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## **ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

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### **REPORT ON STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES**

### **GHANA**

**CODI STATISTICS SUB-COMMITTEE**

**GHANA COUNTRY REPORT ON**  
**STRENGTHENING STATISTICAL CAPACITY FOR**  
**NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**INTRODUCTION**

Statistics is necessary for social and economic development which, ultimately, is expected to meet human needs. Building a sustainable national statistical system is therefore indispensable for a meaningful and successful national development effort. The need to strengthen national statistical systems was recognized and highlighted by the 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of African Ministers responsible for Economic Planning and Development, when it adopted the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s. Since then the international community and development partners have come to accept that any improvement of the statistical system constitutes an integral part of economic and social development.

Building an independent statistical capacity makes it possible to assess the effectiveness of development programmes and therefore enables society to exercise control over what government does, thereby enhancing the democratic process. It is in the context of this that governments and the international community ought to join hands to strengthen and sustain national statistical systems. Indeed, it is empty rhetoric to talk about ownership, taking control or putting countries in the driving seat, without strengthening the absorptive capacity of the national statistical system to satisfy the demand for data needed to influence policy.

**ORGANIZATION OF STATISTICAL SYSTEM**

**Current Organization**

To respond to the growing and complex demands for reliable and timely statistics for planning and policy decisions in the country, the Statistical Service Board took the positive step in 1986 to evolve a functional structure of the following 8 activity Divisions and the General Administration.

- Policy Planning and Coordination Division
- Analytical Studies and Development Division
- Social Statistics Division
- Demographic Statistics Division
- Industrial and Trade Statistics Division
- Economic Statistics Division
- Data Processing and Field Services Division
- Information and Printing Division
- General Administration Division

On the basis of an assessment of the emerging demands for statistical data for monitoring the performance of the economy and the effect on reducing poverty, the structure was modified in 2000 for implementation in 2001. In restructuring the organizational set-up of the Service, much attention was given to the functions of the regional and district offices, with emphasis on training and reorienting staff to be able to carry out data collection and analysis at the regional and district levels to assist the development process. The new structure comprises the following:

- (i) **Industrial and Trade Statistics Division** deals with industrial, agricultural, external trade, internal trade and transport and communication statistics.

- (ii) **Economic Statistics Division** is responsible for the preparation of official estimates of national income and other related statistics; the collection and compilation of price data, construction of price indices relating to retail, wholesale and prime building costs; compilation of government accounts, balance of payments, external resources and external debts, as well as the compilation and analysis of the accounts of public boards and corporations.
- (iii) **Social Statistics Division** concentrates on the provision of official statistics in the areas of education, labour and manpower, crime, culture and tourism, housing, health, nutrition and environmental sanitation.
- (iv) **Demographic Statistics Division** is responsible for planning and analysis of population censuses; compilation of data on births and deaths, migration, marriages and divorces; and preparation of field maps for censuses and surveys.
- (v) **Analytical Studies, Development and Coordination Division** deals with methodological developments, implementation of new methodologies and strengthening of the capabilities of the Service in the adaptation of new methodologies; planning and coordination of welfare measurement and monitoring surveys and coordination of all statistical activities in the country to ensure that all other statistical units in the country conform to the accepted statistical standards necessary to maintain comparability and quality of data.
- (vi) **Information Technology Division** is responsible for developing systems software for processing and analysing data; maintaining computer hardware in good working condition and the proper data storage, archiving and retrieval system.
- (vii) **Publicity and Dissemination Division** is responsible for the preparation and printing of official publications of the Service, dissemination of statistical information and supervision and maintenance of both the library and the documents archives.
- (viii) **General Administration Division** is responsible for the general administration of the Service. It includes the Board Secretariat, Administration Section, Transport Section, Maintenance and Estates Section, and the Skills and Manpower Development Section which organizes in-service training for professional and technical personnel and sees to the general advancement and welfare of workers.
- (ix) **Finance and Property Division** is responsible for the management and administration of property and finances of the Service and the maintenance of good practices of accounts, audit, purchasing and supplies, and stores.
- (x) **Regional Offices Division** coordinates the field activities of all Regional Statistical Offices, including district offices.

### Statistical Legislation

The collection, compilation and publication of official statistics in Ghana for general and administrative purposes are vested by legislation in the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS). The Law (Statistical Service Law, PNDC L135), that established the GSS as an independent public service in 1985, provides for a Board to be the overall body governing the collection and publication of data, determining the form and nature of statistics to be collected and reported on, promoting the use of statistics and advising the government on all matters relating to statistics.

