently there will be a meeting of directors to organise the next PARIS21 regional workshop to review the Andean Community's statistical plan and its compatibility with member states' statistical plans. The workshop is scheduled for April 2004.

4.0 Plenary Discussion

4.1 *Switzerland*

Switzerland agreed that countries must develop an efficient statistical infrastructure. It was suggested that Consortium members, in recognising the success of the Andean Community, work effectively with regional authorities and appropriate funding sources. Planning activities, as such, empower governments to make investments in statistical infrastructure, and require the assistance of donors, namely the World Bank Trust Fund.

4.2 *Senegal*

Senegal confirmed the need to strengthen national statistical infrastructures. When it comes to policy development, statistics have a special role to play and provide the basis for policy legitimatisation. The representative reminded participants that it is important to provide the best information regardless of limited resources. Another point made was the importance of strengthening democracy through statistics.

4.3 *UNECLAC*

UNECLAC reiterated the importance of the Andean workshop for non-Latin Americans. Governments are responding to the demands of globalisation such as the increasing demand for real-time information.

4.4 *ECOWAS*

ECOWAS stated that it does have a viable statistics-based culture in its region, but that it is now interested in further harmonising statistical co-operation. ECOWAS is implementing a regional training program, with assistance from the European Union, in order to harness user requirements and provide useable statistics in a timely fashion.

4.5 *Venezuela*

Venezuela reported that individual offices with disparate objectives are now working in co-ordinated institutes and improving the provision of statistics. The representative expressed his gratitude to all major parties and reiterated that democracy can only work if it is accountable.

4.6 *Andean community*

The Community informed that it hosted its 14th regional meeting in October, which brought together member states' statistics representatives. A supra-national statistical plan for 2003 was also presented.

4.7 *France*

In order to strengthen statistical capacity, France suggested that regional integration should be taken into account as per the lessons learned in Santa Cruz and reminded participants of the importance to integrate know-how from other regions.

4.8 *Palestine*

Palestine recalled the need to make the process of country ownership sustainable in the south. The representative encouraged PARIS21 to add to its mission stock taking of various statistical systems. Palestine mentioned that it hopes its system will continue to support Palestinian society regardless of what happens in the country.

The Chairman added his concern about the events unfolding in Palestine and stressed that international co-operation should preserve everything that currently exists in statistical development.

4.9 *General conclusion by Chair*

The Chairman stated that it is feasible for PARIS21 to establish an integrated program, shared by several countries that adopt different themes. By its example, the Andean Community has given a challenge to other regions in the world.

The Chair expressed concern about mobilising capacity; the Millennium Development Goals, poverty reduction, and such, are all underpinned by a need for a reliable, useable statistical tool for decision makers: those who determine public policy at all levels. As a follow-up, there must be a sustainable effort if members want that tool to be productive.

The co-Chair asked what are the critical ingredients for a successful statistical system and suggested that as demonstrated in the Andean Community, it is the intervention by municipalities. The Chair concluded the session by expressing hope that statistics would eventually become used much like ordinary language.

5.0 Panel Discussion: Future Regional Workshops

What are the Specific Issues to be Addressed in the Forthcoming Regional Workshops?

The PARIS21 Secretariat manager opened the discussion of regional workshops by emphasising that they are merely one step toward developing capacity building strategies.

The most important results will be reaped on the country level—it is there that data must be produced.

5.1 *South East Asia Workshop, Philippines, 2002*

The PARIS21 Secretariat manager then spoke on behalf of the Asian Development Bank representatives, who could not attend. He announced that an Asia region meeting will take place in Manila from 7–9 November 2002. The format for the workshop will be slightly different than usual. First, producers and users of data will deliver country presentations, discussing their demands and constraints. Then, representatives from national institutions and donors will present their programmes in the region and their needs for statistics. The third part will bring the two threads together. It is intended that an important output will be to develop a road map for countries.

5.2 *West and Central Africa Workshops*

A Central Africa regional workshop will be held in Yaoundé in the second week of December, pending a decision on the final date from the Cameroon government. The following countries will participate: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and Sao Tomé and Príncipe.

