United Nations
Statistics Division

ESA/STAT/AC.88/08
24 April 2003

English only

Expert Group Meeting on
Setting the Scope of Social Statistics
United Nations Statistics Division
in collaboration with the Siena Group on Social Statistics
New York, 6-9 May 2003

Social Statistics in the Development Agenda: Two Cases for Relevance and Sustainability *
(Revised)

by

Tomas Africa **

* Paper presented at the Expert Group Meeting on Setting the Scope of Social Statistics, United Nations, New York, 6-9 May 2003. This document is being issued without formal editing.

** Director, United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific. The views expressed in this report are those of the author and do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the United Nations Secretariat nor of the Institute.

Contents

Social statistics in the development agenda: two cases for relevance and sustainability
(Revised)

This paper starts with highlighting the key point that for statistics to survive and flourish, it has to become more relevant to the needs of policy and plan formulation. It then shows that indeed the focus of official statistics has traced the trends and shifts of development thinking. Two cases, one from a country (Philippines) perspective and the other from a regional (Asia and the Pacific) standpoint, are then presented to draw insights, patterns, trends and perhaps next steps from the experience. This is followed by an attempt to establish these cases as responses to the challenge for increasing further the opportunities of social statistics inputting effectively into social policy.

PART ONE

Relevance and Sustainability of Official Statistics

Official statistics will have to be relevant and able to generate impact from its use by policy and decision makers in their planning and programming. It is not enough that the national statistical organization (NSO) produces the results from its surveys, censuses and processing of administrative records, run these through some form of analysis and interpretation, and have them available in a timely and accurate manner. The utility of any statistical series is not attained merely by handing out the results to 'users' when they walk through the doors of the NSO. It is achieved when policy decisions and formulated action programmes have been influenced by the provision of information and knowledge embodied in these statistics.

Sustainability is important in the face of financial difficulties being experienced in the developing world as well as budget deficits in their public sector accounts. No additional monies will come the way of the national statistical organizations unless the results of their censuses, surveys and administrative records processing provide the basis and evidence of key policies and decisions.

In two recent seminars in the region, speakers have called for increased relevance to policy as a means to building sustainable statistical capacity. At the Asian Development Bank (ADB)/PARIS21 Joint High Level Forum on Statistical Capacity Building for ASEAN Countries held last November 2002 in Manila, the President of the Asian Development Bank, Mr. Tadao Chino emphasized a need for a road map for strengthening statistical systems that are capable of generating policy-relevant data sets. He suggested a number of key principles that should underpin a new strategy for capacity building. [1] These include:

- capacity building demands a national commitment to allocate adequate financial and human resources;
- adoption of sound management practices to enable effective and efficient use of all available resources;
- demand for statistics should be the driving force in adopting balanced work programs;
- pursuit of policies that ensure data transparency and credibility; and

- improved data dissemination.

In the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP)/ Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) Management Seminar for the Heads of National Statistical Offices in Asia and the Pacific held last February 2003 in Bangkok, it was concluded that the depth and extent to which an NSO will undertake analysis and interpretation of its statistics is directly related to how high it wishes to place statistical development among the competing priorities in the national funding agenda.

This is quite a departure from the thinking that still prevails among heads of NSOs that they only provide data and users should be able to figure out what to do with it once these are in their possession. This view is equated with being neutral, with being independent, that of not siding on any issue by not doing analysis; however it actually results in its being increasingly isolated from the policy mainstream. It defaults on providing meaning, relevance and returns to the provision of public monies for the conduct of often massive data collection programmes, such as censuses and large-scale national surveys. Not only does this thinking keep the statistical system away from the national priorities, it also misses out on the opportunity to input to the key policies that may spell the difference between success and failure in programmes and projects that affect society and the economy.

To be relevant statistics should support the development process in the economy by monitoring the consequences of events, intended and unintended, and effects on segments or totality of the social or economic units, like a firm, an industry, a family, a community, etc.

An outline of development goals that have been espoused in the international community for the past five decades is presented. It is interesting to observe how the production and availability of official statistics respond to these, with some time lag. Of course the fundamental statistical tools have existed for a time even before these advocacies came into global focus. It is how these are packaged that has been the issue.

Development Objectives

Early postwar aid was focused on reconstruction of the war-torn economies of Europe and Japan-a task that it contributed to with considerable success. The poor countries of the world were not the first priority, and the focus was on raising production and income, rather than on broader notions of development.

In recent years, the goals of development have come to embrace the elimination of poverty in all its dimensions-income poverty, illiteracy, poor health, insecurity of income and powerlessness. A consensus is emerging around the view that development means increasing the control that poor people have over their lives, through education, health and greater participation, as well as income gains. [2]

Development thinking has evolved as studies have brought forward changing strategies (heavy to minimum government intervention) and goals (production growth to distribution of growth) in the desire to achieve progress for the world. The development goals for the past half-century can be outlined as follows:

- 1950s - Growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
- 1960s - Growth of per capita GDP
- 1970s - Growth of per capita GDP; Poverty Alleviation
- 1980s - Non-Monetary Indicators (Human Development Index); Environment
- 1990s - "Freedom' Indicators; Sustainable Development

In the 1950s and 1960s many viewed large investments in physical capital and infrastructure as the primary means of development. In the 1970s awareness grew that physical capital was not enough, and that at least as important were health and education. World Development Report 1980 articulated this understanding and argued that improvements in health and education were important not only in their own right but also to promote growth in the incomes of poor people. The 1980s saw another shift of emphasis following the debt crisis and global recession and the contrasting experiences of East Asia and Latin America, South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Emphasis was placed on improving economic management and allowing greater play in market forces. World Development Report 1990 proposed a two-part strategy: promoting labor-intensive growth through economic openness and investment in infrastructure and providing basic services to poor people in health and education. In the 1990s governance and institutions moved towards center stage – as did issues of vulnerability at the local and national levels.

