

National Statistical System in Lebanon

Current Situation and Vision

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I- Background

The Central Administration for Statistics (CAS) in Lebanon is the Government body responsible for Official Statistics production and publication for the country.

It takes full responsibility for carrying, producing and publishing statistics in various social and economic fields. It also publishes information and statistics whether produced by itself or by other governmental bodies.

The mandate that governs the Statistical System of Lebanon is the statistical law number 1793 issued on February 22, 1979 and the law 2728 issued on February 28, 1980 pertaining to the organization of the CAS.

In 1979 the Government of Lebanon has promulgated the law number 1973 that stipulates the establishment of the Central Administration for Statistics as an entity within the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. The law stated the functions of the CAS to:

- 1- Prepare the country statistics
- 2- Supervise technically other government's statistical units
- 3- Prepare national accounts and balance of payments statistics
- 4- Conduct surveys and studies that are requested by the Construction and Development Council and other government units

Article 5 of the law states that all government units have to provide CAS with all data requested. Private sector as well, has an obligation to respond to surveys conducted by the CAS.

Article 7 of the statistical law, states that CAS staff is not permitted to provide users, including government units, any data that are related to personal matters of households or financial position of individuals or private entities.



CAS has the sole responsibility for data collection, generation of all country social and economic statistics and compilation of national accounts and balance of payments statistics.

II- Organization of the CAS (Departments, Sections and Responsibilities)

The Government issued in February 1980 a decree number 2728 pertaining to the organization of the CAS. The law singles out the departments, divisions and their detailed functions. The law indicates the following departments, their sections and main responsibilities and tasks

1. Administrative Department

The Administrative Department is composed of the following sections:

- i) The administrative section, assumes management of personal affairs of the employees, archiving, mailing, secretarial work..
- ii) The accounting section, assumes preparation and implementation of CAS accounting..
- iii) The equipments and supplies section assumes the maintenance of CAS building and equipments...

2. Department of Production Statistics

The Department of Production Statistics is composed of the following sections:

- i) The section of the data base of production assumes the organization of the data base according to the specifications of their economical activities, geographical location and number of its employees
- ii) The section of foreign trade statistics assumes the execution of studies related to foreign trade statistics, including the studies of exportation and importation of goods prices,

preparation of the initial schedules related to external exchanges in the framework of the national accounts.

- iii) The section of prices and internal commerce statistics assumes the collection of wholesale prices of different goods, and the control of the development of these prices in the different marketing stages. Collection of the retail prices of food, clothes, home appliances and price of services in the different sectors in a periodical and regular way. Calculation of the standard wholesale and retail prices of each category of goods, according to the way of their use, and the standard figures of the cost of living. Estimation and study of the internal trade margins in the frame of the national accounts.

3. Department of Social and Household Sector Statistics

The Department of Social and Household Sector Statistics is composed of the following sections:

- i) The section of housing statistics assumes the preparation of periodical statistical surveys related to houses and extraction of their results. Organization of a special card of each building according to the geographical site and the specifications of the building and of the equipments. The preparation of periodical statistics on houses.
- ii) The section of labor statistics assumes the preparation of statistical surveys on employment, unemployment in different sectors and analysis its results.

4. Department of Fieldworks and Regional Statistics

The Department of fieldworks and regional statistics assumes thru the office of Beirut the collection and centralization of gathered data requested by each department of the CAS, from households, enterprises and public administrations and private institutions. Moreover, the law establishes regional offices to support conduction of surveys at the regional levels.

5. IT Department

The IT Department is composed of the following sections:

- i) The section of preparation of the IT work and archives
- ii) The section of the information conversion
- iii) The section of the computer

The IT department assumes the carrying out of all the works of statistical information processing, through the computer, provides technical IT advice to other departments within the CAS. Manage the CAS web page, electronic publications and data bases.

6. Department of Coordination and National Accounts

The Department of Coordination and National Accounts is composed of team work established through a decision made by the director general of the CAS; they assume the setting up of the general framework and the plans for the national accounts. They set forth of the general economical and social situation and the control for the economical activities. They work on the unification of statistical symbols and terms used in the different units of the CAS and the public administrations, institutions and municipalities.

7. Department of Dissemination, Documentation and Printing

The Department of Coordination and National Accounts is composed following sections:

- i) The section of documentation assumes the centralization of all documents related to the economical and social activities of the country and other countries. Organizing and keeping up the library documentation.
- ii) The section of publication assumes the preparation of periodical publications and distribution for ACS publications and studies.
- iii) The section of printing assumes the printing of the statistical bulletins, forms and other documents necessary for the activities of the CAS.

III- Current and Previous Activities (Surveys and other Activities)

Surveys conducted by CAS during the past 7 years where as planned in its strategic pan and annual work plan and needs. Below is the list of the main activities conducted by the CAS:

1. Previous surveys

- In 2001 CAS has conducted in collaboration with the UNICEF the second round of (MICS) the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, which provided number of relevant indicators on children and women's situation in Lebanon.
- The census of 'Water Services Subscribers' for Beirut and the Mount Lebanon Governorates was conducted since 2004.
- In 2004-2005 CAS has conducted 2 main social surveys: the 'Living Condition Survey' and 'Household Budget Survey'
- The 'Household Health Survey' (PAPFAM) was carried in 2004.
- The CAS completed in 2004-2005 the census of housing Buildings, dwellings and establishments in all Lebanon. The questionnaires used for the census covered very comprehensive information that supports the construction of a reliable frame for economic and social surveys.
- The CAS is the agency responsible by law, for compiling the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the Department of Production Sector Statistics within CAS is accountable for the data collection, processing and dissemination of the index.
- CAS accomplished in 2006 the ICP program.
- The CAS has as well published a 'Statistical Compendium on Environment" with the MEDSTAT II program in 2006

- CAS produces as well a statistical year book that covers the years 2000-2005, main indicators gathered from different sources and ministries.
- CAS has launched in 2006 the first economic survey; it covers the following sectors: Insurance, Services, Constructions, Transportation and communication, Internal Commerce, Manufacturing and financial mediation.

