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TECHNICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL PRE-REQUISITES  
OF SURVEY INTEGRATION

C O N T E N T S

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## INTRODUCTION

1. This paper is in two parts. The first part considers issues relating to co-ordination of survey procedures as an essential part of survey integration while the second part discusses agricultural and non-agricultural surveys with respect to the important question of the co-ordination of data producers. The paper is a continuation of the one on "Development of integrated programmes of surveys: general, technical and organizational problems (E/CN.14/SII/41)" presented to the Working Group on Organization, Content and Methodology of Household Surveys convened in Addis Ababa from 29 June - 3 July 1981. In respect of the technical aspects of integration, problems relating to sample design, concepts, definitions and classifications, non-sampling errors and interlinking of survey results were mentioned. The organizational problems considered were: staff development, equipment, data analysis and publication of results. These problems will be referred to only briefly in this paper, since its focus is slightly different from the earlier paper.

2. It may be recalled that the African Household Survey Capability Programme (AHSCP) is a component of the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP) and aims at collecting integrated demographic, social and economic data from households and household members. In conjunction with data from population and agricultural censuses and surveys and other sources, it also aims at supplying this information, on a regular basis, for development planning and other purposes. Thus the AHSCP envisages rendering assistance to countries of the region in developing their own field operations and the collection, processing and dissemination of integrated socio-economic and demographic statistics on a continuous basis.

3. The integrated approach to statistical activities as envisaged by the AHSCP consists of surveys organized in different rounds, each round covering the same core with one or more subjects. It is in this context that the ECA secretariat has been trying to present to countries practical details of surveys relating to each subject. Most of the countries in the region have a long tradition of collecting their basic social and economic data through households since these form the most convenient units which provide a comprehensive means for assessing the current development status of the country as well as for planning for the future.

4. Among the reasons given for an integrated household survey programme in Ethiopia, it is stated that

"There has not been a national statistical programme as such to ensure continuous flow of integrated demographic, social and related economic data. In general, these would indicate the absence of comprehensive and timely data on development on the national economy. One major objective of the integrated programme is to provide socio-economic and demographic data required for plan preparation, monitoring and evaluation of development programmes, including policy formulation and research activities, etc., in an integrated form on a continuous basis."

In the programme document for Kenya it is stated that the integrated approach

"symbolizes the establishment of the requisite infrastructure without which it is not possible for a central statistical agency such as the CBS to respond to data needs of the Government and other users for reliable and integrated socio-economic data required for the design, control, implementation and evaluation of the development policies and programmes."

5. Thus in order to obtain a continuous flow of integrated data, it is recognized that requisite infrastructures should be established. It may be noted that prior to the establishment of the AHSCP most of the surveys undertaken in the region had been on an ad hoc basis with deficiencies and disparities in the survey design and procedures with no meaningful attempt being made to link data from one round to another. To eliminate or at least minimize these shortcomings, there is need for the co-ordination of survey procedures.

#### CO-ORDINATION OF SURVEY PROCEDURES

6. There are four areas in which survey procedures should be co-ordinated. These are: use of common standards of concepts, definitions and classifications, survey design, uniform training of staff and as far as possible, common listing procedures. These are now considered in detail in the following paragraphs.

##### (a) Standardization of concepts, definitions and classifications

7. To make it possible for the interlinking of results from one survey and another there is the need to standardize concepts, definitions and classifications. In general some work has already been done in this field by the international organizations. For example in the field of classifications a number of standard international classifications have been evolved. The main ones are the International Standard Classification of Occupations (International Labour Organization, revised edition 1963), International Standard Industrial Classification (United Nations, revised edition 1968; currently being revised), the International Standard Classification of Education (UNESCO, March 1975) and the International Classification of Diseases (WHO).

8. These international classifications are usually adapted to suit the conditions in a particular country. By keeping the same standard classifications for surveys in the same country and also by providing a conversion table to show the correspondence between the national classifications and the international it is possible to ensure intra- and inter-country comparisons.

9. Related to the question of classifications is the question of standardization of definitions. It is a pre-requisite for the household survey programme in any country that definitions relating to such concepts as households, household members, place of birth, locality, urban or rural, working, unemployed, etc., be standardized. Without this it will be impossible to compare and interlink results from one survey to another.