World Development Report 2000/2001 built on the earlier strategies in the light of the cumulative evidence and experience of the past decade- and in the light of the changed global context. It proposed a strategy for attacking poverty in three ways: promoting opportunity, facilitating empowerment, and enhancing security. [3] Related to this is the thinking on poverty-reducing development in the mold and influence of Albert Hirschmann (processes rather prices and quantities), Joseph Schumpeter (entrepreneurship), and Amartya Sen (achievement of freedom from poverty, intolerance and oppression through development). [4] The idea is to look beyond aggregate income and its distribution and recognize that standards of living and thus development require key dimensions beyond income such as empowerment that is the enhancement of individuals' abilities to shape their own lives. Accordingly, the strategy of development is to build an investment climate that facilitates investment and growth, and to empower poor people to participate in that growth.

Three broad determinant factors of a favorable investment climate are

- macroeconomic stability and openness,
- good governance and strong institutions, including the rule of law and law enforcement, the control of corruption and crime, regulatory structures for the promotion of a competitive private sector, the provision of public services or of the framework for such services, and the quality of the labor force, and
- the quality of infrastructure, including power, water, transport, and telecommunications.

However, in this broad view, instead of simply asking whether a person's current income level classifies that person as poor *ex-post*, it is also important to ask *ex ante* whether, or to what extent, he or she has the capabilities and environment for action and success. The "freedom" notion of poverty is about opportunity, empowerment, and security, and is the idea that there are more dimensions of poverty than lack of income. To attack poverty thus involves, in large

measure, empowering poor people to shape their own lives, through opportunities to obtain education and health care, through risk reduction and mitigation, and through participation in the key decisions that affect them and their families.

Development Goals and Official Statistics

When these goals are laid down vis-à-vis the branches of official statistics answering to the range of issues related to the goals, we see that there has been the effect of data support being generated by the statistical community to support development work. (See Annex 1 for a brief description of official statistics as referred to in this paper.)

Period	Development Goals	Official Statistics
1950s	Growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	Economic
1960s	Growth of per capita GDP	Economic
1970s	Growth of per capita GDP; Poverty Alleviation	Economic, Social
1980s	Non-Monetary Indicators (Human Development Index); Environment	Economic, Social, Demographic, Environment
1990s	"Freedom' Indicators; Sustainable Development	Economic, Social, Demographic, Environment

Despite the limited availability of resources, the NSOs have tried to keep pace, but with some difficulty, in addressing the data support needed in the national and international development agenda. This harmonization process may be illustrated by two developments in the region that highlight the responses of the statistics community in aligning statistical capacity building efforts to the data requirements imposed by the development community. One is from the perspective of the Philippine National Statistics Office (PNSO) that participated in a government-wide exercise of people empowerment in social reform (poverty reduction) and the other is that of an international (regional) agency carrying out training activities, SIAP, to support the provision of statistics required in the National Human Development Reports (NHDRs).

PART TWO

Case 1
Philippine NSO Experience in Community-based System of Minimum Basic Needs Monitoring

The Philippines launched the *Social Reform Agenda* (SRA) on June 4, 1995 to enable people to have access to opportunities for undertaking sustainable livelihoods espoused under the agenda for change. (See Annex 2 for more information on the Agenda.) One of the ten flagship programs under the SRA was the Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (CIDSS) implemented by the Department of Social Welfare and Development that sought to

- Alleviate poverty through an integrated delivery of social services;

- Empower families and communities through the total family approach and community organizing;
- Monitor and evaluate changes in the quality of life of targeted poor families based on the Minimum Basic Needs (MBN) approach, and;
- Institutionalize CIDSS strategy in local development planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of activities for sustainability.

The MBN approach was a strategy of prioritizing primary requirements to ensure that the basic needs for survival, security from personal harm, and enabling needs of the individual, family and community are attended to. The degree to which a Filipino family achieves its MBNs served to measure its quality of life. If the family is unable to meet its minimum basic needs on a sustained basis, then the family is considered deprived of these basic needs and is therefore in a state of poverty. Those who are classified to be at the highest level of deprivation are then targeted for priority assistance. This was put into operation through a system of gathering data using monitoring forms at the community level by volunteer monitors (CVMs). The government officially adopted the Minimum Basic Needs-Community-Based Information System (MBN-CBIS) in 1995.

The set of MBN-CBIS indicators to be monitored was formulated by an inter-agency technical working group composed of representatives from key Executive Departments of the national government in the social sector. [5] Thirty-three (33) indicators were identified and grouped into indicators of survival, security and enabling needs:

a. Survival (15 indicators on food and nutrition, health, water and sanitation, clothing),
b. Security (9 indicators on shelter, peace and order, income and livelihood), and
c. Enabling (9 indicators on basic education and functional literacy, people's participation in community development, family or psychosocial care)

These indicators resemble the 'freedom' indicators on promoting opportunity, facilitating empowerment, and enhancing security espoused by Stern and as expounded in the World Development Report 2000/2001 (Attacking Poverty). About a fourth are also related to the MDG indicators that were adopted in late 2000.

The inter agency working group included many existing social indicators into the MBN framework. From a statistical standpoint, it had in reality forced the consideration of several social statistics into a government-recognized development framework and approach to be pursued nationwide. And this happened without the active participation of the Philippine Statistical System (PSS).

Giving advice in aggregating statistically robust results from the community level to the national level

The PNSO was drawn into the programme only in 1996, when the Presidential Commission to Fight Poverty (PCFP) approached it for assistance in producing aggregate MBN indicators at the provincial, regional and national levels. An inter-agency Task Force on Poverty Statistics Enhancement (TF-PSE) was organized by the PNSO for a final assessment of the monitoring

form and to provide guidance on how to collect and process the data. It revealed a number of shortcomings in the procedures and instruments, such as:

- lack of procedures to validate the data during its collection;
- no uniform interpretation of concepts used;
- no available manual of instructions or procedures;
- inappropriate phrasing of the questions to be able to come-up with quantifiable indicators;
- inclusion of questions in the household questionnaire requiring the answer from the community; and
- construction of indicators such that some are positively phrased, while others negatively phrased, resulting in confusion in identifying unmet needs.