For West Africa, there will be two workshops. The first will be in Dakar in the third week of January 2003 for the following countries: Cape Verde, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, and Sierra Leone. The second workshop will take place in Abuja, 17–21 February 2003, with Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, and Togo. For the participating countries, six representatives will attend—two statistical producers and four other representatives (including individuals responsible for the PRSP, from the Ministry of Finance, and from a technical ministry). Civil society, the media, the national statistics director, and a PRSP representative should all attend.

Three themes will be discussed: (1) the state of statistics in each country (capacity, production, and use of statistics); (2) the requirements and contributions of development partners (national partners, civil society, media, donors, the international community); and (3) collective action to be carried out in the countries to resolve problems.

5.3 *Arab States Workshop, Jordan, 2003*

The representative from the Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics announced that 22 Arab countries will attend the Arab States workshop in Jordan in mid-January 2003. The goal will be to achieve an increased awareness of statistics in policymaking. This will be the first workshop in this region with this objective. The workshop will try to stimulate dialogue between national and international partners and help countries define national priorities. A preparatory meeting will be convened next week in Tunisia.

5.4 *Central American Workshop, El Salvador, 2003*

The representative from El Salvador commented that he looks forward to this regional meeting to respond to the scourge of poverty in the region. The Andean Community regional workshop in April 2002 was a great learning experience. At that meeting, El Salvador was selected to host the Central American workshop. The meeting will look at what can be done to improve the region's national statistical systems. This event will also make it possible for international co-operation to step in and assist in this endeavour. The countries of the region have very small national budgets for statistics, as sectors such as health often take priority. There is too much duplication of effort, which is due to a lack of co-ordination. The region's statistical systems are not always useful to modern needs, and it is difficult to improve these systems.

Benefits for the region could include: improved statistical systems, raised awareness of the need to invest in statistics, better dissemination of information to international partners on the programmes they fund, and raised awareness in civil society of the need for timely data.

The workshop will take place the second week of January 2003.

5.5 *Other Regional Workshops: Central Asia, Pacific, Caribbean*

The representative from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) said that she was glad PARIS21 has adopted a regional approach. The CDB is committed to assisting the national statistical offices in assessing social policies and programmes. Toward this end, they have tried to help countries assess their situation and their statistical strategies. The PARIS21 workshop will be in 2003, in collaboration with the CDB. She remarked that before this Consortium meeting is over, she hopes to identify the areas to be discussed at the workshop. She hopes the workshop will address strategic statistical systems. The past has focused on producing economic indicators, but the CDB is glad to see that PARIS21 emphasises social indicators.

6.0 Plenary Discussion

The Chair remarked that there appeared to be a bit of overlap in the organisation of the different regional workshops. Taken as a whole, these presentations show how important it is to organise national statistical systems.

6.1 *Tunisia*

The Tunisian representative said that PARIS21 makes a distinction between national and regional level work. As for the regional level, most of the work focuses on approving and canvassing ideas to improving systems. He then asked if there are operational implications. The other regional workshops are inviting supplementary guests: Can the Arab States workshop take the same approach as that of Central Africa?

6.2 *Palestine*

The representative from Palestine remarked that these workshops have provided an opportunity to raise global awareness for investment in statistics. He then asked if after the workshops, a lessons learned document could be produced, along with an analysis of concerns, in order to refocus the strategy toward building statistical capacity.

He echoed the Tunisian representative's emphasis on south-south co-operation and an exchange of experience/expertise. PARIS21 should pay particular attention to the role of regional statistical commissions to involve them more as partners in this common struggle.

6.3 *Albania*

The Albanian representative requested that Balkan countries become involved in PARIS21 initiatives. They are facing similar problems in that region. There is a missing dialogue between users and producers. A forum for dialogue for the region would be very useful.

6.4 *Chair*

The Chair gave the floor to the PARIS21 Secretariat, who took due note of all the comments from this morning and announced that other regional seminars are in the works, for the Pacific region for example, probably for Fall 2003.

The Chair then closed the morning session at 13:00.

