

## Statistics and Indicators in the Fields of Human Rights and Governance

### The 2000-2003 follow-up of the Montreux Conference on “Statistics, Development and Human Rights”

In the course of the last four years a huge amount of resources and energy has been invested in launching and supporting the so-called Montreux/Munich/Merida process. This process aims at strengthening the use of statistics, indicators and quantitative methods for improving monitoring of human development, human rights and good governance. The original intention of this process was not to set up a “Swiss” project, but to lay foundations for the development of an international initiative that, by its own nature, would be owned and conducted by a large number of institutions and experts from the South and the North. Today this intention is becoming a reality.

The IAOS Conference on “Statistics, Development and Human Rights” (Montreux, September 2000) gave rise for the first time to a serious and fruitful encounter between three international communities of experts: statisticians, development specialists and human rights practitioners. It gave impetus to the development of an international network of experts and organisations interested or already active in the development of statistical methods, tools and indicators for assessing governance and human rights. During the last two years this network confirmed its interdisciplinary and North/South characteristics. Several actors within the network started to translate the conclusions of Montreux into tangible action. Concrete pilot work has been undertaken in different parts of the world and initial results and proposals for further action have been examined in three important international meetings:

- **A workshop on “Measuring good governance”**, convened by the European Commission and held in Munich in January 2002;
- **A seminar on “Statistics and indicators for national human rights diagnosis”** held in Merida, in April 2002, that was convened by the Mexican Commission for Human Rights with the support of the Swiss Development and Co-operation Agency (SDC) and the Swiss Federal Statistical Office (SFSO); and
- **A workshop on “Statistics and Human Rights”**, convened by the European Commission and held in Brussels in November 2002.

These meetings marked substantial progress in the international consultations aiming at **formulating a program of work in the lines of the “spirit of Montreux”**. A task force, supported by the European Commission and serviced by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, worked on a proposal that eventually materialised in a document entitled **“Measuring Democracy, Human Rights and Good Governance” (METAGORA)**. This project proposal has been submitted for grant to various potential donors.

The **METAGORA budget amounts to €M 2,25**. The European Commission decided to finance two thirds of it, as a contribution of the *European Initiative on Democracy and Human Rights*. France (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Sweden (SIDA) and Switzerland (SDC and Ministry of Foreign Affairs) will also contribute to finance the implementation of the project.

METAGORA is designed as a **two years pilot project (2003-2005)**. It aims at developing and testing statistical methods, tools and indicators that would allow assessment of human rights and governance in its various dimensions, including accountability, distributive development and participatory democracy. It intends to gather together the expertise of leading organisations and individuals from the Northern and Southern hemispheres and to build on multidisciplinary approaches and methods of work allowing progress in developing indicators and matching quantitative and qualitative analysis for policy-oriented reporting.

METAGORA will consist in national and multi-regional pilot actions, tests and comparative studies to be implemented in several countries around the world. These will include field operations focusing on the design of pilot surveys and the implementation of collection/analysis of data (such as a human rights survey, ad hoc modules on human rights and governance within existing national household surveys, etc.). The project will also include product-oriented development of statistical methods (in fields like matching of data sources, ad hoc survey design, consistency of quantitative human rights reporting, etc.). Substantial applied research and policy-oriented analysis will be carried out by a panel of national and international outstanding experts.

METAGORA is not intending to develop an exhaustive set of governance and/or human rights indicators, whereas its work will include development and test of assessment tools and of a few key targeted pilot indicators. In the short term METAGORA aims at establishing solid basis, developing methods and testing prototypes of tools. In this sense, it intends to contribute to a proper development of human rights and governance indicators to be conducted at a later stage within medium and longer-term perspective.

As a results-oriented pilot project, METAGORA should deliver several **concrete outcomes**, in particular:

- pilot national policy-oriented reports based on the results of field operations;
- a report on the relevance and consistency of a few targeted governance indicators developed and tested within the field operations and subsequent analysis;
- an outline manual of applied measurement for assessing human rights and governance;
- an online repository of current work and initiatives in these fields; and
- an analytical report on the concepts and operational relevance of this work.

Many international agencies, research centres and universities, national statistical institutes, development agencies and non-governmental organisations are committed to be involved at different levels in the steering and implementation of METAGORA.

**METAGORA will be conducted under the institutional aegis of Paris21** that is itself a unique North/South consortium<sup>1</sup>. The profile and structures of Paris21 fit well with the global networking underlying METAGORA. Moreover, Paris21 membership encompasses the national statistical institutes and international agencies that are playing, or intend to play, a significant role in assessing governance and human rights. And as Paris21 is hosted by the

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<sup>1</sup> Decision of Paris21 Steering Committee of 18 October 2002. All costs of the Project will be covered by the Project budget. Hosting the Project, including its Co-ordination Team, within Paris21/OECD therefore implies no cost to Paris21/OECD.

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OECD Secretariat, the project could link to ongoing work on governance indicators carried out within the Development Aid Committee (DAC) and the GovNet. Thus integrating METAGORA within Paris21 will ensure synergies and interaction.

The working structures of METAGORA will include:

- a **Project Co-ordination Team** (5 persons) bound to the Paris21 Secretariat and therefore hosted within the premises of the OECD/DCD Secretariat in Paris;
- a **Panel of Experts** formed by some 14 outstanding statisticians and specialists in fields relevant for the project;
- an **Advisory Board** gathering together representatives of some 30 national and international organisations involved and/or strongly interested in the project;
- a **Steering Committee of Donors**.

The METAGORA Co-ordination Team will report to the newly created **Paris21 Task Team on Tools and Methods** and, through this channel, to the **Paris21 Steering Committee**.

It is expected that the administrative and contractual procedures within and between the EC and the OECD will be concluded in the course of this spring in order to allow the installation of METAGORA in the Paris21 Secretariat and starting of operations by May / June 2003.

**METAGORA therefore foresees strong (and broadly inclusive) advisory and reporting structures. These could open a way to respond to the request formulated at the 2002 session of the UN Statistical Commission to set up a mechanism to develop work on statistics and indicators of human rights and governance.** In this sense, the METAGORA Advisory Board, together with the Paris21 Task Team on Tools and Methods could act effectively as the **Montreux Group on governance and human rights indicators**.

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Further information can be requested to the interinary secretariat of the Montreux follow-up task force :

- Mrs Carol Mottet, SFSO, e-mail: [carol.mottet@bfs.admin.ch](mailto:carol.mottet@bfs.admin.ch)
- Mr. Raul Suarez de Miguel, SFSO, e-mail: [raul.suarez@bfs.admin.ch](mailto:raul.suarez@bfs.admin.ch)