Moreover, since the monitoring forms captured only the presence or absence of particular problems/needs in the community, the magnitude and extent of these problems could not be determined. Because the needs and conditions vary from one locality to another, there were feedbacks received that not all the 33 indicators were appropriate or sufficient for some areas. Several communities merely wanted the monitoring of a few indicators such as lack of potable water and sanitary toilets that made their farmers sickly despite fertile lands and irrigation available nearby. Others wanted the inclusion of other indicators not in the list. Cultural communities wanted a measure of ancestral domain holdings. Moreover, while the concept of volunteerism (in data collection, processing and presentation) encouraged people participation, the capabilities of some of the CVMs mattered and the quality of information derived was affected.

The form that was designed after months of intensive consultations and debates among key Departments was deemed as not capable of generating robust statistical results. Procedures to correct the inadequacies and oversights observed in the assessment had to be undertaken. However while the assessment provided some concrete solutions to improve the MBN-CBIS procedures and at least get technically better statistics, the original MBN-CBIS procedures were still implemented. It was too late for drastic revisions, or any for that matter, needed for it to be an instrument that could be attributed to an official statistics organization. Although PNSO has the expertise in planning and undertaking data collection activities, it served as an observer to the data collections exercise orchestrated by *barangay* officials in the poor municipalities.

Overseeing technology and fund transfers in the implementation of the community-based monitoring system

Relatedly the implementation involved the installation of the MBN-CBIS in the fifth and sixth class municipalities (classified according to local government revenue generated) all over the country. There were a total of 960 such 'poor'municipalities covering 19,066 *barangays* (villages) nationwide. An amount of PhP100 million earmarked from the Poverty Alleviation Fund II (PAF2) was provided for this purpose in 1977.

The fund was added to the PNSO budget since the PCFP felt that the principal activity to be funded was data collection and no other agency had the skill, experience and presence in the field on data collection and processing other than the PNSO. The funding had a high chance of

approval by Congress if it were incorporated into the under the PNSO budget. To maintain good relations, the PNSO eventually served as the fund conduit for capability building, data collection and processing materials in the communities whereby funds necessary for the project were transferred to the concerned local government units in accordance with progress reports and other necessary documents.

The programme had modest results as it lost steam as a new President of the Republic and another administration took over.

Addressing the lack of adequate and appropriate data on poverty and related statistics

Unlike the household surveys conducted by the NSO, the MBN-CBIS could not be a statistical technique of generating information on the poverty situation at the local level and estimates could not be aggregated to the provincial or regional level. Information derived was limited only to particular municipalities that participated in this program.

Another motivation for the MBN-CBIS was to have a more frequent measure of poverty available to the national government. Official poverty statistics in the country are based on the Family Income and Expenditures Survey (FIES), which is conducted on a nationwide basis by the PNSO every three years since 1985 and therefore can only be generated every three years.

However there has been an increasing demand for monitoring poverty on a more frequent basis, e.g., once a year, through the development and identification of proxy indicators, including those that are not based on income alone. [6] FIES poverty estimates are also generally income-based and it was the consensus that the multiple dimensions of poverty were not being moitored. Also, the sampling design of the FIES up to 1994 allowed for the estimation of poverty incidence at the national and regional levels only.

The PNSO still had to address the lack of frequent and relevant poverty statistics. Through the UNDP, the NSO conducted a pilot survey, named as the Annual Poverty Indicators Survey (APIS) that provided not only income and expenditure data but also some socio-economic indicators. This was followed by a nationwide APIS, which eventually became a rider to the quarterly labor force surveys and was funded by the government. [7] The APIS was envisioned to supplement the monitoring of poor families through the use of non-income indicators (correlates of poverty) and to provide inputs to the development of an integrated poverty indicator and monitoring system which would enhance timely, accurate and consistent production of poverty-related data for policy and planning purposes. [8]

Other items like income and expenditures, though with less detail, were maintained to establish correlation with the non-monetary variables. It covered about 41,000 sample households from the 78 provinces and all cities and municipalities of Metro Manila. Both the MBN-CBIS and APIS support the government's thrust to alleviate the conditions of the poor families in the country. About 15 MBN-CBIS indicators were included in the APIS so that an overlap may be established between the two data sets at the provincial level. The APIS provides national data down to the regional and provincial level while the MBN-CBIS provides data at the community level, which can be aggregated at the municipality and up to the provincial level.

The enhanced MBN-CBIS continues to be implemented in some local government units. The Asian Development Bank meanwhile is supporting a project intended to directly link the APIS and the FIES, and to construct a panel for a longitudinal look into the incomes, expenditures and social transactions of families over time.

Case 2
SIAP Involvement in Training Countries on Social Indicator Systems

There are linkages between the statistics needed for the preparation of the NHDRs, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). The same data collection efforts are the basis of the statistics needed for all three purposes. SIAP can help promote the availability and quality of the statistical backbone in these systems since the mandate of SIAP is building statistical training capability in the region. What has been included in its regular training courses as the generic official statistics can be (and is now) packaged as an integral part of these indicator systems.

The UNDP and SIAP in 1998 embarked on a project on "Establishing and Strengthening National Capacity in Data Collection/ Compilation and Statistical Analysis Required in the Preparation of NHDRs". The project was implemented through providing training courses/workshops/seminars at both the country and regional levels. SIAP in collaboration with NSOs, and often supported by UNDP country offices, organized country courses and provided training materials, lecturers and resource personnel. The participants were middle-level official statisticians, plus a number of economists with statistical background from other ministries/organizations since the NHDR is a collaborative effort among different ministries/organizations of various disciplines and persuasions. These courses were each of a duration of 10 working days and attended by 20-30 participants. There were 16 country courses held in the last three years with 474 participants satisfactorily completing the courses.

