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Current Initiatives of the Philippine Statistical
System on Social Statistics *

by

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Contents

1.	Introduction.....	3
2.	Philippine Statistical System.....	3
3.	Discussion of issues on social statistics.....	4
3.1	Statistical coordination among various producers of social statistics.....	4
3.2	Linking different fields of social statistics.....	5
3.3	Complementary use of different sources of data	8
3.4	Harmonization of concepts, definitions and classifications within and among fields of social statistics	8
3.5	Producer-user collaboration.....	9
3.6	Strategies for promoting and maximizing the use of statistics for policy planning.....	9
4.	Concluding note.....	10
Annex 1	11

Current initiatives of the Philippine Statistical System on social statistics ¹

1. Introduction

1.1 A comprehensive review of the Statistical System undertaken in 1986 by a multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral committee constituted by the Philippine Government revealed that social statistics in the Philippines do not have, as yet, a coherent framework similar to that of the national accounts. As such, the development of social statistics is generally fragmented and sectoralized.² While economic statistics were well-developed, social statistics were lagging behind. To resolve this and in response to the demand of users from various sectors, in the next decade or so, substantial focus has been given on the development and improvement of the quality of social statistics. These include among others, poverty statistics; gender statistics; Human Development Index (HDI); health statistics; and literacy and education statistics.³

1.2 This paper aims to present the status of the Philippine Statistical System (PSS) and its current initiatives to address the information needs of users in the area of social statistics along the identified issues as follows: (1) statistical coordination among various producers of social statistics; (2) linking different fields of social statistics; (3) complementary use of different sources of data; (4) harmonization of concepts, definitions and classifications within and among fields; (5) producer/user collaboration; and (6) strategies for promoting and maximizing the use of statistics for policy planning.

2. Philippine Statistical System

2.1 The Philippine Statistical System (PSS) is decentralized as upheld by the reorganization of the system in 1987 under Executive Order No. 121. Its objective is to provide timely, accurate and useful statistics for the government and the public, especially for planning and decision-making. As defined, the PSS consists of statistical organizations at all levels, the personnel therein and the national statistical program. Specially, the statistical organizations include the following:

- A policy-making and coordinating body on statistical matters in the country, the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB).
- A single general-purpose statistical agency, the National Statistics Office;

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² Report of the Special Committee to Review the Philippine Statistical System (PSS), 1986.

³ R.A. Virola, "The Philippine Statistical System (PSS): Status", Philippine country paper distributed during the High-Level Forum on Statistical Capacity Building for ASEAN Countries, PARIS 21 and ADB, November 2002, Manila, Philippines.

- A statistical research and training arm of the PSS, the Statistical Research and Training Center; and
- All departments, bureau, offices, agencies, and instrumentalities of the national and local governments and all government-owned and controlled corporations and their subsidiaries that are engaged in statistical activities either as their primary institution has its own role and responsibility in the System.

2.2 Coordination of the Decentralized PSS. Coordination is a fundamental principle that is essential in a decentralized system like the PSS. It is essential to achieve consistency and efficiency in the statistical system and avoid duplication of statistical activities. In the Philippines, the NSCB serves as the policy-making and coordinating body on statistical matters in the country. Through its Executive Board, resolutions are issued to achieve an environment conducive to the delivery of high quality statistics. Through the years, the PSS continues to address the data needs of its stakeholders, among others, the provision of quality data and indicators for the social sectors.

3. Discussion of issues on social statistics

3.1 Statistical coordination among various producers of social statistics

Pursuant to its mandated functions, the NSCB orchestrates and harmonizes statistical data generations at the national and sub national levels through several instruments and mechanisms. These include the following:

a) Philippine Statistical Development Program (PSDP)

The PSDP serves as the blueprint of priority programs and activities to be undertaken during the program period to improve the capability of the PSS. It also translates and addresses the data requirements of the Medium Term Philippines Development Plan (MTPDP). It is prepared every six years by the NSCB in cooperation with concerned data producers and users from all sectors in the country. The current PSDP (PSDP 1999-2004) envisions to develop a proactive statistical community capable of providing relevant statistical information and services to society towards sustainable development and growth with social equity.⁴ A Presidential proclamation enjoins the adoption of the PSDP as an integral part of the MTPDP and in the prioritization of the funding requirements of the program.