7.0 PARIS 21 Country Programme

7.1 *Report Back from Malawi*

Previous exploratory work by PARIS21 in Malawi revealed that baseline values had several benchmarking problems in terms of future monitoring. Further, there was a need in Malawi to improve agricultural statistics and to develop a strategic national plan.

A stakeholders workshop was held in Blantyre in July 2002 which produced a lively dialogue between users and producers and invited best practices from neighbouring countries to share their experiences of monitoring and evaluation.

The expected outcome from the Blantyre workshop was the development of a framework for effective monitoring and evaluation of the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (MPRSP). Recommendations from the workshop include:

- 1) A plan for a national statistics system
- 2) Agreement on institutional arrangements

3) Course of action for the analysis and dissemination of information

Following the PARIS21 workshop, several meetings transpired between the Ministry of Economic Planning, who will do the core implementation of statistical planning, and the National Statistics Office (NSO), who will handle the output and indicators.

The strengths of the workshop were that it provided a very good user/producer dialogue, spelled out the role of the NSO and recognised it as playing a fundamental role in monitoring and evaluation. Further, the workshop improved statistical capacity for which Malawi thanked PARIS21.

7.2 *Report Back from South Africa*

PARIS21 organised a workshop in Cape Town in April that reconfirmed the need for closer co-operation between users and producers. There is already recognition of the relationship between Statistics South Africa and policy makers. The national statistics system aims to improve utilisation of statistics while the policy unit in the President's office co-ordinates with Statistics SA. South Africa reported that it has managed to integrate the PARIS21 recommendations since the April workshop and that Statistics SA has made inroads in several ministerial departments. It has also been instrumental in the development of indicators through its ten-year review project.

7.3 *PARIS21 Country Strategy*

PARIS21 explained that while it is improving statistical systems and the use of statistics data at national levels, it suggested adding another dimension: intra-national statistics. Therein PARIS21 could define the tools, follow-up for statistical capacity, and provide advocacy material.

Strengthening relations between users and producers is but one possibility, while another possible role for PARIS21 could be in strengthening the use of data. Further, PARIS21 would like to assist in establishing consensus within a country.

Finally, PARIS21 could play a role in co-ordinating activities of donors by assisting countries in self-evaluation. In conclusion, PARIS21 invited consortium participants to recommend further avenues for PARIS21.

8.0 *Plenary Discussion*

8.1 *ILO*

ILO queried if PARIS21 had been involved in Cambodia recently.

8.2 *Philippines*

Philippines expressed that it is already sophisticated in aligning users with producers. However, it suffers from a lack of resources allocated to statistics by the government itself. There is a law that stipulates that each area of government should set aside 5% of its budget to gender issues. The representative suggested that the same allocation be made for statistical activities.

8.3 *United Kingdom*

The UK suggested distinguishing PARIS21 from the Secretariat. Having been at Malawi and knowing the amount of work involved in the workshop preparation, the representative knows that the Secretariat cannot do the same for all interested countries. Rather it might explore other methods of advocacy, for example e-learning. In terms of activities, the UK suggested further workshops on particular themes (as a sequence to regional and country workshops). The representative expressed doubt that PARIS21 has the human resources to move beyond. PARIS21 must decide, instead, how to exploit the resources it presently has.

8.4 *Congo*

Congo appealed to all to continue to support its initiatives and would like to continue negotiations with assistance from PARIS21 within Congo. It would like to focus on users and producers in order to develop a statistical master plan and a national statistical system. Congo stressed that there is no statistics culture in Congo but has planned a number of awareness-raising activities.

8.5 *Palestine*

The representative emphasised the suggestions made by the UK in terms of defining PARIS21's role as assistant. PARIS21 has a clear mandate of putting developing countries in the "driving seat" vis-à-vis development of respective national statistical systems. Donors likewise need to follow well-defined rules therein. National statistical systems need increased recognition. Assuming that PARIS21 has both roles, it can help to bring about increased legitimacy of national statistical systems.