Subjects and topics that were covered in the country and sub-regional courses included:

- the concept of human development;
- the progress in human development throughout the world in the last thirty years;
- the three major components of the Human Development Index, namely, health, education, and income;
- statistical foundations of NHDRs pertaining to income and economic performance, labor force and employment, the informal sector, demography, poverty and income distribution, health and nutrition, gender, housing, community, education and literacy, transport and communication, and environment;
- the analysis of the foregoing statistics in terms of underlying concepts, scope, reference period, specific items of data needed, and data sources;

From the various country courses [9] and the sub-regional workshop in Bangkok , it was concluded that NSOs have an important role to play in the preparation of NHDRs in terms of providing valuable advice and input on the nature, sources, methodology, and presentation of data for the purpose of NHDRs. However many NSOs in the region have not been significantly

involved in the preparation of the NHDR in their respective countries. Most have simply provided data. Only very few NSOs have actually taken the lead in the compilation, have done most of the data processing, or have been institutionally involved.

It was reported though that many NSOs are eager to be involved, if not increasingly involved, in the preparation of the NHDR. (See Table 1.) But whether it be the MDGs, PRSPs, or NHDRs, the statisticians have to be conversant, if not absorbed into the mainstream of, related plans and policy actions.

But this will not be a one-way process (outflow) for the NSOs. It will be made aware of the need for the regular or periodic conduct of the census and key household surveys and at the same time be more vigilant over the validity and reliability of the statistical results. The NSO is also in a vantage position to incorporate new and reasonable demands on data. In fact the statisticians in the workshop took note that statistics from traditional sources of data are being used in the reports. The following data collection efforts were identified as key to the statistics required for the NHDR, the MDGs and the PRSP, and the focus of training by SIAP:

- the population census,
- the vital registration system,
- household surveys on the labour force, income and expenditure, and on demographic and health situation
- the administrative record systems such as on education and elections.

A document prepared for the 34th session of the Statistical Commission in March 2003 lists the need for statistical capacity in the following additional areas [10]:

- purchasing power parities
- primary school retention and completion surveys
- environmental indicators from various sources
- trade analysis capability

Table 1. The Role of NSOs in NHDR Compilation: 1992-2001

Country	Number of NHDRs	Kind and Level of Involvement in the Compilation			
		Taking a lead	Institutionally involved	Doing most data processing	Data provider
Bangladesh	7	No	No	No	Yes
Bhutan	2	No	No	No	Yes
Cambodia	5	No	No	No	Yes
Indonesia	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Iran	2	No	No	No	Yes
Lao PDR	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Malaysia	2	No	No	No	Yes
Maldives	1	No	No	No	Yes

Country	Number of NHDRs	Kind and Level of Involvement in the Compilation			
		Taking a lead	Institutionally involved	Doing most data processing	Data provider
Mongolia	2	No	Yes	No	Yes
Myanmar	1	No	No	No	Yes
Nepal	2	No	Yes	No	Yes
Philippines	4	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sri Lanka	2	No	No	No	Yes
Thailand	2	No	No	No	Yes
Viet Nam	2	No	Yes	No	Yes

The project had sensitized country statistical officers on current issues related to gender, environment, poverty, health and nutrition, and in establishing a sound statistical base for the NHDRs. These social indicators should eventually take on added meaning in providing useful measures and tools for policy discussions on the implication of sustainable human development. It was envisaged that these will support more informed policy discussions, especially at the national level, among the key stakeholders on the basis of up-to-date reliable data and high quality statistical analysis.

Moreover, the broad view of development taken by NHDRs, the MDGs, and the PRSPs shows that the international development community now better realizes that raising standards of living and attacking poverty involves other key dimensions than the measurement of aggregate income and its distribution, such as the empowerment of individuals to shape their own lives.

Traditional surveys like the labour force, income and expenditure, and demographic and health surveys will have to take on the added demands of poverty monitoring in dimensions aside from the income aspect. The population census and vital registration and related administrative systems should likewise be seen as providing data for the poverty reduction programmes. NSOs may even have to undertake transfer of appropriate statistical technology to civil society in order for smaller domains like communities or zones to undertake their own data collection effort outside of the national system of official statistics, as in the case of the PNSO.

And to be actively involved, NSOs will need to improve their capabilities on statistical analysis and interpretation. They will increasingly have to highlight social and economic issues from the data they produce, even if their mandate for this is not clearly spelled out in most cases. They are the ones who provide the data so they would know the context and quality in which these were produced better than any institution or individual. Doing so can enable them to gain related experience and improve their analytical skills and increase the transparency, consistency and resulting credibility and support of their statistics and activities in the development community.

PART THREE

Challenges in Social Statistics

A paper for the 1998 Sydney meeting of the Siena Group for Social Statistics listed down gaps that exist in the production and use of social statistics to be the necessary starting point for defining a programme of actions. [11] For every concern (in italics) I have outlined some related observations from the two cases presented earlier. It can be seen that in some ways social statistics have been produced and used to assist in formulating social policy and programme, even in the absence of a framework parallel to that of the SNA. The main concerns noted at the time (1993) were the following:

1. *The relationship with users (policymakers and citizens). Statistical information was not considered as being sufficient – in terms of quality more than quantity- to guide decision making by individuals, households and institutional players…*

Case 1: MBN (Philippines)
The policy circle felt that not enough data (even at the national level) were being produced to fight poverty. Furthermore, the Social Reform Agenda sought to empower people at the grassroots. It was decided that the citizens should take a direct hand in improving their plight and in fighting poverty. Hence data collection was designed and implemented at the community level.

Case 2: NHDR (SIAP)
Many statisticians felt that statistical results available from the censuses and surveys were not being used as much as those from economic surveys. This could be addressed through increased involvement of the NSO in the NHDR preparations. More indicators may also be obtained by re-processing existing data files and establishing closer collaboration with other data collectors. A fewer number of new surveys may need to be undertaken. Official statisticians will also have to increasingly highlight data that they produce to shed light on social and economic issues, even if their mandate for analysis and interpretation is not clearly spelled out in most cases. It should be pointed out that carrying out this analytical work increases the relevance and strategic importance of statistics in the national funding priorities.