In the current PSDP, programs on social statistics are provided under a major chapter, Social Reform and Development. It contains major programs categorized as follows: (1) Generation of national, regional and provincial indicators of poverty and human development, (2) Improved generation and dissemination of provincial health and nutrition statistics and indicators; (3) Expansion of education and manpower development statistics; (4) Conduct of the 2000 census of population and housing and surveys on

⁴ Philippine Statistical Development Program 1999-2004, National Statistical Coordination Board 2000.

fertility and demography; (5) Improvement of shelter and urban development statistics; (6) Enhancement and expansion of social welfare and community development statistics; and (7) Institutionalization of the system of gender and development statistics and indicators. The list of specific programs, responsible agency and the status of implementation of these programs is provided as an attachment (Annex 1).

b) System of Designated Statistics (SDS)

Executive Order No. 352, issued in July 1996, implements the System of Designated Statistics as a mechanism for the identification and generation of the most critical and essential statistics for administrators, planners, policy and decision makers in government and private sectors. The designation includes the implementing agency, frequency of collection, geographic disaggregation and schedule of data dissemination. Of the 60 activities/statistics designated, 20 pertain to social statistics. These include, among others, the conduct of the Census of Population and Housing, National Demographic and Health Survey, Generation of Basic Education Statistics, Poverty Statistics, and National Nutrition Survey.

Under the SDS, the statistics generated form the core of official statistics that constitute the set of public good that the designated data producers must be accountable for. As a result, these designated statistics receive priority attention in the preparation of the national Budget.⁵

c) Technical and Inter-Agency Committees (TCs/IACs)

The IACs are created (1) to assess and evaluate the quality, usefulness and timeliness of sectoral data and determine areas of duplication, discrepancies and gaps; (2) to review the concepts, techniques and methodologies used in the collection, processing and reporting of data; and (3) to recommend an efficient and workable scheme for the allocation of agency responsibilities in the production of statistics. At present, the Committees created by the NSCB on social statistics include the following: TC on Population and Housing Statistics; Technical Working Group (TWG) on Housing Statistics; IAC on Health Statistics; IAC on Gender Statistics; IAC on Labor, Income and Productivity Statistics; TWG on Mortality Statistics; and the Working Group on Gender and Development (GAD) Indicators System.

3.2 Linking different fields of social statistics

a) Human Development Index (HDI)

The Human Development Network (HDN) initiated the estimation of the HDI in the Philippines at the regional level. Three years later, HDN came out with HDI estimates at the provincial level, and then President Ramos instructed the NSCB to include the HDI in

⁵ R.A.Virola, "The Philippine Statistical System: Status", 2002.

the System of Designated Statistics and ensure its regular generation. In May 1997, the HDN and NSCB signed a memorandum of understanding to effect the transfer of the computation and publication of the HDI to the NSCB. The first HDI series for 1997 with updates for 1994 was released by NSCB in 2000. The HDI is prepared every three years and to date, the NSCB came up with the 2000 provincial HDI. The provincial HDI is constructed using the average of three development outcomes for each province as follows: (1) health as measured by life expectancy; (2) level of knowledge and skills as measured by the weighted average of functional literacy and combined elementary and secondary net enrolment rates; and (3) access to resources as measured by the level of real per capita income.

b) POPDEV Core Indicator System at the local level

The population and development (POPDEV) indicators system is a set of core indicators based on the POPDEV framework that highlights the interrelatedness of population and socio-economic development factors, e.g. nutritional status is affected by household income and household size. Through an NSCB Resolution, the Board approved the core POPDEV Indicators, consisting of 27 indicators for adoption in planning and policy making at the local level. The LGUs were enjoined to compile the indicators and establish mechanisms to operationalize the indicator system. The Commission on Population is tasked to monitor its implementation.