The Law also prescribes for the Service the role of coordination of all developments in statistics outside the Service. The Law further charges all official and other organizations to collaborate with the Government Statistician in ensuring **uniformity** in the statistics generated in the country.

### Statistical Coordination

The GSS, in the discharge of its mandate of collecting, compiling, analyzing and disseminating data, often depends on Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) as secondary sources of data. Delays in receiving data from these sources often create a long time lag. Many of these MDAs and research institutions also use different guidelines and coding structures for the collection of similar sets of data for the estimation of selected social and economic indicators. This often leads to data inconsistency and divergent views on the performance of the economy, a situation which does not help in policy-making.

The non-conformity with the harmonized system of economic and social classifications by institutions dealing with the business community has greatly affected the continual updating of the register of establishments. It is necessary to discourage the current practice by effectively harmonizing the different geographical codes to facilitate data sharing and comparison.

### **USER – PRODUCER RELATIONS**

The GSS regularly reviews the data needs of various users and monitors statistical activities of other producers in the country to ensure that statistical units in MDAs conform to the accepted statistical standards necessary to maintain comparability and quality of data.

### Structure of Producer-User Group

The Ghana Statistical Service is the national body charged with the collection compilation and dissemination of official statistics. Most Ministries and Departments have Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) units that generate sector-specific data. Such units are required to collaborate with the GSS to ensure uniformity in the statistics generated. The GSS collects and collates these sector related data for publication, dissemination and use by the general public.

To improve the relationship between the GSS and the various PME units and to respond to the complex demands for statistical data, a National Advisory Committee of Producers and Users of Statistics (NACPUS) was formed and inaugurated in July 1988 with UNDP assistance. The Committee helped to bridge the gap between producers and users as well as among producers of statistics. Due to a combination of factors, the Committee became dormant in 1993. The factors that contributed to the non-functioning of the NACPUS have been identified and addressed, leading to a national consensus to reconstitute and revitalize the Committee to provide a framework for the needed coordination of statistical activities to satisfy demand for statistical data. The inauguration of the reconstituted NACPUS was performed by the Hon. Minister for Finance on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2001. The structure of NACPUS incorporates 10 statistics sectoral working groups (SSWGs) covering the whole spectrum of statistics.

### Activities of Producer-User Group

The central mission of the NACPUS is to serve as a focal point for the expression of priorities and requests from users and a framework for satisfying the demand for statistical data. The NACPUS is expected to meet at least once in a quarter to receive and study reports from the SSWGs and make appropriate recommendations for the consideration and approval by the Statistical Service Board.

The SSWGs are expected to evaluate the statistical situation of various producer agencies and to assist in the setting up of the priorities in the production of statistics in the country, taking into account the development objectives of the country. Within the framework of the SSWGs, consensus can be built on harmonization of standards and methods as well as periods for releases of statistical data. Effective performance of the various groups should facilitate the production of timely estimates to help monitor development programmes.

#### Communication between Producers and Users

Both the NACPUS and SSWGs are institution-based, represented at management level (not below the rank of Director in the public service). The institutions represent both public and private sectors and include both producers and users. This structure therefore allows for a feedback interaction between and among interest groups.

A recent government directive has institutionalised a practice of the Statistical Service to constitute a National Steering Committee of major stakeholders (producers and users) to provide policy direction for all projects funded from public/donor funds. This provides the opportunity for input in questionnaire design, tabulation plan and targets for dissemination.

Celebration of Africa Statistics Day (18<sup>th</sup> November) of every year will provide a forum for producers and users to interact on very crucial issues.

### **STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES**

The GSS collects routine statistical data and collaborates with specific sector producer agencies to implement special and periodic national projects. The routine data collection and publication activities relate to industry, trade (local and international), labour, inflation, national accounts, agriculture, health and environmental sanitation, education, crime, vital registration (births, deaths, migration, nuptiality), transport and communication.

#### Current Activities

In addition to the routine statistical activities, the GSS, in collaboration with other producer agencies, is currently involved in the following activities as part of the 2001–2005 medium term statistical programme.

- ♦ Processing of 2000 Population and Housing Census data for release by December 2001.
- ♦ Processing of 2001 Ghana Child Labour Survey data for release by October/November 2001.
- ♦ Preparation for District Level CWIQ survey in October–December 2001.
- ♦ Preparation for Industrial Census in 2002 (with follow-up survey of medium and large enterprises in 2003).