2. *The linkages between social and economic (or other) phenomena were insufficiently expressed and understood; this was reflected in data collection and data analysis. Even in the social field, the various branches – education, pensions, demography or crime – appeared to be too separated along policy departments or among different disciplinary approaches…*

Case 1: MBN (Philippines)
At the national level a new survey (APIS) was designed and conducted by the PNSO to complement the data, which were already available from existing surveys but lacking in frequency and linkages to support the monitoring of the impacts arising from the intervention packages under the Social Reform Agenda. The survey included items that clearly were the statistical concerns of the Executive Departments but which were not addressed adequately

and for which the PNSO did not get involved in because these were not included in their mandated coverage.

Case 2: NHDR (SIAP)
The NHDR provided a framework to bring various social statistics into a consolidated report and statistic (Human Development Index), even if its efficacy and accuracy are still highly debated. The training and related activities still provided the NSOs a structure with which to establish relevance and relationships among the various 'non-economic' statistics that their computers were crunching out.

3. *Gaps in policy and analytical models affected both data production and analysis. Conceptual frameworks derived from mainstream models needed revision, including concepts of employment, health, quality of life, welfare, etc…*

Case 1: MBN (Philippines)
The framework that promoted the integration and generation of social and economic statistics was developed from Agenda 21 initiatives and translated into the country context. The key agencies of government participated extensively in formulating the version of the national agenda. It was programmed to increase access to livelihood and empowerment opportunities of marginalized sectors of society, but not entirely administered by the government.

Case 2: NHDR (SIAP)
The framework that was advocated through statistical capacity building, principally through training, was that of the National Human Development Report formulated under the aegis of UNDP. The various statistical series were presented as integral components of the various indexes in the report.

4. *Social accounting, after the promising results achieved in the 1970s, thanks in particular to Richard Stone, had run into all kinds of difficulties and had practically been marginalized from mainstream statistical activities…*

There has been no response to this concern in both cases.

5. *The state of cross-country comparability of data and analysis was particularly poor, and worrying. The great progress in the definition and implementation of international standards in many areas of statistics (e.g. economics, inflation, national accounts) was not matched in social statistics.*

Case 1: MBN (Philippines)
The community-based information system (CBIS) was drawn up without the participation of the PNSO. Upon field verification, the concepts, forms, and processes were insufficient to provide robust statistical results. But the need for data was pronounced; data had to be gathered by the community through volunteers because the starting point of the whole effort was the data to be obtained from the CBIS. It was too late for PNSO involvement for these to be revised so as to generate statistics for policy use at higher administrative levels. The PNSO to adequately respond to the need for quality and standards initially tapped resources

from the UNDP and the World Bank to launch the APIS and later succeeded in getting funds from the national government to support its regular conduct.

Case 2: NHDR (SIAP)
Training is not only a tool for statistical capacity building; it can also be an effective means of advocating for statistical support to development thought and the issues that come with it. Through training the concepts, definitions and methodologies have been standardized on topics related to human development and the statistical foundations of NHDRs.

6. *Serious problems of coordination existed at the national and international level. There were many players involved, and no one of them seemed to have a natural and recognized role of leadership…*

Case 1: MBN (Philippines)
The framework called for the preparation of indicators that were not being produced officially: crime victimization, domestic violence, and social inclusion. Some indicators could be obtained from the programme departments, such as those involved in health and nutrition, education and social welfare. But these were compiled from their administrative records and were often limited to project monitoring activities rather than national or sub-national conditions. The exercise brought out the important need for the PNSO to be an active participant in the undertaking to reduce unnecessary duplication in data collection efforts and rationalize the production and use of social statistics for more comprehensiveness and better application in social planning.

It was also doubtful if any data gathered by the community in forms, where it had a free hand in revising a few or some data items that were relevant to their situations, could really be aggregated to higher administrative levels. Because needs and conditions varied from one locality to another, the PNSO received feedbacks that not all the 33 indicators were appropriate or sufficient for some areas. However having a common set of indicators was not fully addressed due to a change in the strategy of poverty alleviation adopted by a new administration. Early participation of the NSO in the activity could have cut down on time, costs and effort.

Case 2: NHDR (SIAP)
The NSO is in a vantage position to incorporate new and reasonable demands on data. It was suggested that with increased involvement of the statisticians in the NHDR preparation, more indicators can be obtained by re-processing existing data files and establishing closer collaboration with other data collectors. A fewer number of new surveys may need to be undertaken to fill in the gaps. While it cannot be the lead in the preparation of the report, the NSO can help the leadership in compiling the statistics from its holdings and those from the other departments or ministries.

7. *The role of national statistical institutes in most countries and at the international level was not strongly felt or recognized. As most of the sources of data were administrative, and considering the policy sensitivity of the issues, data production was mostly in government departments or in research centers (e.g. Germany)…*

Case 1: MBN (Philippines)
The PNSO was approached by the programme agencies very close to the stage of implementation because of aggregation issues of data collected from the community that had to be summarized to the national level for policy and programme considerations of the Executive departments.

Case 2: NHDR (SIAP)
Many NSOs reported that they had very little or no involvement in the preparation of the NHDRs. They were eager to be in the mainstream of the NHDR activities. The NSOs have become aware of the need for the regular or periodic conduct of the census and key household surveys and at the same time be more vigilant over the validity and reliability of the statistical results.