##### (b) Survey design

10. The design of surveys is another area where care has to be taken to co-ordinate procedures. If comparisons are expected to be made on a small area basis it is essential that this should be taken into account in designing the surveys. It is in this context that the use of master samples has been claimed to offer advantages in the short run for the co-ordination of procedures. However as was stated in document E/CN.14/SM/41 master samples although desirable for integrated household survey programmes are not a necessity.

11. The problems of survey design are considered separately in document ST/ECA/SM/9 which is being presented to this meeting. There is thus no need for any extensive discussion of the topic in this paper. It is sufficient to call attention to the fact that the survey design provides a mechanism for the co-ordination of procedures within the AHSOP.

(c) Training of field staff

12. Co-ordination can also be effected through the type of training given to the field staff. It is for this reason that it has been advocated by some that in establishing a permanent field organization consideration should also be given to recruiting a permanent field staff. This would ensure that the training given to the field staff will be used for subsequent surveys. In spite of the recruitment of permanent field staff it is essential to note that if this is not followed by the formulation of suitable guidelines for their training it is possible that the advantages claimed for the availability of a permanent field staff will be lost. Adequate and consistent training of the field staff would ensure proper interpretation of maps, proper scrutiny of completed questionnaires and in general a proper discharge of the functions of enumerators and supervisors. It will also ensure a proper interpretation of concepts, definitions and classifications.

13. It is therefore one of the pre-requisites for an integrated survey programme that training manuals should be prepared and that copies of these training manuals should be available for those designing training for subsequent surveys.

(d) Common listing procedures

14. A desirable but not always necessary feature of an integrated survey programme should be that there should be a uniform procedure to be followed in listing units to be sampled or enumerated. For example, if the serpentine approach to listing is preferred, it would be advantageous to follow this procedure in all surveys. If there are permanent field staff, they then become very familiar with the approach and thus obviate any costly programmes of training in subsequent years.

CO-ORDINATION OF DATA PROCEDURES - AGRICULTURAL AND NON-AGRICULTURAL SURVEYS

15. It is important to stress here the need for harmonization among related agricultural and non-agricultural statistical activities. The importance becomes evident in view of the large number of countries in the region, as shown in the annex, in which the responsibility for agricultural statistical activities lies with agencies - in most cases Agriculture Departments - different from those charged with the responsibility for undertaking non-agricultural statistical activities - in most cases the National Statistical Offices. The possibility for formulating an integrated programme of statistics clearly exists in these countries and the initial steps could now be taken to ensure that the pre-requisites for such a programme are implemented.

16. The following example may illustrate the point. It was realized in one country that primarily for the agricultural sector, development planning requirements called for data on production and the productive capabilities of the country, on the consumption patterns of the population and on the welfare situation in regard to the population such as marketing opportunities, accessibility to improved welfare opportunities including health centres, schools, etc., and resource utilization such as available manpower and its utilization, employment possibilities, etc. It was however clear that data from other non-agricultural surveys taken together with the data requirements described above would provide a more comprehensive picture of the range of data required to formulate the development plan. In such cases, there is the need for both groups of data producers to be brought together to discuss the best way of producing the required data in the most cost-effective manner. One of the ways of achieving this through producer/user or technical advisory or steering committees is discussed later.
17. It has also to be borne in mind that when a country develops a household survey capability, the resulting infrastructure and information network are not likely to be confined to the production of household data. Thus a linkage between household surveys on the one hand and agricultural and other surveys on the other will have to be established at an early stage of a country's household survey programme. Within countries, collaboration between all professionals concerned with agriculture, employment, demographic and other statistics is likely to lead to the improvement in the flow of integrated demographic, social and economic data.
18. As envisaged in the ANSCP, adequate co-ordination among the national authorities concerned with the population and agricultural censuses will make possible the preparation of a list of agricultural holders from the population census lists, thus resulting in appreciable savings. Similarly, mapping materials for the population and housing census operations are useful for the agricultural census and for other agricultural surveys. The data processing arrangements and facilities for the population census and other non-agricultural **statistical activities may be utilized** for the agricultural census and other agricultural statistics
19. As the availability of related data increases, their utility and quality can be more readily assessed and improved. By linking data from household surveys that use the household as the statistical unit, with the related agricultural holdings, many improvements in the utility and reliability of the data thus gathered, as well as in the methodology used, can result. The agricultural census provides some basic information on the demographic characteristics of holders' households and on employment in agriculture. As the household is the more appropriate unit for the gathering of such information, the population census and labour force surveys may be more efficiently utilized to provide more detailed data on the population engaged in or dependent on agriculture. Similarly, labour force surveys may give more detailed and more frequent information on employment in agriculture to augment data obtained through the agricultural census and other more frequent agricultural inquiries. Since 30 per cent or more of the population in African countries is in the agricultural sector, any national survey will have a very large agricultural context. Hence, special efforts are needed to harmonize the procedures used in all these statistical activities.