c) Gender and Development (GAD) Indicator System

The publication, *Women and Men in the Philippines: A Statistical Handbook* is released by the NSCB every three years as an offshoot of its involvement in the United Nations Development Fund for Women (INIFEM) and UN ESCAP Project. It is a compilation of the latest available and relevant statistics on gender issues which are deemed important to planners, researchers and other users in GAD advocacy, plans, programs and policies. The 2003 edition of the statistical handbook put together statistics on the following gender concerns: population and families; work; economic participation; public life; agriculture; environment; peace and human rights; health and nutrition; education; migration; and violence against women.

The NSCB Executive Board likewise approved the adoption of 20 core GAD indicators as part of the GAD Indicator System needed to monitor the implementation of the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development (PPGD) and the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action. Specifically, the core indicators will be used to monitor gains in pursuing the PPGD visions which include gender equality and equity, women empowerment, sustainable development, peace and social justice, actualization of human potentials beyond basic needs, democratic participation, self determination at all levels and respect for human rights.

d) Poverty Statistics

The National Statistics Office (NSO) conducts the Annual Poverty Indicators Survey (APIS) to provide data needed in a more frequent monitoring of poverty. The survey provides information on demographic and economic characteristics; health status and education of family members; family access to health facilities; water and sanitation condition of family members; availment of credit to finance family business or enterprise; and income and expenditures of the family. In addition, it gathers information on the effects of the economic crisis on families and the steps they have taken in response to these problems.

A conceptual framework for the Integrated Poverty Monitoring and Indicators System (IPMIS) was developed by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) through a UNDP assisted project. It is an integrated system by which different ways of measuring, monitoring and reporting of poverty which are not income and expenditure-based maybe interfaced. Using this framework, the NSCB identified 18 indicators covering three areas of concern: survival; security and enabling.

Official poverty statistics in the Philippines are generated by the NSCB with geographic disaggregation from the national down to the provincial level. In addition to the official poverty statistics, the NSCB initiated efforts to produce GIS-based poverty maps at the provincial level piloted in 2 provinces: Laguna and Albay. The maps show the various dimensions of poverty and allow users a micro perspective of the poverty situation in terms of health, crime situation, education etc. in the municipalities.

e) Economic and Social Indicators (ESI) System

The NSCB is currently updating the ESI, an instrument aimed at strengthening the planning system by providing the means by which economic and social change can be monitored and measured more effectively. Specifically, the indicator system seeks to monitor the achievement of the economic and social development goals set forth in the Medium Term Philippines Development Plan. Thus, the ESI Framework is revised each time a new development plan is formulated. The proposed ESI Framework for 2001-2004 will serve as basis for the data inputs needed for the State of the Nation Address of President Arroyo in July this year.

f) Compendium of Philippine Social Statistics (CPSS)

The CPSS is published by the NSCB every 2 years with the purpose of presenting in figures major developments and trends in the country on social concerns. It presents a wide range of available data in the social sector covering 176 indicators on population; health; nutrition; education and manpower; housing; employment; income, expenditure and prices; women and children; public order, safety and justice; poverty, social welfare and development; and environment.

g) Framework for the protection of women and children

The framework for the protection of women and children was approved by the NSCB Executive Board for adoption by all concerned as basis for the development and improvement of an integrated reporting system on statistics on violence against women and children. The framework identifies the needed statistics on the following: prevalence and incidence of violence against women and children, profile of the perpetrator and the victim, place of commission, forms of violence, motivating forces and underlying causes, service provider, types of services, etc.