It is the link to social policy link that will make social statistics more relevant, enable the NSOs to be more proactive in the direction of its development, bring in the resources from the government and the international community to spark and sustain the development of social statistics. Key offices like the Departments of Finance, of Planning and the Central Bank as well as the Legislature may still focus on the economic issues and fund the economic statistics sectors internally or get external donors to pitch in, but they are likely to provide support also for social statistics since the last decade has increasingly seen the emphasis on the reduction of poverty and related social issues as the desired impact of economic policy. Statistical systems will definitely benefit from being in the mainstream of these advocacies and initiatives as these people-centered trends figure prominently in programs of government. [12]

Frameworks for Social Statistics

Several important UN World Summits took place in the last decade of the millennium and contributed substantially to the increased level of international awareness of social issues. These gatherings also played a catalytic role in renewing the quest to better integrate economic and social facets in to the development process and underscored that social development cannot be isolated from ongoing political, economic and cultural changes. This view, which can now be found in many UN reports, broadly recognizes that all macroeconomic policies entail a variety of social outcomes and therefore should be judged, not on market-based criteria only, but on how successful they ultimately are in bringing societies closer to achieving social justice. [13]

Frameworks or systems that have been developed have not really attempted to distill social statistics of their economic linkages. There have been notable efforts to consolidate or relate social statistics with economic statistics under a single umbrella of analysis. The System of Social and Demographic Statistics developed by Richard Stone also includes an elaboration of the SNA. [14] A System of Economic and Social Accounting Matrices and Extensions (SESAME) has been developed by Statistics Netherlands. SESAME is a detailed statistical information system of sub-modules in matrix format, from which a set of core economic, social and environmental macro-indicators is derived. [15] The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has espoused a system for linking nine articulated frameworks for social statistics to measure well-being that considers work and economic resources (enabling consumption) as two among the areas of concern integral in its monitoring. [16]

While a generally accepted social theory or conceptual model would facilitate the development of integrated systems of social statistics, the history of economic statistics and national accounts teaches us that it is likely that theory will never provide the statistician with such a model, and that the statistician can develop very useful coherent statistical systems without such a theoretical model. [17] This is the case in the two examples given: the MBN and the NHDR frameworks, which were developed external to the statistical system.

Thus, being relevant and involved in the national development efforts can immensely help developing countries in improving their statistical capacity, to include data production, analysis and interpretation, agency coordination, statistical programming, and perhaps necessary legislation. Efforts in providing technical and operational guidelines to establish minimum foundations for concepts and definitions may be more productive for the global statistical community in the medium term.

Integration of Databases

The preceding review of two statistical activities related in setting the direction and pushing the advance of social statistics has also brought out the importance of linking data across collections: censuses, surveys and administrative registers. The NSO or an appropriate agency responsible for statistical coordination has to rationalize the production of statistics in the social sector. Those that are generated as a result of the exercise of administrative functions in providing, for example, health and education services to the citizenry should be convinced to undertake the production of statistics for the overall purpose of national planning and not merely for singular departmental project-specific monitoring functions. Otherwise the statistical system should take up the cudgels for broader action in rationalizing the production of social statistics, including those derived from administrative-based systems.

The improvement of administrative data systems while admittedly not a short-term activity should be pursued. Over a longer period this together with a support system of sample surveys may turn out to be a more cost-effective venture than one relying on a considerable survey program augmented by administrative data. Great strides can be obtained from the advances in information and communications technology coupled with improved coordination in establishing priorities and standards by the statistical system with the programme Departments. Statistical outcomes will show more consistency and better comparability over space and time. There will be better opportunities to produce data on small population groups and small area estimation.

Statistics based on administrative data are not a cheap, low-quality alternative to survey statistics. They have their own merits and are in many cases the best alternative. The emerging trend in transition countries in Asia to abandon their registry systems and increasingly allocate more of their resources to sample surveys may be ill-advised. The improvement of these systems that are integrated to the conduct of surveys may prove to be more cost-effective and sustainable in the medium term as surveys can also be expensive to maintain. However, in order to use administrative data more effectively in the statistical system the following are musts:

- encourage legislation that clearly enables statisticians to access and improve administrative data systems;
- promote better documentation, in particular process meta-data on administrative registers;
- invest in the methodology and compilation of statistics based on administrative data or a combination of surveys and registers at the micro-level;
- regularly audit the quality of administrative data, especially in terms of coverage and administrative delay; and
- try to get influence on actions leading to modifications to an administrative file used for statistical purposes. [18]

The turf issue on whether the NSO or the individual programme Departments should take on the task of producing a coherent and related set of statistics to aid policy making in the social sectors should not be left to be resolved on its own, because it will not. Not many officials will let go of a function that will monitor to what extent how well one's office manages the projects that it carries out, especially if it is already given the monitoring task. At times partial monitoring can give a good report on the performance of an office even as the impact on service delivery to its overall clientele is less than favourable. The government leadership should assign this function of production and/or coordination of social statistics to a neutral and professionally competent organization like the NSO. Unlike in other sectors, and particularly economics, NSOs were not, and were not seen as, primary players in the field of social statistics; they were not bringing the required coordination and broader perspectives needed for multidisciplinary approaches and the integration of data sources. [19]

As we have seen that the mandates for economic statistics were eventually passed on to the NSOs from the economic agencies and ministries, I think that a parallel transfer of responsibilities and resources for social statistics would be advantageous for social development efforts in the country, as was beginning to be observed in the PNSO case and as was voiced out by NSOs in the SIAP NHDR Project. This will ensure a policy-neutral (but not policy-isolated), sustainable, and technically sound monitoring scheme for social development in the countries.

CONCLUSIONS

NSOs have to respond to the call for support in providing data or technology to generate good data for guiding or enlightening social policy discussions and decisions. Otherwise they lose the opportunity of increasing the relevance of their outputs, and their existence. The PNSO had to **react** to the situation by (1) acting as a resource and conduit to the output of the nationwide poverty alleviation programme; and (2) designing and conducting a new survey (APIS) to provide more frequent indicators to complement available data and a wider perspective of the situation in the social sector. If the PNSO backed down on the challenge, the government would have proceeded anyway with implementing the MBN-CBIS.

NSOs have to be proactively involved in carrying out the development agenda. They can provide available data that are statistically robust. They should be conversant in the current development issues so that the development community can be furnished proper advice and assistance on the data requirements for monitoring and evaluation. They should hone on their

skills for analyzing and interpreting the statistics that they produce and determine the extent to which they will present these.

The NHDR, MDGs, and PRSPs are highly sustainable, integrable and high-utility policy and analytical frameworks that NSOs can identify statistical priorities for data production and analysis as well as key areas for statistical capacity building.

