

WORLD STATISTICS DAY

Note by the United Nations Statistical Division

1. The Statistical Commission at its special session (11-15 April 1994) requested the international organizations to explore the possible establishment of a "World Statistics Day". In doing this the Commission noted that a number of countries around the world and the African region as a whole, celebrated a national/regional statistics day. As part of this exploration UNSD wrote to approximately 70 countries to gain knowledge about national experience and opinions. The letter asked countries if "Statistics Day" or similar event was recognized/celebrated in the country and, if so, what were the objectives, methods and results of that celebration. In addition, countries were asked their opinion of, and suggestions concerning a possible "World Statistics Day".

2. Approximately 40 replies were received, of these, four indicated that they celebrate a national statistics day. Another thirteen while not formally celebrating statistics day observed some kind of celebration such as an annual conference of the national statistical association. Detailed responses are in Appendix A. Thirty-three countries supported the idea of a world statistics day and many provided ideas on its celebration.

Detailed responses are in Appendix B. *One did not support.*

Interested in views of those who did not respond - maybe we had not tried to express that view. Will telephone. Not well developed on what & how; concerned about resources

*and if decided to do it, how
what to do and how to make it
a success. Still not clear of
specific worthwhile purpose to do
it and on
some what
entirely*

Appendix A

Bangladesh

There is a national "Statistical Association" which holds usually every year a national statistical conference discussing various topics on statistics and statistical developments in the country.

Belgium

The Belgian Society for statistics (SBS), a non profit private scientific organization, is considering a "Quetelet Year" in 1996, second centenary of his birth, to honour the founder of modern statistics and first president of the Official Statistical Commission of Belgium, predecessor of the actual National institute for statistics.

Chile

Chilean universities conduct seminars on statistics that take place any time during the year.

Costa Rica

The School of Statistics of the Universidad de Costa Rica and the Costa Rica's Statistician Association have their celebrations every year including a workshop on statistics.

Ecuador

It would be good to divulge the importance of statistical information for the scientific knowledge of development, and for the economic, social and political affairs. An official celebration at national level and better at world level, will

contribute to achieve an statistical culture in Ecuador.

At the present time, we have a celebration of the anniversary of the National Statistical Office in May. Some years ago, this opportunity was taken to have different exhibitions that were called "Open house of Statistics". During those events the producers of statistics made contact with the users and explanations related to quality and timeliness of statistical data were given.

Egypt

For African Statistics Day in 1994 (18 November) CAPMAS organized a meeting at its premises for supporting the theme of this year's celebration. Speeches were made by CAPMAS President, Head of Statistical Sector at CAPMAS, Director of Cairo Demographic Center, Dean of Statistical Studies and Research Institute and other statisticians. The celebration of the Day also included presentation of three lectures.

Finland

Finland does not celebrate a national statistics day, but the anniversary of the founding of Statistics Finland has been evolving in that direction. In 1995, for example, Statistics Finland will be celebrating its 130th anniversary with an exceptionally high level of publicity. The programme of the day will include a statistical seminar on some urgent social problem, for which high publicity will be sought, as well as a more informal social occasion.

Greece

The National Statistical Service of Greece organized from 6/12 to 9/12/94 an International Conference with subject: "The N.S.S.G. in the year 2000".

Japan

The Government of Japan designated 18 October as " the Statistics Day " in 1973 for the purpose of deepening people's concern and understanding of the importance of statistics and promoting their cooperation in statistical surveys. Since then, every year centered around this day, a variety of statistical-related events such as official commendation of those who have rendered distinguished statistical services, special lectures, exhibitions, national and local statistical conventions, statistics data fair, graphics statistics competition, etc. have taken place throughout Japan in close relation between the national government and the local governments, which have proven to be very effective.

Morocco

Le Plan d'Action d'Addis-Abeba pour le Développement de la Statistique en Afrique dans les années 90, adopté en mai 1990 par la Conférence des Ministres de la CEA responsable du développement économique et de la planification, a fait du 18 Novembre une Journée Africaine de la Statistique que notre pays célèbre chaque année.

