

NATIONAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY CAPABILITY PROGRAMME
Report prepared by the United Nations Statistical Office

1. This report indicates the current status of the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP) and its work programme for 1989-91.

2. As of December 1988, thirty developing countries were participating in NHSCP. They include:

Africa:	Benin, Botswana, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Zambia and Zimbabwe;
Asia and the Pacific:	Bangladesh, Mongolia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Samoa;
West Asia:	Bahrain, Jordan, Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen Arab Republic;
Europe:	Cyprus;
Latin America and the Caribbean:	Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Peru.

In addition, there were 25 countries for which project proposals had been prepared but not yet approved. These include:

Burundi, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal and the United Republic of Tanzania

Afghanistan, Brunnei Darussalam, China, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea and Tonga;

Oman, United Arab Emirates and Yemen Democratic Republic;

Bolivia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Panama.

3. A meeting of the NHSCP Programme Review Committee held in December 1988 approved the work programme for 1989-91, and accordingly a project proposal for the fourth phase of the programme, covering 1989-91, has since been prepared and approved by the funding agencies.

4. According to the work programme, 15 more countries, mostly those for which project proposals have already been prepared, are

expected to join the Programme by 1991. Simultaneously, most of the countries which joined the Programme before 1987 will have been gradually transferred to the maintenance phase.

5. A new development during the last year was a request received from the Caribbean Community for the formulation of a sub-regional household survey programme for the Caribbean. A consultant, assigned to help the Caribbean Community Secretariat, has prepared a project proposal for the consideration of the community. If successful, the approach may be extended to other sub-regions such as the Pacific.

6. NHSCP has been actively involved in the development and implementation of the Pan-Arab Project for Child Development (PAPCHILD), a project sponsored by the League of Arab States for the organisation of maternal and child health surveys. NHSCP has been helping the project in the development of survey methodology, questionnaires and other survey instruments. Survey activities at the country level are coordinated with NHSCP activities wherever it is in operation.

7. NHSCP has also been engaged in efforts to evolve effective arrangements for coordination with the World Bank sponsored survey programmes under its Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) on the one hand and its Social Dimensions of Adjustment (SDA) project on the other. NHSCP is represented on the SDA Steering Committee as well as its working group, and has been attending many of the technical meetings convened by the World Bank for the development of the SDA conceptual framework and survey methodology. A note containing suggestions for coordination between NHSCP and SDA was presented to the SDA Steering Committee on behalf of the United Nations. In response, the World Bank presented to the NHSCP Programme Review Committee its own proposals for coordination. The matter was also discussed at the 25th Session of the Statistical Commission, which emphasised the need for effective coordination, and welcomed the collaborative arrangements under consideration. The Commission also considered a report presented by the World Bank on its initiatives, and inter alia -

- (a) emphasised its understanding that in implementation of the SDA programme, account would be taken of on going national and regional statistical activities and that it would be carried out in collaboration with NHSCP and other programmes;
- and (b) appreciated the on-going efforts at achieving coordination between the SDA project and NHSCP and urged the need to avoid duplication and disruption of on-going work in the countries.

Nonetheless, arrangements for effective coordination between NHSCP and SDA are yet to be concretized and need to be pursued. Proposals for the organization of LSMS-type surveys under NHSCP programmes are,

however, under consideration in some countries e.g. Pakistan, without disrupting the rest of the programme, and will be supported if the country so desires.

8. NHSCP is also conscious of the need for coordination with other survey programmes such as the Demographic and Health Surveys (Westinghouse), the Interagency Food and Nutrition Surveillance Programme (IFNS) etc. A new proposal under consideration is for the development of social indicators based on household surveys to meet the needs of social development programmes. It will be pursued vigorously in consultation with interested agencies such as UNICEF, UNFPA and the specialized agencies concerned.

9. Technical Studies: During the last year, three technical studies have been finalized and sent to the press, viz.,

- (i) Assessing the Nutritional Status of Children (prepared in collaboration with UNICEF and WHO);
- (ii) Measuring Literacy through Household Surveys (prepared in collaboration with UNESCO);
- (iii) Household Income and Expenditure Surveys (prepared in collaboration with ILO, World Bank and the regional commissions).

Another study on Measuring Health through Household Surveys, undertaken in collaboration with WHO and UNICEF is in progress. The first volume of this study, prepared by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, has since been revised in the light of comments received, and the second is still under preparation. A methodological study of Household Surveys of Agriculture has been initiated in collaboration with FAO and CFTC, and several country level case studies have been completed. A consolidated report will soon be prepared and published. Action has also been initiated for the preparation of technical studies on Household Surveys of Energy Consumption and Surveys of Household Economic Activities. The latter will be prepared in collaboration with the ILO and FAO. Others to be initiated in the near future include guidelines for (a) estimation of sampling errors in household surveys, (b) coverage of elusive populations and infrequent occurrences, and (c) preparation and dissemination of survey reports. A technical study on time use surveys is also proposed.