Production of social statistics has to be rationalized and the NSOs should be at the helm of this effort, aided by appropriate legislation or Executive directive. Data has to be made comparable as far as possible by providing minimum criteria that will be built into concepts and definitions at the national and/or regional levels.

The importance of administrative registers should be promoted. Transition countries in Asia have been seen to forgo the viability of its registry systems in favor of probability surveys. The allocation of resources should be seen in the light of a combination of both strategies rather a choice of one over the other. This should be examined in terms of relevance and sustainability beyond the short-term.

The slow development of social statistics may not have been due to lack of a policy and analytical framework since there are several in the social sector. The ABS move to articulate each of these and link these together may be a viable solution considering that the responsibility for all these frameworks may not be lodged under one accountable office. Perhaps the frameworks for health statistics, education statistics, and other social statistics can be individually strengthened and appropriate statistical systems drawn up for each. Then with the help of the local and international development community their linkages can be established in support of plan and policy formulation in the social sector. We have seen that increasing the relevance of social statistics to social policy, (more of the 'need-to-know' motivation rather than the 'nice-to-know'), can lead to its sustainability, growth and advancement with the NSO overseeing its development.

References and Notes

1. Asian Development Bank, Report of the ADB/PARIS21 Joint High Level Forum on Statistical Capacity Building for ASEAN Countries, Manila, November 2002. <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Events/2002/ADB_Paris21/default.asp>
2. Goldin, Ian, Rogers, Halsey, and Stern, Nicholas, *The Role and Effectiveness of Development Assistance: Lessons from the World Bank Experience*, from A Case for Aid: Building a Consensus for Development Assistance, World Bank, June 2002, pp. 57-58. http://www1.worldbank.org/publication/pdfs/15162front.pdf
3. World Bank Development Report 2000/2001, Attacking Poverty, September 2000.
4. Stern, N., 'A Strategy for Development', ABCDE Keynote Address, Washington D.C., May 2001
5. These included the Social Reform Council, Presidential Commission to Fight Poverty, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Department of Health, Population Commission, Department of Labor and

Employment, Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council and the Department of Education, Culture and Sports.

6. Africa, Tomas, *Portraying Disparity through Statistics: Situation and Methodological Issues – Philippines*. Paper presented at the International Symposium 'In Pursuit of Statistics for Sustainable Development in Asia', Tokyo, Japan, November 1997.
7. The Philippine Statistical System runs a programme of household surveys anchored on the quarterly labor force survey. Surveys such as the Family Income and Expenditures Survey, Demographic and Health Survey, Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey are scheduled regularly to ride or 'piggy-back' on these quarterly surveys.
8. The procedures and contents of the pilot APIS were based on the results of two UNDP-assisted projects, namely: (a) the Study on Correlates of Poverty, which identified the household-specific and location characteristics of the poor that were highly correlated with indicators derived from past FIES, Labor Force Survey and Census of Population, and (b) the Study on the Expansion of the Sampling Frame, which evaluated the operational applicability of the poverty indicators identified in the first study and assessed the adequacy of the master sample design with respect to these indicators. Incidentally the UNDP also supported the enhancement of the MBN-CBIS through the Minimum Basic Needs - Community-Based Poverty Indicators Monitoring System (CBPIMS).
9. Country courses were held in 17 countries, namely Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Iran, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam.
10. United Nations, Harmonization of Indicators and Reporting on Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, Statistical Commission 34th Session, E/CN.3/2003/21, New York, March 2003.
11. Garonna, Paolo and Jones, Gary, The Siena Group After Five Years – Origins and Intentions, Progress and Achievements, Sydney, Australia, December 1998.
12. Perhaps the Philippine NSO should focus on what right things it did or seemed to have done in the eyes of the top leadership in the Executive and Legislative branches of government that brought about the assignment of a significant budget for an activity that it was initially not part of and did not ask for. On hindsight, the perception of technical competence, professional independence, and good governance (accountability) may have brought this about.
13. Mikkelsen, Lene, *Benchmarking and Monitoring Social Development: Geneva 2000 and Beyond*, Brainstorming on Social Indicators, Strasbourg, France, September 2000.
14. United Nations, Towards a System of Social and Demographic Statistics, Series F No. 18, ST/ESA/STAT/SER.F/18, 1975.
15. Keuning, Steven and Verbruggen, Marleen, European Structural Indicators, A Way Forward. Presented at a seminar in honour of Graham Pyatt, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, Netherlands, November 2001.
16. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Measuring Wellbeing: Frameworks for Australian Social Statistics, Canberra, Australia, October 2001.
17. Everaers, Pieter, *A Framework for Harmonization of Key Social Indicators, Core Variables, and a Framework for the Joint Use of Administrative Sources, Registers and*

Survey Data, in Future Directions for the Siena Group, Harmonization of Key Social Indicators, Sydney, Australia, December 1998.
18. van der Laan, Paul, Social Statistics based on Micro-Integration of Administrative Registers and Household Surveys, Netherlands, May 2000.
19. Garonna, Paolo and Jones, Gary, *op. cit.*

Annex 1

Official Statistics

Several frameworks of analysis have been used, although rather loosely. The most frequently cited is the framework for *economic* statistics. These are statistics used for measurement of economic activity; used to describe the structure of the economy, and reflect the change in relative importance, with growth, of each sector of economic activity; to show labour input in relation to production; on variables that influence dynamism of the economy; that serve as early warning indicators of problems that could surface in the economy; to indicate the degree to which the economy is integrated to the rest of the world; on availability of living essentials and other items of regular consumption by the society; and on the role of the government in the economy, the size of government operations, and the policy priorities of government.

In the mid-60s there was a compelling need by governments and international organizations on measuring progress achieved in the social aspects of development in a systematic manner as it became clear that increase in per capita incomes as a consequence of economic growth was not enough and that the impact of other relevant considerations on individual well-being and the quality of life also mattered. The framework of analysis for *social* statistics arose from these considerations. Briefly the major social indicators are in the areas of education and literacy, health and nutrition, environment, income and wealth disparities, gender differentials, ethnic, religious and caste disparities, and regional disparities. The list now includes governance and political participation.