Des manifestations ont lieu pour célébrer cette journée sous la responsabilité du ministère de l'Incitation de l'Economie et de l'Association Marocaine des Ingénieurs Statisticiens, dans un but de mieux faire connaître la statistique et d'oeuvrer à son développement. Il s'agit de tables rondes, d'interviews dans la presse écrite et parlée, d'exposition de documents ...

Philippines

We are pleased to inform you that since 1990 the Philippines has been observing the month of October of every year as the National Statistics Month (NSM) under the auspices of the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) pursuant to the Presidential Proclamation No. 647 (see attached document). All the agencies of the government and private sectors, both at the national and local levels, are enjoined to actively participate in and support the celebration of the NSM. The observance of the event has two objectives, namely: a) to promote, enhance and instill nationwide awareness and appreciation of the importance and value of statistics to the different sectors of society and b) to elicit the cooperation and support of the general public in upgrading the quality and standard of statistics in the country.

In observance of the celebration, the Philippine Statistical System (PSS) has been able to sponsor statistical activities such as symposia, workshops, conferences, exhibits, lectures, film showings, statistical quizzes, hanging of streamers, motorcades, slogan/essay/oratorical contests and other activities that fitted the occasion (see attached). The event has fostered close interaction among the members of the statistical community and has provided opportunity to discuss current developments, issues and challenges faced by the PSS and exchange ideas with those in other fields/professions.

Last year's NSM celebration commenced with an impressive opening ceremony hosted by the National Statistics Office *where* besides providing a venue for the latest technological advancements in statistics, *some* talented statisticians presented cultural dances and songs. The closing ceremony participated in by government and private sectors represented also private sector's initiative in statistics. It was jointly sponsored by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry and NSCB, was well attended by representatives ~~from various~~ sectors and likewise proved that the 1993 NSM ended successfully. The theme was "Philippines 2000: Private Sector-Government Partnership in Statistics".

For the 1994 NSM, the theme chosen was "Philippines 2000: Reaching Out Through Statistics" to stress the mission of the statistical community to reach out to various

sectors of society and make known to them the products and services that the PSS can offer. Commencement ceremony was hosted by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas while the closing ceremony was sponsored by the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics. The occasions were graced by high officials in the government. The activities which highlighted the event were as follows: a) the "Ugnayan sa Shangrila", which was co-sponsored by the Philippine Statistical Association and the NSCB. It was a forum organized by the Philippine Information Agency and the radio media men to discuss current statistical issues. It was attended by the major statistical agencies and has reinforced the ties between the media and the PSS; b) the Statistical Research and Training Center Annual Statistical Conference which brought forth important issues on research and training; and c) the "Signing of Statistical Accord" of the Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics, a significant event that enabled the forging of an alliance among the labor, management and government sectors in coming up quickly with statistical information, especially during critical times.

Poland

We do not celebrate such a day in Poland. However, we celebrate the day of the foundation of the Central Statistical Office of Poland (which was established on 13 July 1918) and on this occasion we promote statistics among the Polish society and

try to increase the general awareness about the responsibilities and challenges of statistics.

Russian Federation

In Russia, the Day of Statistics is not legally recognized, but it has become traditional to observe some jubilee dates. Thus, for example, in July 1993 there were celebrated the 150th anniversary of Russia's state statistics and the 75th anniversary of the state statistics of the Russian Federation. The year 1843 can be regarded as the birth-year of statistics for Russian, when the first independent statistical body - the Provisional Statistical Branch - was founded, and afterwards transformed into the Statistical Committee under the Ministry of the Interior. The day of July 25, 1918, can be considered another memorable date, when the "Decree on State Statistics" was approved, making legal the creation of a new state organ - the Central Statistical Board. It should be noted that such legislative enactments render it possible to emphasize the significant role played by statistics in modern society.

Sweden

Over the years, the matter has been discussed now and then within Statistics Sweden, but so far we have always decided against trying to establish such a day. The arguments have generally ranged from "would not work" to "too expensive for the potential benefit".