PARIS21 does not necessarily play a part in the policymaking cycle, but this forum plays a part therein. PARIS21 and the Secretariat can help in mobilising resources in various countries. Moreover, Palestine emphasised that in addition to its technical function, PARIS21 can break down barriers in country-country dialogue. The need is to minimise costs while maximising use of statistics. PARIS21 should place emphasis on providing country guidelines. When resources are not available, countries could learn what to do with their limited resources. Finally, Palestine proposed that the Steering Committee design multi-level, regional dimensions in a road map so that a country can measure itself.

8.6 *Switzerland*

Switzerland called on developing countries to provide examples of their accomplishments. The representative suggested making use of current capacity to pool examples for future country questions. Essentially, Switzerland would like to have a forum to showcase examples of the success stories.

8.7 *France*

As a member of the Steering Committee, France suggested that PARIS21 streamline its activities to the country level and start by identifying priority areas. France further suggested that national workshops should not be managed by PARIS21 but by regional organisations. Members should be responsible and act as facilitators for specific tasks and need to work in a more decentralised approach.

8.8 *ECOWAS*

Having heard presentations by Malawi and South Africa, ECOWAS asked why no institutions involving those countries were involved in the workshops? Secondly, realising the importance of involving countries, the need is to have specific statistics.

There is also the need to develop sound, timely statistics to keep people informed, i.e., conflict prevention. ECOWAS has developed an early warning system whereby at any time a politician makes a statement, statistics can help confirm or counter such statements. Statistics can also help reduce poverty and help change people's viewpoints on a number of issues. ECOWAS thinks PARIS21 can work together on a number of indicators beyond just intra-regional trade and invites others to accurately gauge progress.

8.9 *Eurostat*

Eurostat suggested that PARIS21 attract the persons to convince national and regional decision makers that statistics are a useful policy tool. Eurostat countered France's position, and added that all stakeholders beyond PARIS21 should be included in regional and national workshops.

8.10 *Venezuela*

Venezuela identified a role for PARIS21 to play: to make statistical systems move away from descriptive to analytical and help policy makers understand the impact of their policies. Venezuela congratulated PARIS21 for its efforts so far. In Andean Community, PARIS21 helped to get countries to agree on indicators (comparable statistics). Then it identified the audience for the statistics, which requires training for producers.

8.11 *PARIS21 Secretariat*

PARIS21 responded to the ILO question by saying that it was unaware of a workshop in Cambodia. The representative expressed that he is always surprised by different initiatives in other countries.

On Malawi, the representative said that the Blantyre workshop was a good example of a PARIS21 workshop. It was largely UNDP that financed it while PARIS21 provided labour from the Secretariat. The objective was to provide South–South co-operation, which is exactly what it did.

The representative said that PARIS21's role is not to get involved in every country and that there is a need to establish a priority list to better apply resources. It is proposed that the Secretariat work harder in sharing its knowledge with people in other countries to be aware of PARIS21 initiatives as well as expertise within regions. It was also suggested that PARIS21 be a facilitator as well as provider of guidelines and advocacy.

8.12 ILO

The representative from ILO clarified that he, too, was unaware of the Cambodia meeting earlier and simply suggested that PARIS21 act as a clearing house for such information, with the assistance of the rest of the consortium.

9.0 Supporting Follow-up in Country. What is Required?

Brief Interventions from Country Representatives

9.1 Albania

The representative from Albania commented that indicators of how well Albania has performed have been difficult to develop. In 1992–93, the country started from scratch in developing its statistical system. The country has to exert a lot of effort to improve its institutional framework. When democracy emerged, the country emerged with too much information—they were not used to it.

The country must start with the planning process and data collection and perform a quality control between the old way of producing statistics and the new way of producing statistics. Dissemination is also a key issue. Statistics need to be viewed as a public good. Previously, it was viewed as merely a governmental good. This is one of the many roles of the statistical office.

Always at the top of government priorities has been economic reform. Statistics was subservient to this. Poverty reduction has been the focus more recently. So statistics are now in the service of social, rather than economic, indicators.