#### Future Activities

The routine statistical activities will continue. In addition, the other statistical activities under the medium-term programme will be implemented. These include:

- ♦ Situation Analysis Study of Reproductive Health Service Provision in 2002.
- ♦ Preparing for 2002 Maternal Mortality Survey in Ghana.
- ♦ Agricultural Trial Census in 2002 and Agricultural Census in 2003.
- ♦ CWIQ Survey in October–December 2002.
- ♦ 5<sup>th</sup> Round of Ghana Living Standards Survey in 2003 and 2004.
- ♦ 4<sup>th</sup> Round of Ghana Demographic and Health Survey in 2003.
- ♦ Demographic and Policy Analysis of Census Data in 2003 and 2004.
- ♦ Presentation of Project Document for Census 2010 to Donor Group Meeting in 2005.

## **HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS**

Household surveys are a powerful instrument for measuring outcomes of sector programmes and for assessing the effectiveness of programme initiatives in their impact, particularly, on poor people. The main welfare monitoring instruments in Ghana have been the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS), Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire (CWIQ) survey and Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS). These household surveys are also important for monitoring changing levels of access to, utilization of and satisfaction with, social and economic services across different population groups. As time series data from these surveys develop, they have the potential to form an effective accountability framework.

These household surveys pose three main challenges: methodological and conceptual issues, institutional linkages and financial sustainability. On methodological/conceptual issues, it may be noted that there is no agreement on the definition and measurement of the concept of poverty and the direction of some programmes is unclear in many instances. The result is that many agencies pursue different agenda based on their perception of the problem. The other challenges are linked to donor assistance. Such assistance has helped to upgrade equipment and facilities of recipient institutions but this has resulted in the unfortunate situation where several public institutions solicit assistance to undertake projects even when they are aware of efforts made elsewhere in that direction. The general non-committal attitude to matters of statistics and the reluctance of users of statistical data to pay for the data they need for planning, have resulted in much reliance on donors for support. The over reliance on donor assistance has meant that many donor-funded programmes are not sustained when such donor support comes to an end.

Efforts have begun to ensure broad agreement on what factors constitute poverty as well as what indicators may be considered core for Ghana. The revitalization of the NACPUS is expected to give effect to the formally defined linkages between the Ghana Statistical Service and other public agencies to ensure effective institutional coordination and collaboration. Government appreciates the importance of statistics for effective development and has reaffirmed its preparedness to provide the needed financial support. The District Assemblies also appreciate the need for the responsibility for sustaining the welfare monitoring system to be spread to include consumers of statistical data and are willing to accept responsibility for field expenses of field personnel.

## **DATA DISSEMINATION PRACTICES**

Adequate publishing, marketing and dissemination facilities are vital to ensuring continual availability of information. The Service, since 1995, has embarked on a major dissemination programme to share survey results with regional/district planners and programme managers. Relevant strategies that make use of modern information and communication technologies to package, market and disseminate research findings have been adopted. In addition to printed material and data on diskettes, database dissemination takes advantage of CD-ROM and other electronic media, as effective information routes. These have, however, not replaced the verbal dissemination practices through press briefings, media discussions, launching of published results of surveys and briefing at government and other official meetings.

Successful implementation of the welfare monitoring system will, over time, generate a large volume of data for dissemination. The sustainability of the system will depend on the building of an efficient data archiving system to serve as an enduring capability in statistical data dissemination. The OCR scanning technology being used for the census data capture will provide ready support for this. Much of the results will be stored on the CD-ROM.

Further strengthening of the national statistical system will require information capability. Technology has offered didactical possibilities, such as the Internet, which is interactive, widely accessible, flexible and provides a variety of resources to help researchers. Plans are advanced to disseminate data through the Internet by creating a website for GSS products, including the census data. This, together with the e-mail and facsimile facilities, will facilitate communication and speedier transfer of data between the GSS and users and among users.

The restructuring of the GSS has reflected these concerns and a redirection of the Information Technology Division and Publicity and Dissemination Division. The GSS will actively pursue dialogue with the Council of the Ghana Employers Association, Association of Ghana Industries and the Private Enterprise Foundation to explore how the needs of the private sector can be effectively addressed. The NACPUS will also become an important channel of data dissemination.

## **USERS OF STATISTICAL DATA**

As producers of a public good, the Ghana Statistical Service has the world as its clientele.

### **Local Data Users**

The major local data users include:

- ♦ Government institutions (national, regional and district)
- ♦ Researchers and research institutions
- ♦ International organizations (development partners, NGOs)
- ♦ Private sector institutions/businesses
- ♦ Individuals

The requests for data in most cases are general but in some cases, clients request data specific to some sectors of the economy. Data requests that do not fall within the existing table formats are satisfied by recompiling and analysing the raw data to suit the needs of the client; this causes some delay in responding to requests.