However, this autumn the discussion has taken new turn and we are currently looking into the idea of carrying out recurrent

"Statistics Days" for actual and potential statistics users, and other interested persons. Very tentatively, we might arrange such a day (or days) for the first time during 1996, perhaps in collaboration with the national statistical association, the other Scandinavian statistical offices etc.

The basic idea would be to create a new forum for exchange of experiences and techniques, present official statistics and databases, and illustrate their uses in national, regional and local planning, in evaluations etc. The mode would be lectures by internationally recognized experts, seminars, exhibitions and demonstrations. The idea is still very tentative and a decision about whether or not to implement it will probably not be taken until spring 1995. The concept is fairly different from what is usually understood by a national statistics day.

Switzerland

Each year in November the Union of Statistical Offices (at national and regional level) has its annual meeting. It gives participants the opportunity to have a broader discussion on actual themes and to have a better overview of the statistical projects initiated by the regions and by other statistical agencies. Outcomes of these discussions are often published in the national press.

Turkey

National Statistics Day is celebrated on 9th May every year. The State Institute of Statistics (SIS) of Turkey is responsible for collecting, evaluating and presenting data on the economic,

social and cultural structure of Turkey. Taking into consideration the importance of her responsibility, the SIS of Turkey has proclaimed 9th May as National Statistics Day in the country. This year the sixth anniversary of National Statistics Day will be celebrated. During the week of the Day various conferences and seminars are organized at the SIS. Some well-known scientists and policy makers from around the world are invited to present addresses and papers on various subjects of statistics. The celebration day is opened by the minister of state, prime minister and/or president of Turkey with an opening speech. Foreign missions in Ankara are also invited to the opening ceremony. A publicity program is run through the mass media to inform the public of the importance of statistics during the week.

Uganda

In Uganda we celebrated "Africa Statistics Day" for the first time last year. Details of the activities we had including the programme are: Africa Statistics Day on 18 November, 1994 was celebrated. The theme of the celebration was "Building Statistical Capacity in Support of Sustainable Development and Regional Integration". It was organized jointly with the Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics (ISAE), Makerere University and the Uganda Statistical Society (USS). Activities over three days included:

- (a) An Inaugural lecture by a Professor of Statistics.
- (b) Exhibitions of Statistics publications available with

the various agencies.

(c) Workshop for data producers and users.

(d) Talk by a Guest Speaker - a former Director of ISAE has been invited.

These activities enabled the data users and the public in general to learn and comment about what is happening in the statistics industry. The data producers got a feed back on the data they produce. The stage was set for the co-ordination of data gathering activities between the data producers themselves and the determination of priorities.

Participants of the Workshop on Statistics were selected from among senior representatives of the major producers and users of statistics in Uganda. The organisations included the principal Government Ministries and departments in charge of economic and social development (e.g. the Ministries of Finance and Economic Planning, Agriculture, Industries, Trade, etc.), the Central Bank, the academic institutions, chambers of commerce, employers' associations, trade unions, and the news media.

The general public were invited to attend the exhibitions and the Inaugural Lecture to learn what is produced in the various statistics offices. Potential donors were invited to the Workshop.

Appendix 2

Bangladesh

Such a 'Day' should be marked by efforts focussed on programmes of very wide disseminations of statistics and statistical information and intimately interacting with all users of statistical products. The 'Day' can be celebrated sometime in November/December and in this regard idea/experiences of other countries will be very valuable.

Belize

Such a world day would be very good for small statistical offices like Belize, who strive for visibility on a daily basis in order to survive. A day like this could sensitize both government and the public to the need for reliable and accurate statistics.

Bulgaria

For "World Statistics Day" we suggest 27 April (the day of the establishment of the permanent office of the ISI in the Hague).

Ecuador

It would be good to divulge the importance of statistical information for the scientific knowledge of reality, and for the economic, social and political conduction. An official celebration at national level and better at world level, will contribute to achieve an statistical culture in Ecuador.

Finland

A World Statistics Day would provide an opportunity for publicising the usefulness of statistics and for generating discussion about the problems of statistics. We would suggest that the proposed World Statistics Day be celebrated every year.