3.3 Complementary use of different sources of data

a) National and Local Health Accounts

Continuing the efforts initiated by the Department of Health (DOH) in 1992, the NSCB has institutionalized the compilation of the Philippine National Health Accounts (PNHA). PNHA consist of a set of statistics that presents national health spending for a given year. It tells (a) how much the country spends for health care; (b) where the money comes from (sources of funds); (c) types of health care services (uses of funds); and (d) how much it costs to administer a health financing scheme. Data are sourced from administrative-based statistics of the Commission on Audit, Department of Budget and Management, DOH, Philippine Health Insurance, etc. and from derived statistics such as the Philippine National Income Accounts and results of surveys of the Family Income and Expenditure Survey of the NSO.

b) National Education Expenditure Accounts (NEXA)

The NSCB was contracted by the Department of Education (DepEd) through its Third Elementary Education Project in the development of the NEXA for the Philippines. Compiled from various sources, the NEXA 1991-1998 presents how and what education services are financed and how services are paid for, i.e., expenditures by various sources of funds, public and private, changes over time in the source of funds, etc.

3.4 Harmonization of concepts, definitions and classifications within and among fields of social statistics

As the coordinating body for statistical matters, the prescription of standard concepts and definitions as well as the dissemination of standard definitions are continuously being undertaken by the NSCB. Efforts along this line include the following:

- (a) Production through an inter-agency effort of the glossary of terms on violence against women and children and other related concepts which prescribes the standard concepts and definitions to be used in the generation of statistics on violence against women and children. The definitions and concepts conform with the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination

against Women, the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child and Philippine related laws in the rights of women and children.

- (b) Another on-going effort concerns the redefinition of urban-rural, being led by the NSO through an inter-agency working group.
- (c) User-producer collaboration is likewise evident in the on-going work in coming up with a new operational definition of functional literacy by the PSS based on the concept developed by the Literacy Coordinating Council of the Philippines. Similarly, approval by the NSCB Executive Board of the concept and operational definition of the 'informal sector' was facilitated through inter-agency effort specifically, by the IAC on Labor, Income and Productivity Statistics.

3.5 Producer-user collaboration

A number of mechanisms have been implemented in the PSS to foster better relations between users and producers of official statistics as well as to improve information dissemination in the country. These mechanisms contribute to the enhancement of the credibility and sincerity of the statistical system in responding to its users. These include the following: (1) Joint user-producer formulation of the PSDP Framework as well as the sectoral programs; (2) Annual celebration of the National Statistics Month in October; (3) National Convention on Statistics; (4) The National Statistical Information Center (NSIC) One-Stop Shop for Statistical Information and Services; (5) Users' fora; (6) Technical and Inter-Agency Committees (TCs/IACs); and Production of National and Local Health Accounts and the National Education Expenditure Accounts. Likewise, it should be noted that other agencies with financial resources engage the major statistical agencies to undertake the development of data systems for the generation of the data requirements e.g. NHA, NEXA, etc. As a result, the statistical system's capacity to address user needs is strengthened.

3.6 Strategies for promoting and maximizing the use of statistics for policy planning

As discussed in the previous section, the PSS has put in place several mechanisms which provide the fora for the articulation of user requirements and expectations, for informing users about statistical development programs of the producers and for soliciting user support, cooperation and involvement in the advocacy on the importance of statistics. Through the NSCB Executive Board, which is comprised of both producers and users of data, priorities and thrusts are decided. In pursuance of its objective to be responsive, demands of the stakeholders are considered in the workings of the system. Consultations with concerned users of data are done to gather inputs useful in the evaluation of developmental activities/frameworks such as coverage, users, etc. The need to reach out to media and the legislative bodies is also an effective strategy in promoting the importance of statistics. Thus, the PSS nowadays makes it a point to invite

representatives of the media and Congress in users' fora and in the presentation of various outputs of the PSS. ⁶

The use of statistical data is maximized if sharing is institutionalized and a culture of information sharing instilled within the system. To this end, the PSS adopted as one of its best practices, the concept of the National Statistical Information Center (NSIC) as one way of establishing a culture of information sharing between and among data producers and users. As a medium for promoting accessibility of statistical information and services, the NSIC has been instrumental in the PSS. ⁶

4. Concluding note

As earlier mentioned, although a number of mechanisms has been implemented in the PSS, much leaves to be desired in the area of social statistics to respond to the diverse demands from stakeholders. The PSS operates in an environment constrained by limited resources, thus setting of priorities has become quite important in all respects. A concrete program of work to further the development of social statistics is thus essential.