The representative mentioned that PARIS21 can be an important tool in Albania's case, particularly in advocacy for the use of statistics. New tools need to be developed for the

dissemination of data. Often publications are produced, but it is complicated to determine where to distribute them.

9.2 Lesotho

The Lesotho representative commented that his country's PRSP is currently being drafted. The first draft is scheduled for completion on October 26. The country hopes it is meeting international standards and expectations because they have exceeded national ones. The government does not have an official measure of poverty. Surveys are being conducted to define standards. A household budget survey in particular is being conducted. PARIS21 could provide assistance in this endeavour. Poverty monitoring poses quite a challenge to Lesotho. He proposed a sustained support, in addition to that of Dr. Ajayi, from the PARIS21 Secretariat to assist in poverty monitoring in Lesotho.

10.0 Donor Collaboration

10.1 DFID

The representative from DFID offered a few thoughts on PARIS21 activities in Southern Africa. The SADC regional workshop in Lusaka saw policymakers and statistical producers congregate. The workshop also allowed participants to discuss problems they were facing. It enhanced the dialogue between policymakers and statisticians. It was hoped that this dialogue would then be echoed in the individual countries participating. It was expected that one or more donors would be involved in that dialogue. This happened at the same time as the PRSP process. Co-ordinating these two processes can be quite difficult.

If donors have their act together at the country level, there should be no need for an extensive PARIS21 role at the country level. The dilemma is what to do when that national dialogue is stunted. PARIS21 provides the impetus to kick-start that dialogue process. One lesson for donors is to make sure that the dialogue benefits from expertise and experience locally and on the ground. Donor offices at the country level must play a role similar to that of PARIS21 in advocating a dialogue between policymakers and statisticians. Unfortunately donors have not always been successful at that.

Often donor agencies are not aware of the underlying statistical needs of a country, whereas PARIS21 is aware. There are not just indicators that are needed but also the underlying statistical system requirements.

10.2 UNDP

The representative from UNDP commented that the UN has worked on translating the MDGs onto a national level and the policies necessary to achieve them. Underneath this issue is the availability of data. She said that the UNDP is organising regional forums to launch an advocacy campaign on the MDGs and is making rapid progress in identifying

indicators which are similar from one organisation to another. These forums have only just begun and very quickly will have to move onto a second stage, of discussing these themes within countries.

10.3 France

The French representative said that France has for some time decided not to support statistics but instead statistical capacity building, so PARIS21 has seemed like an appropriate mechanism. The advantage of PARIS21 is that it provides expertise and experience across all regions. He commented that he believes there is universal agreement that PARIS21 is less interested in statistics than in the development of countries.

He stated that whenever France sets up a program in a country, they systematically think of linkages with PARIS21. But while donor co-ordination seems simple at the central level, it is not always as easy at the local, country-level. The major donor organisations should organise a forum bringing representatives together within the framework of PARIS21 to discuss what is meant by “poverty reduction strategies” so they don’t spend their money haphazardly.

10.4 ECOWAS

The ECOWAS representative said that for the donor community to make a positive contribution, look to Afristat. Perhaps the Afristat model could be replicated in other regions.

10.5 Switzerland

The Swiss representative commented that PARIS21 ought to pay attention to donor co-ordination but not be obsessed by it. It would be counterproductive to trump the benefits of PARIS21’s work by overfocusing on co-ordination. He said that he is fully in support of north–south co-ordination, but co-ordination must start at the country level.

10.6 OECD

The OECD representative said that co-ordination must start from locally owned country strategies. He said that the OECD is exploring donor co-ordination issues, particularly with the advantage of improved information technology.

10.7 Senegal

The Senegalese representative said that PARIS21 is a unique initiative on capacity building – including training. Strangely, the poorer a country is, the higher level of statistician is required. This situation also requires closer co-operation with research institutes.

10.8 ILO

The ILO representative commented that labour statistics are unrepresented in the MDGs. The development community needs to build capacity of course, but labour statistics (falling into both social and economic statistics) must be included.

10.9 Peru

The Peruvian representative commented that he sees a conflict of interest when one works on statistics in a government agency. Greater autonomy must be afforded to the statistician to safeguard him/her from political pressures.