In the nineties, further specialization and global circumstances have created separate analytical frameworks for *demographic* statistics as ageing, migration, disability, and related development concerns emerged as issues that have and will be addressed by governments in the decades to come. Indicators on environment have also come to the fore with the threats of the depletion of the ozone layer, climate change or the greenhouse effect, and acid rain (acidic gases reacting with the atmosphere) precursors on the population. The pressure for *environmental* statistics has already resulted in the development of a satellite account for energy and environment statistics in the system of national accounts (SNA).

Annex 2

The Philippine Social Reform Agenda

The SRA was an integrated set of major reforms to enable the citizens to: a) meet their basic human needs and live decent lives; b) widen their share of resources from which they can earn a living or increase the fruits of their labour; and c) enable them to effectively participate in the decision-making process that affects their rights, interests, and welfare. These reforms were perceived to enhance democratic processes.

The SRA was composed of social reform packages providing programs and services for marginalized sectors of society in the country's 20 poorest provinces. It involved all the executive departments, the local government units, and people's organizations representing the basic sectors of women, children, youth and students, disabled, senior citizens, urban poor, and victims of disaster and calamities.

A further enhancement of the SRA resulted in sharper definition of the social equity, economic, ecological, and democratizing components of the various flagship programs. It also led to the convergence or integration of the nine flagship programs having impact on all target sectors and ecosystems. This placed the country's anti-poverty initiatives within the framework of *Philippine Agenda 21* (PA 21).

By 1997, efforts were geared towards pushing the Agenda in municipalities and convergence areas, where the SRA was expected to impact the lives of ordinary people. Increased participation by civil society and major groups was promoted. The nine (9) flagship programs of the SRA included: *Agricultural Development for Farmers and Landless Rural Workers; Fisheries Management and Development; Protection of Ancestral Domain for Indigenous Peoples; Workers Welfare and Protection; Expansion of Credit; Livelihood Programs; Socialized Housing Delivery for the Poor; Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services; and Institution Building and Effective Participation in Governance.*

One of the ten flagship programs under the SRA was the Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (CIDSS) implemented by the Department of Social Welfare and Development. It sought to

- Alleviate poverty through an integrated delivery of social services;
- Empower families and communities through the total family approach and community organizing;
- Develop capabilities of families to undertake productive activities;
- Ensure that basic social services are accessible to families and communities;
- Monitor and evaluate changes in the quality of life of targeted poor families based on the Minimum Basic Needs (MBN) approach, and;
- Institutionalize CIDSS strategy in local development planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of activities for sustainability.

The set of MBN-CBIS indicators to be monitored was formulated by an inter-agency technical working group composed of representatives from the Social Reform Council, Presidential

Commission to Fight Poverty, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Department of Health, Population Commission, Department of Labor and Employment, Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council and the Department of Education, Culture and Sports.

The MBN-CBIS initially used a monitoring form that gathered information on met and unmet needs of the families using the following 33 indicators grouped into indicators of survival, security and enabling:

A. Survival
   - Food and Nutrition

1. Newborn babies with birthweight of at least 2.5 kgs. (5.5 lbs.)
2. No severely and moderately underweight children under 5 years old
3. Pregnant and lactating mother provided with iron and iodine supplements
4. Infants exclusively breastfeed for at least the first four months
   - Health
5. Deliveries attended by trained personnel
6. Infants (0-1 year-old) fully immunized
7. Pregnant women given at least two doses of tetanus toxoid
8. Not more than one diarrheal case per child below five years old
9. No deaths in the family due to preventable causes
10. Couples with access to family planning services
11. Couples practicing family planning in the last six months
12. Solo parents availing of health care services
    - Water and Sanitation
13. Family with access to safe drinking water within 250 meters (or ten minutes walk from their houses)
14. Family with sanitary toilet (water-sealed, *antipolo* flush type)
    - Clothing
15. Family with basic clothing (at least three sets of external clothing)

B. Security
   - Shelter

16. Houses owned, rented or shared
17. Housing durable for at least five years
    - Peace and order/public safety
18. Family members not victimized by crimes against person (i.e. murder, rape, abuses, physical injury)
19. Family members safe from crimes against property (robbery, theft, and other similar crimes)
20. No family member victimized by natural disaster
21. No family member victimized by armed conflict
    - Income and Livelihood
22. Head of the family gainfully employed
23. Other members of the family 18 years old and above gainfully employed
24. Family with income above subsistence threshold level

C. Enabling
    - Basic education and functional literacy

25. All children 3-5 years old attending day care/preschool
26. All children 6-12 years old in elementary school
27. All children 13-16 years old in high school
28. All family members 10 years old and above able to read and write and do simple computations
    - People's participation in community development

29. At least one family member involved in at least one legitimate people's organization/association for community development
30. Qualified members of the family voted during the last election
    - Family Care/Psychosocial Care

31. No children below 18 years old engaged in hazardous occupations
32. No incidence of domestic violence
33. No child below 7 years old left unattended

The 20 priority provinces were monitored as to how far these had localized the SRA at the municipal and *barangay* (village) levels. Localization meant that: (a) the SRA had been adopted to local needs and priorities and was being implemented with clear poverty reduction targets and basic reform commitments; (b) the Minimum Basic Needs approach had been installed and its data profiles formed the basis for local situation analysis, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of local poverty issues and response mechanisms; (c) the programs and resources of the National Government Agencies (NGAs) and the local government units (LGUs) had been synchronized for specific target areas and sectors in line with the convergence policy; (d) local structures had been set up and were functional with clearly defined roles and accountabilities; and (e) the system and process for monitoring the delivery of National and local SRA commitments on the ground were in place.

[Taken from United Nations, Social Aspects of Sustainable Development in the Philippines http://www.un.org/esa/agenda21/natlinfo/countr/philipi/social.htm]