### **International Community**

The international community refers to data users outside the borders of Ghana, that is

- ♦ Sub-regional (ECOWAS Secretariat, AfDB, EBID, ECOWAS states,)
- ♦ Regional (ECA, UNFPA, ILO, research libraries, universities, students)
- ♦ International (UNSO, ILO, research students, academics).

The data needs of the sub-regional, regional and international clients pose the greatest challenge. These institutions, with knowledge of what forms of data are available in other countries, request similar data to make comparisons for policy decisions. These institutions usually design formats for the type of information required. The data required can be so extensive that various sections have to provide inputs to meet the request.

Some of the information required by these institutions may also be outside the scope of work of the existing sections of the GSS. In such cases, the needed data are sourced from the specific sector. This also causes delay in meeting the demands for data. To address these shortcomings in data supply, there has been a re-definition of the roles of the various sections to expand their scope of data collection and analysis. It is expected that, through the NACPUS and its statistics sectoral working groups, standards and methods for data collection would be harmonized to facilitate timely submission of returns to the GSS for compilation and dissemination.

## **POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY PROGRAMME (PRSP)**

Poverty reduction is a priority social and economic goal of society which must be pursued with all the seriousness it deserves. That national crusade has been translated into the PRSP as the blueprint for assessing the impact of development programmes on the poor and the general level of welfare in the country. This calls for the production of more district level statistics, including poverty profiles for the districts.

Effective monitoring of the development effort will have to depend on reliable and timely data of all kinds, which reinforces the need for closer collaboration between producers and the leading users of data. This requires that the entire national statistical system, and not the GSS only, would have to be strengthened to attract and retain the needed calibre of professional and support personnel. In line with the decentralized planning system, priority attention is given to strengthening the regional and district offices of the GSS to make it possible to undertake data analysis and dissemination close to the districts. This will require that the regional and district offices be provided with the needed hardware and software. These efforts will improve the capacity of the statistical system to respond quickly to new demands for statistics coming out of the PRSP.

At the national level, the GSS will collaborate with other producer agencies through the NACPUS and its statistics sectoral working groups while at the regional/district level, the collaboration will be with the Regional/District Development Planning Offices. The involvement of producer agencies other than the GSS ensures not only a feeling of ownership but will also enhance the level of utilization of statistical data for planning. The capacity that will be built in the GSS and other producer agencies would also be a tremendous investment that will benefit other programmes and sectors at the national and district levels.

## **COORDINATION OF STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES**

The problems related to the use of different and varied statistical tools for data collection and analysis have been raised and discussed earlier. The benefits to be derived from the use of harmonized methods and standards have also been noted. The situation with regard to coordination of statistical activities, until recently, left much to be desired. For reasons already mentioned, local producer agencies as well as some development partners, initiate data collection activities without the knowledge of the GSS. To ensure that statistical activities are undertaken in a well-coordinated manner, the GSS has committed itself to providing leadership in implementing the national policy on data collection and reporting as provided by law.

### Coordination at National Level

Integrating statistical activities at the national level and harmonizing standards and other statistical tools will enhance the capacity of the national system to respond to user needs. The starting point should be a review, with other producers of statistics, of the different methods and standards, classification codes, methodologies and other available materials to ensure that one and the same set of harmonized tools is used by all producers.

This process should involve all Governments departments which collect primary statistical data, either for direct use or for other institutions. The Ghana Statistical Service will serve as the coordinating institution, using the recently inaugurated National Advisory Committee of Producers and Users of Statistics (NACPUS) as the frame for coordination.



### Coordination at International Level

Coordination of statistical activities at the sub-regional, regional and international levels has been mainly in the area of data sharing and harmonizing of methods and standards through workshops and conferences.

### **NATIONAL PRIORITY AREAS AND NEEDS**

The areas of statistical need are many; the capacity to meet the challenge is available locally, but this can be achieved only if the required resources are provided. Given the fact that it may not be possible to meet all such needs, it is necessary to prioritise.

The principal area of statistical need is how to measure and monitor the impact of development programmes on the living standards of the population. Thus statistics of welfare indicators are the first national priority (consumption expenditure, income levels, school enrolment, access to health services, ownership of basic household assets, employment creation, food security, etc.).

Government is interested in attracting Ghanaians living abroad to invest in the country; there is the need therefore to improve immigration statistics.

Harmonizing methods and standards, having an effective system of collaboration between GSS and other producer agencies and coordination between producer and user agencies are a major national priority, if the statistical system is to make the needed impact on development.

One major problem the GSS has faced over the years is the less than satisfactory working conditions for its staff. Many highly trained personnel, because of their improved market value, leave for the private and financial sector where the pay structure is better. A major national priority should be to provide the needed incentives to ensure that the investment in training personnel benefits the statistical system.

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