20. It is also worth noting that the continuity inherent in the organization of an integrated survey programme is of overwhelming advantage. Preceding surveys provide training, act as pilot surveys for subsequent ones and can also be used for collecting other preliminary information required for other surveys. For example, the lists of villages or communes and households prepared in the course of household survey operations, together with some additional data on a number of agricultural and socio-economic characteristics can be used as a sampling frame and for improving the design and implementation of agricultural surveys. Preceding survey operations provide valuable information on the cost of interviews, printing and preparation of questionnaires, data-processing and training programmes which are useful in the planning of subsequent surveys within the integrated programme. The continuity thus facilitates studies leading to the refinement of concepts, definitions, questionnaires and tabulations as well as time-saving and economical survey procedures. The professional and field staff of the organization, as well as users of the data, will build up an invaluable fund of experience and expertise. If producers of agricultural data are kept separate from other data producers, all these advantages are lost and the efforts to promote the collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of integrated economic, social and demographic data will be largely to little avail.

21. It is in this context that the role of the producer/user committees mentioned earlier has to be examined. Such a committee, by bringing together all the major producers of data, not only promotes the harmonization of procedures and classifications but also by providing a forum for consultations with the major users of data helps in determining the main data gaps. If the deliberations of such committees are taken seriously, survey operations can be made more cost-effective, especially in cases in which different agencies are responsible for different subject fields in statistical data collection.

22. For the more detailed consideration of technical issues such as the co-ordination of producers and the development of survey designs, a sub-committee of the committee comprising mainly the technical experts of the data producers can be set up. Such an approach ensures that the main committee deals with policy and related technical issues, while the sub-committee deals with the more detailed technical questions. In the case of agricultural and non-agricultural surveys sponsored by different organizations, failure to adopt an approach similar to this is likely to result in expensive surveys which do not provide data which are easily comparable.

#### CONCLUSION

23. In the preceding paragraphs consideration has been given to two important aspects of technical and organizational issues relating to survey integration. The co-ordination of survey procedures including the standardization of concepts, definitions and classifications, the development of an over-all survey design, consistent training courses and manuals for field staff and common field procedures are a sine qua non of good survey practice in the context of integrated household surveys. The co-ordination of data producers, especially those responsible for agricultural surveys and those responsible for other surveys ensures not only that the surveys are cost-effective but provides for meaningful data, capable of being analysed in the context of the AISCOP.

24. The discussions above and also in paper E/CN.14/SM/41 already referred to provide in a nutshell a comprehensive picture of the technical and organizational issues which must be settled before a satisfactory national household survey capability programme can be launched. All the major producers and users of survey data should be brought together in a committee. For these pre-requisites to be met, the conditions prevailing in Africa call for a single survey-taking agency which should be part of and work under the national statistical office. Close collaboration between the national statistical office and other data producers as well as with the principal users of data should be maintained.

## ANNEX

COUNTRIES IN THE AFRICAN REGION WITH DIFFERENT AGENCIES  
RESPONSIBLE FOR UNDERTAKING AGRICULTURAL AND  
NON-AGRICULTURAL SURVEYS

	Economic and Social Surveys (CSO)	Agricultural Surveys	Combined
NORTH AFRICA			
Algeria	X	X	
Egypt	X	X	
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	X	X	
Morocco			X
Sudan	X	X	
Tunisia			
WEST AFRICA			
Benin	X	X	
Cape Verde			X
Gambia			
Ghana	X	X	
Guinea	X	X	
Guinea Bissau			
Ivory Coast			X
Liberia			X
Mali			X
Mauritania			X
Niger			X
Nigeria			X
Senegal			X
Sierra Leone	X	X	
Togo	X	X	
Upper Volta			
CENTRAL AFRICA			
Angola			
Burundi			
Cameroon, United Rep. of	X	X	
Central Africa Republic			
Chad	X	X	
Congo			X
Equatorial Guinea			
Gabon			X