10.10 Chair

The Chair concluded the discussion with a comment of caution regarding the issue brought up by the Peruvian representative: the statistician can not distance him or herself too far from the politician. The profession of statistician requires a high level of ethical standards, the goal being to provide all information to all parties at all times. The suppliers of statistics tend to be overlooked. Supply must be understood in order to understand what to produce.

Friday, 18 October

PARIS21 Task Teams

11.0 Panel Discussion: What we have achieved and future programme to complete the tasks.

11.1 Advocacy

The representative reported that the task team's "Why Statistics?" web site is available and a draft brochure is underway. The representative formally suggested that advocacy not be in hands of a task team, but as part of the Secretariat.

11.2 Census

The representative announced that the report from the TEAM meeting in Pretoria 2001 is available on the PARIS21 web site as well as on the UNFPA site. This year the task team did not make any demands on the resources of PARIS21 since UNFPA sponsored its activities. The task team also supported the idea of national capacity building efforts. The

representative hoped that this team will be given a sympathetic, open-ended mandate and of which others will take ownership one day.

11.3 Strategic Statistical Development Plans

About one-third of all countries in the world will have adopted the standards, most of which have been developed by producers, from the IMF initiative. On the PARIS21 web site, there are links to a number of related documents.

At the team's October 15 meeting, various presentations of initiatives and country case studies from the international community were made. One point made at that meeting was that donors have difficulty co-ordinating amongst themselves. It was suggested therefore that co-ordination be carried out at the national level.

A study will be carried out to explore how regional and international initiatives will appear in the team's plans. The task team would like to prepare all documentation in the Secretariat in CD-ROM format. Next meetings are planned in April and August 2003, and a final meeting in October 2003. The team requests additional funds to co-ordinate the three-day INSEE meeting in April.

11.4 Statistical Capacity Building Indicators

The team presented indicators to help track statistical capacity building in countries. These were not intended to provide a full picture of a country, rather an economic scope. Users are intended to be the international donor community and the domestic policy makers. The team representative made reference to the PARIS21 advocacy film, specifically the inputs and outputs.

The quantitative indicators were tested in two countries by the task team (and by even more at IMF). They did try to measure how well the capacity was progressing in a country by providing levels of international good practice (not standards) against which local statisticians could measure their own progress.

11.5 Rural and Agricultural Statistics

The working party on rural and agricultural statistics became operational in October 2001. There is no concrete product to date, however.

The goals set forth for this task team:

- Foster use of food and agriculture statistics
- Encourage linkages between agriculture statistics and national systems
- Advocate ways and means of statistical capacity building
- Provide a forum for exchange
- Ensure statistics are produced in a timely manner

It was agreed that the task team should not duplicate existing work in other organisations. The task team should also aim for a global, not regional, reach. The FAO was asked to convene the team.

A subsequent workshop and informal meetings with PARIS21 brought together the parties to examine recommendations. It was decided to organise a high-level meeting for which a preparatory committee adopted objectives. The results were an agreement on main guidelines to target rural and agriculture statistics in Africa. A second agreement was made on a possible program for statistical capacity building in rural and agricultural statistics in Africa.

It was proposed that the team develop its web page, update its member list, and enlist inactive members to take on specific tasks. There is a need to mobilise the programme and make it truly operational. It was also proposed to work with a consultant on the task team's objectives. Up to now, the team has been focusing on Africa but will extend to the Asia-Pacific region. A better information system, based on a set of indicators, is also needed.

11.6 Statistical Support for Monitoring Development Goals

A new task team was launched which is now identifying pilot countries and mobilising resources. Various donors and international organisations have already expressed interest in its financing. The task team is jointly convened by World Bank and Eurostat and will exist for two years. In the meantime, it has already done studies in comparisons of MDGs and PRSPs in 16 countries.

12.0 Discussion of the Role of the Task Teams in the PARIS21 Strategy

12.1 ILO

The ILO representative proposed that the PARIS21 Secretariat encourage partners in the task teams to engage in a discussion forum to gather the sum total of their knowledge.