These surveys provided set of important indicators on individuals and household's living condition, education, economic activity, reproductive health, elderly characteristics, expenditures patterns and income... Therefore data on income and expenditures will be used as well for poverty calculation for the country.

2. Surveys for 2007

- CAS is currently conducting a 'Post-war Living Condition Survey' at the national level to assess the result for the previous war (July 2006) on the household's social and economic situations. The survey is expected to be finished in few weeks; results will be disseminated by end of March 2007. Expected results enable users to compare main findings with the 'Living Condition Survey' conducted in 2004-2005
- A Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) round 3 will be conducted in 2007, in collaboration with the UNICEF, to mainly cover the situation of children, women and youth in Lebanon. The survey will be conducted at the national level and will ensure for the first time data on the level of Mouhafazat (Administrative Areas)
- CAS is preparing a Labor Force Survey to be conducted by the end of 2007 .It is planned to be conducted on a regular basis starting 2007.

3. Publications

The CAS publishes all survey results and other publications. Hard and soft copies are available on demand and at the CAS web page that contains various statistical products, such as recent studies, news, reports, and survey results. All CAS products are free of charge, stored in downloadable versions and accessible to all users.

4. Local, Regional and International Cooperation

The CAS stress a lot on the local, regional and international cooperation with different ministries, bodies, institutions and agencies. CAS has shown interest in different activities launched at different levels of cooperation through participation in several activities, workshop and even conducting surveys.

At the local level, CAS has strengthen existing collaboration with line ministries in gathering, collecting data, and working in partnership with other ministries in order to unifying efforts and needs.

At the regional level, CAS sharing experience with other statistical agencies in Arab countries, exchanging expertise and benefiting from current surveys and new techniques.

At the international level, CAS has different partnerships on several projects and activities with different bodies, mainly the MEDSTAT and different UN programs.

CAS has worked in collaboration mainly with UNDP, UNICEF, ILO, WHO, INSEE, EU ... on several projects and benefited from these agencies through technical assistance and staff capacity building and IT equipments.

CAS participated as well in different workshops, training and meetings with UNSD, AITRS, UN ESCWA, EU, UNFPA, ILO, UNICEF, IMF... in several

topics such as Labor force, Gender statistics, census, environment statistics, transportation statistics, poverty, national accounts...

Using the main recommendations, methodologies, definitions and terms recommended by relevant UN agencies and EU MED programs and regional institutions enable CAS surveys results to be compared with other surveys results and reflect the Lebanese situation as it is.

5. Workshops

CAS organized in late 2005 a workshop on "Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics" to emphasize statistical principles used by the UN with an aim of raising awareness among users and create such a dialogue between users and producers of statistics in Lebanon. Each one of the 10th points was explained and stressed out in a way to ensure its understanding and showing its application among the law that is pertaining the organization of the CAS.

IV- Challenges

After many years of war and frustration, much of the statistical capacity and the potential to produce information and statistics were destroyed. More important, there was a loss of what is called "institutional memory".

Since the end of the war, in 1992, the country had also under-invested in the production of economic information. It has not devoted sufficient resources to rebuild its statistical capacity, and as a result, there is a lack of economic information.

One of the challenges that CAS faces is the non-existence of any statistical interagency coordination committee that would support to:

- 1- Coordinate the statistical inter-agency activities in the country
- 2- Prioritize the statistical activities

3- Supervise the adoption of best practice methodologies and classifications

1. Burden of respondent's

Households, individuals and enterprises are responding to several surveys conducted by different ministries or other bodies working on collecting data, each for specific purposes. That will affect respondent's behavior and increase the non response or partial response rate to surveys.

2. Respondent's Awareness

Some of the respondents are not aware of the aim of conducting studies neither conscious of the importance to responding to questionnaires since they don't get any direct benefit from responding to questionnaires. Therefore sensitizing respondents thru developing statistical awareness among individuals and enterprises to ensure better collaboration between the CAS and them is an urgent need.

V- Vision

In 2005, the Government has shown a strong commitment to strengthening the capacity of CAS and related ministries and public agencies and to ensuring Sustainable Statistical operations through the modernization. In February 2005 the Prime Minister gave his agreement to CAS to develop a National Statistical Master Plan for the development of the National Statistical System and to make contacts with international agencies and mainly World Bank to ensure necessary funds to implement this project. The Prime Minister has requested from the World Bank a grant for helping Lebanon for establishing the SMP. The request is still in process. The SMP will be developed with the assistance of METAC.

The SMP will help in setting out a medium-term strategy for creating the necessary capacity to produce reliable data for policy and decision making.



The main objectives will be to:

- Evaluate and assess the National Statistical System
- Formalize coordination mechanisms and formulate a Data Dissemination Strategy
- Review and update the National Statistical Strategy which will include all sectors of CAS;
- Support the development of a long-term statistical development plan;
- Evaluate data users' needs as well as data providers' means, through a participatory process with national stakeholders and international donors.
- Cost out all activities listed in the Strategy;
- Design an action plan for implementation.