10. NHSCP Reporter: The NHSCP Reporter, which has remained suspended since 1983, has recently been revived in a new format and will be continued as a bi-annual feature for the dissemination of information on NHSCP activities and related technical developments.

11. Interregional, regional and sub-regional workshops: In accordance with the approved work programme for 1989-91, a joint UN/ILO Working Group on Household Surveys was organized at Geneva in January-February 1989 to discuss the NHSCP technical study on Household Income and Expenditure Surveys and the ILO manual on surveys of the Economically Active Population. At the regional level, NHSCP assisted and participated in the ESCAP/ILO Seminar on Employment and Unemployment Statistics held at Bangkok (Thailand) in

January 1989, and the Workshop on Food Supply Information Systems in Africa held at Nairobi (Kenya) under the sponsorship of CFTC, UNSO and EUROSTAT in March 1989. NHSCP also contributed to and participated in a Household Survey Seminar held at Maseru, Lesotho, in January 1989, where ten countries of Eastern and Southern Africa were represented.

12. Other inter-regional workshops proposed for the next three years include one on surveys of health, nutrition and literacy (1990) and another on household economic activities, energy consumption and time use (1991).

13. A series of sub-regional workshops on the development of sampling frames and sample designs for integrated household survey programmes is also planned for Central America and the Caribbean.

14. Training programmes: The NHSCP Regional Training Programme in Household Surveys organized at New Delhi (India) in collaboration with the Government of India under the plan for technical cooperation among developing countries, has been extended with assistance from UNDP for three more years, 1989-91, and is now open for trainees from Africa and West Asia. Besides the annual courses on sampling and survey methodology and data processing for household surveys, the programme now includes two ad hoc courses for the training of trainers, one on sampling and survey methodology, and the other on data processing for household surveys. A similar training programme is to be organized in cooperation with Mexico for the benefit of Central America.

15. Inter-agency cooperation: The above-mentioned activities which, in most cases, involve inter-agency collaboration indicate the extent to which NHSCP enjoys the active cooperation of a number of international agencies. Apart from UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, which support the programme financially at the global level, and the World Bank, which was one of the sponsors of the Programme, the ILO, FAO, WHO and UNESCO have been supporting the programme both materially and technically. In particular, the ILO, which has all along provided expert assistance at the regional level, continues to do so, though on a reduced scale because of its own financial constraints. ILO's Regional Experts in Africa and Asia continue to provide valuable assistance for the implementation of the programme. NHSCP has also benefited appreciably from the participation of FAO, WHO and UNESCO experts in its project formulation and technical review missions.

16. Regional cooperation: NHSCP has depended and continues to depend on the regional economic and social commissions of the United Nations for the implementation of the Programme at the regional, sub-regional and national levels. Apart from the expert services provided by the ILO at the regional level, regional advisers supported by UNDP, UNFPA and others, as well as the regular staff of the Statistics Divisions, have been providing considerable assistance in the implementation of the programme. The unfortunate discontinuance of funding support has, however, curtailed the assistance available, marginally in Africa and substantially in West Asia, although in the case of the latter, an agreement has since been

reached with AGFUND for the provision of financial support to the extent of \$300,000 for country level activities in the region.

17. National Survey Capabilities: As the ultimate objective of the Programme is to develop national survey capabilities, it is gratifying to note that many of the countries participating in NHSCP for five years or more are now apparently in a position to carry on with their survey programmes, more or less on their own. In fact, 12 of them have effectively been transferred to the maintenance phase, and by 1991, about 15 more are to be so transferred.

18. Over the last nine years, more than 200 surveys have been conducted in the countries participating in NHSCP, ranging in subject coverage from agricultural and non-agricultural activities to employment and unemployment, incomes and expenditures, food consumption and nutrition, fertility and mortality, migration, health, disabilities, water supply, sanitation, energy consumption, literacy, education and cultural activities. While in most cases surveys have been conducted taking up one subject at a time, in some cases two or more subjects have been taken up together to facilitate inter-related studies. Some countries have been able to establish continuing annual surveys on subjects of current interest such as vital events, labour force, incomes and expenditures.

19. Most of the participating countries have well established data processing systems of their own. The demand for further modernization and enlargement of the systems, however, continues. While most of the survey data have been processed and reports prepared, the need for speeding up the operations and reducing the time-lag remains. Analytical capabilities are, in many cases, minimal and need to be improved. Domestic finances are often a critical constraint for the continuance of survey programmes, especially in the African countries. Nonetheless, survey activities continue unabated, possibly with external assistance in some cases. The Statistical Commission, at its 25th Session, held in February 1989, emphasized, therefore, the need for further donor support for country level as well as regional and global activities on a continuing basis well beyond 1991.