12.2 Eurostat

The Eurostat representative said that, as it now has a programme proposal, the Rural and Agricultural Statistics team represents an example of taking a team to another level, and that should be replicated in the other teams.

12.3 OECD

The OECD representative mentioned that the SCBI team reported that environmental indicators are lacking. The OECD is trying to improve environmental indicators. He also

mentioned that he was struck by the need to connect up different initiatives and encourage synergy across all the teams. PARIS21 lives by this interconnectedness, and all opportunities to link up ought to be explored.

12.4 Malawi

The Malawi representative commented that for the Rural & Agricultural Statistics team, forestry production needs to be captured. Eighty percent of people in sub-Saharan Africa are dependent on the forestry sector.

12.5 Cameroon

The Cameroon representative commented that PARIS21 should try to standardise the SCB indicators. On strategic plans for statistical development, PARIS21 should reflect on the capacity that exists to implement such plans. Sufficient financial and human resources are not always available to implement them. Perhaps partners and donors could provide assistance; otherwise, countries will have great difficulty developing plans.

12.6 Palestine

The Palestinian representative congratulated the SCBI team but commented that it has not drawn sufficiently on representatives from various regions of the world. Its membership was a little too focused on a small group; nevertheless, they have generated an impressive product. He suggested that this team work with national statistics institutes to employ its tool within countries. As for the issue of task team compositions, he suggested that it is time to institutionalise their compositions. He recommended that teams' membership be balanced across regions, donors, and international representatives. He then asked what kind of synergy can be created across the teams.

12.7 France

The French representative expressed his concern about the lack of decisionmakers in the task teams; they are mostly composed of statisticians. Secondly, he brought up the proliferation of task teams. At the outset, PARIS21 hoped the teams would have a clearly defined mandate with a sunset clause. PARIS21 just doesn't have the means to monitor so many task teams at once. Perhaps teams could be merged (SCBI and Advocacy, for example).

12.8 PARIS21 Secretariat

The Secretariat manager said that he views the task teams as reflecting the personality of the people or institution who runs them. The Secretariat tries to provide support to all the teams. He said that he believes that Advocacy should be an ongoing activity and one of the Secretariat rather than the task team itself. As for the membership of the teams, he said he feels it is imperative to go beyond the usual suspects and to broaden their membership to be as representative and complete as possible. As for the proliferation of

teams, PARIS21 needs to have a rich culture, and it is good that the Consortium is involved in many things, but obviously PARIS21 must not replicate work.

13.0 Closing Remarks

The chair remarked that PARIS21 has hit its stride. Participants have heard reaffirmations of certain principles today. Perhaps PARIS21 needs to make its basic principles, mission statement, and mandate more visible. PARIS21 needs to have a better integration with its partners and statisticians, while maintaining its principle of autonomy. Regional meetings allow PARIS21 to make progress in its dialogue with policymakers. Follow-up to regional meetings, perhaps in 2004, is needed. A list of good practice, a sort of check list for activities, should be extracted.

Development agencies need to integrate statistics into decisionmaking. Operational people need to consider this as a dimension, and PARIS21 has to integrate better into and with all the agencies in development. Information exchange is also an important element; knowledge of different initiatives need to be summed up in a clear and visible way. PARIS21 needs clearinghouses and databases to give the big picture of the initiatives, as donors have in other fields. This should be carried out partner country-by-partner country worldwide.

The chair suggested that the PARIS21 Consortium co-chairs sign a cover letter attached to the minutes of this meeting with a list of future action points and distribute it not only to all participants but also to agency heads, ECOSOC, and the UN Statistics Commission. This ought to be systematic with PARIS21 events. He also suggested that an annual report is required for the rest of the world. It would highlight the current state of statistics for development, would be addressed to the general public, and could include a CD-ROM. He called on the Steering Committee to consider this.

He further suggested that PARIS21 should widen its reach and sponsor high-level events with other bodies. These events would give statistics a more prominent place in the overall development landscape. PARIS21 has to be a visible reference point for people who share its concerns, to find answers to common questions and to be a partner.