⁶ R.A.Virola and L.D. de Leon, Coordinating the PSS, 2002.

Annex 1

Philippine Statistical Development Program (PSDP), 1999 -2004 Social Reform and Development

Program/Implementing Agency/Status

Data Collection and Indicators Development

1. *Generation of National, Regional and Provincial Indicators of Poverty and Human Development*

- Annual Poverty Indicators Survey – National Statistics Office (NSO), Latest 2001
- Estimation of National, Regional and Provincial Poverty Thresholds – NSCB, Completed in 2002
- Family Income and Expenditure Survey – NSO, Conducted 2000/Planned 2003
- Pilot Implementation of the Community-Based Poverty Monitoring Project – Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Completed 2002
- Institutionalization and Improvement of the Estimation of the HDI by Province – NSCB, Completed 2002
- National Indicators Testing of Indicators of Sustainability – National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA/PCSD), Completed 2002
- National Health Accounts – NSCB, Latest 2000

2. *Improved Generation and Dissemination of provincial Health and Nutrition Statistics and Indicators*

- Development of the Health Management Information System – Department of Health (DOH), on going
- National Nutrition Survey – Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI), 6th NNS on-going
- Updating of the Nutritional Status of Filipino Children at the Provincial Level – FNRI, 2001
- Philippine Food Consumption Survey – FNRI, 1993
- Development of an Information System for electronic dissemination and utilization of food and nutrition survey data – FNRI, deferred due to budget constraints

3. *Expansion of Education and Manpower Development Statistics*

- Improvement of the Coverage of Basic Education Statistics – Department of Education (DepEd) on-going
- Development of the National Education Accounts – NSCB, Completed 2002
- Enhancement of the Collection, Processing and Dissemination of Higher Education Data – Commission on Higher Education (CHED), on-going

- Generation of Statistics on the Rationalization of Technical, Vocational Education and Training – Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), on-going
 - Operationalization of the National Manpower Information System – TESDA, on going
 - Establishment of Linkages among local and international data banks on TESD – TESDA
 - Maintenance and Expansion of the Electronic Networking on Science and Technology Education – Science Education Institute/Department of Science and Technology (SEI-DOST),
 - Survey on IT Capability of Philippine Secondary Schools – SEI-DOST, every 3 years, 2003
 - Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey – NSO, November 2003
4. ***Conduct of the 2000 census of Population and Housing and Surveys on Fertility and Demography***
- 2000 Census of Population and Housing – NSO, Completed
 - National Demographic and Health Survey – NSO, 2003
 - Institutionalization of the Family Planning Survey – NSO and DOH
5. ***Improvement of Shelter and Urban Development Statistics***
- Improvement of Housing Statistics – Housing and Urban and Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC), on-going
6. ***Enhancement and Expansion of Social Welfare and Community Development Statistics***
- Improvement of the DSWD Data Collection and processing System – DSWD, 2002
 - Ancestral Domains Resource Data Banking – National Council for Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) – deferred due to resource constraints
 - Development of a Data Base on Indigenous Peoples’ Organizations and NGO Operating for Indigenous Peoples – NCIP, deferred due to budget constraints
7. ***Institutionalization of the System of Gender and Development Statistics and Indicators***
- Generation and Publication of GAD Statistics and Indicators – NSCB, Completed April 2003

Statistical Human Resource Development

8. *DepEd Statistical Manpower Training Program – DepEd, Completed 2002*
9. *CHED Training on Basic Statistics and Computer Software – CHED, Completed 2002*
10. *DSWD Training on Statistical Data Management – DSWD, Completed*