Israel

A recognition/celebration of that kind would, I assume, differ from one country to another, mainly by cultural patterns and other conditions prevailing in each country.

For Israel I could imagine a celebration with the Prime Minister's presence or a reception by the President of the State for senior statisticians. This could be followed by a special meeting of the Public Advisory Council on Statistics and/or a one-day conference of Israeli-statisticians dealing with current tasks of statistics in the country (present and future).

A meeting of the Government Statistician with the media should be another feature in the series of events of that "Day" which could contribute to raising public awareness as to the role of statistics in modern society life, business and state affairs.

A special commemorative postmark could be used that day (or during a whole week/month) by all postal services in Israel.

Further, should the UN issue a special "statistics" stamp, one could try to get many countries to use the same design (with country's name and denomination changed) as a local postage stamp.

Japan

With regard to what day of the year should be chosen as "the World Statistics Day", we think there are some ideas. For example, February 16 may be one of the choices commemorating the establishment of the Statistical Commission which was decided by the eighth resolution of the Economic and Social Council on February 16, 1946 and has been contributing to the development of the statistics in the world. September 19 is another option commemorating the first meeting of the International Congress of Statistics held from September 19, 1853, when commenced the international statistical activities. In addition, the day when the United Nations decided to implement the first world-wide statistical programme could be one of the choices.

Mexico

It is suggested that the "World Statistics Day" have as part

of its objectives to illustrate role of statisticians not only in the information systems, but also their inter-relationship with working groups in all fields of scientific research.

Provide awareness of the importance of the National Systems of Statistical Information. In this context, for example, of relevance would be the "fundamental principles of official statistics".

It would be convenient in a celebration of this kind that the public, private and academic sectors concur in a conference in which pamphlets and various publications were distributed.

It would be important to make it known through media communication channels.

To integrate in a report the activities that took place on this day to be distributed to all countries after the celebration.

Morocco

Quant à la proposition d'instituer une journée mondiale de la statistique nous l'accueillons avec joie car cette journée mondiale renforcera encore plus les objectifs visés par les journées nationales ou régionales.

New Zealand

Such a day might well focus on highlighting the benefits of statistics to public policy, the maintenance of government processes including underpinning the democratic nature of democratic societies, and also to celebrate those distinguished statisticians that we have who may well have played a part of some significance in the development of the nation.

Norway

The idea of a "World Statistics Day" is good, however, and if a certain date is recognized as a world wide event, we would celebrate by i.e. inviting journalists, statistics users, dataproviders and the general public to Statistics Norway, initiate activities in the school system etc, using the opportunity to inform on statistics on a general basis and on the activities of Statistics Norway.

Philippines

We appreciate your interest to establish a "World Statistics Day" to promote and instill a worldwide awareness and appreciation of the importance and value of statistics. Since we are also celebrating our statistics month in October, we would prefer to hold the World Statistics Day in October.

Portugal

We do consider however, that such a day ought to be celebrate only once or twice every decade, thus preventing its banalization.

Suriname

I think that a worldwide celebration of a Statistics Day is a good idea especially for the third world countries because in these countries the people are not "statistic minded" enough. Such a day could be helpful.

Sweden

Statistics Sweden would probably support it to the extent of arranging some seminar, exhibition or the Statistics Days outlined above on that date, trying to get media coverage, perhaps arranging an essay competition among school-children etc. I should mention, through, that the various UN "Days" usually receive fairly limited attention in Sweden, and that statistics is not widely regarded as an inspiring item.

Switzerland

Consider to be a valuable contribution to a better understanding of statistics in general among a broader public. In order to be even more efficient, I would suggest to link it with other national specific actions, such as articles in newspapers or press conferences about the main tasks and purpose of official statistics.

Uganda

It could be a good idea, however, due to resource and time constraints I do not think it will be feasible to have more than one celebration in a year. Thus one possibility could be to do it jointly or convert the African Statistics Day to a "World Statistics Day". Since African statistics has some unique problems and features to me it is preferable to celebrate Africa Statistics Day.