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SCS

Statistics and Census
Sector (SCS), Ministry of
Planning - Kuwait

A Brief Profile

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Introduction:

The Statistical Office was one of the first institutions which were created to coincide with the emergence of the State of Kuwait on the eve of Independence in the early 1960s. Law no. 27 was issued on 5th December 1963 specifying : " There shall be established an Office for Statistics and Census called The Central Statistical Office to be annexed to the Planning Council. This Office is to be the sole official statistical reference in the State of Kuwait". Subsequently, Ministerial Resolutions were issued to organize the work of the CSO which is now called Statistics and Census Sector (SCS).

Statistics and Census Sector (SCS) is mandated by law to build the statistical infrastructure of the country. Statistical work in general, and Population Censuses, Surveys and Sample studies, in particular, provide indicators and numerical data that depict the structural characteristics of the national economy and shows the share of the various economic activities in generating the flow of goods and services. The SCS monitors economic and social phenomena and uses them as a basis for statistical analysis which is a primary input in planning and socio-economic policy decision making. These indicators are also useful in reflecting the progress of nations as depicted in the Human Development Reports of the United Nations.



Vision:

SCS aspires to become the sole national reference for accurate, reliable and transparent statistical information in the State.

Mission:

To provide accurate, high quality and timely statistical data in accordance with international standards, and its periodical dissemination to meet the requirements of users. The mission is to be accomplished through:

1. Commitment to neutrality and use of the specialized scientific and professional methodologies in collection of data from its primary and secondary sources and its validation and processing.
2. Development of data collection and dissemination methods by increasing utilization of modern technology in linking with data sources including use of electronic media in exchange of data between the source and SCS.
3. Assurance of confidentiality of individual information.
4. Provision of service to data users within a framework of transparency, respect and mutual trust.
5. Maintaining sustainable means of contact with the public.
6. Commitment to the basic principles of official statistics adopted by the UN.
7. Development of statistical capacity.

Historical Development of Statistical Work:

Law no.27/63 on Statistics and Census contained a comprehensive organization of the process of collection and dissemination of statistical data. However, statistical work started before enactment of the law as population census statistics were officially published in 1957.



Statistics in Kuwait is centralized since the CSO (formerly) and SCS (currently) undertakes the tasks of conducting censuses and surveys and collection and dissemination of statistical information in all fields. The responsibilities and activities of SCS expanded in tandem with the developments that took place in the Kuwaiti society. The salient features of the historical developments in the statistical work could be discerned from the following:

The 1950's and 1960's decades: The second half of the 1950's and the 1960's witnessed the implementation of the general censuses on population, housing and establishments which started in 1957 and continued until now. In 1964, one year after ratification of the statistics law, the Annual Statistical Abstract, which was the first comprehensive statistical guide for Kuwait, was published.

The 1970's and 1980's decades: This period was characterized by monitoring the pervasive socio-economic changes that followed the oil boom. Work concentrated on conducting surveys of labor force, household budget, prices and CPI, and annual surveys of establishments to construct national accounts statistics and input-output tables. Attention was also paid to compilation of time series on foreign trade statistics 1973-1986 in order to meet the requirements of planning. This decade witnessed also compilation of statistics on fisheries, public services and transport & communications. In the 1980's there was comprehensive coverage of most socio-economic phenomena, especially the development of the agricultural sector which was captured in the Agricultural Statistical Bulletin which is published annually starting with the 1986/87 season. On the other hand, SCS published special series of analytical studies on population censuses.

The 1990's decade: The first half of the decade witnessed re-construction of the statistical work which was seriously hampered by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. One of the most important features of this decade is keeping pace with the requirements of the digital society which swept all developed and most developing countries. This endeavor necessitated development of computer programming of all statistical applications to facilitate data processing.



The New Millennium: With the advent of the 21st. Century, SCS launched the new statistical portal in the web page of the Ministry and contains numerous tables on economic and population statistics, trade, Government Financial Statistics as well as Annual Statistical Abstracts. The portal improved quality control and timeliness of publication as it adopts a work flow approach for entering data at the section level and verification and approval at the departmental level up to the final verification and approval by the Chief Statistician. This allows for transparency and speed in publication.

In addition to the portal, there has been increased utilization of electronic media to publish statistical bulletins and decline in the frequency of dissemination by traditional means. There has been a sizeable increase in the use of e- mail to answer inquiries as well as CD Rom and the Web Page. By the end of 2006, 90 periodic statistical bulletins were published. These bulletins cover economic statistics (National Accounts, Annual Establishment Survey Results, Consumer Price Indices) and Population Statistics (Vital Statistics, Labor Force Survey and Household Income and Expenditure Survey results) , Foreign Trade, Transport, Social Services, Environment , Tourism , and other Statistics.

In 2005, SCS conducted the three censuses: the ninth Population Census, the Housing Census and the Census of Establishment in Kuwait . The final results of these censuses are due by the first quarter of 2007.

SCS role is not only restricted to production and dissemination of statistics, but includes ,also , preparation of statistical studies and reports. Following is a list of the most important studies which were completed during the period 2002/2003-2005/2006:

- A report on Household Income and Expenditure Survey, September 2002.
- Technical Report on the Economic Effects of Increasing Electricity Tariff on Kuwaiti Households, December 2002.
- Study on Determination of Minimum Standard of Living for Kuwaiti Limited Income Group, August 2003.
- Statistical report on Unemployment in Kuwait: Facts and Figures, June 2006.
- Two reports on Gender Equality Indicators (July 2004, March 2005).



- **Statistical Studies on Trade Relations between Kuwait and the Rest of the World:**
Two reports were published on Relations with USA and Morocco.

Tasks and Responsibilities of SCS:

Article III of law no. 27 for 1963 on Statistics and Census specified that the Central Statistical Office shall perform the following:

- ⇒ **The General Census of Population and Dwellings once every ten years at most, upon a Resolution to be issued by the Planning Board.**
- ⇒ **Collection of statistical information in all the fields which the Resolution of the Planning Board specify.**
- ⇒ **Collection of statistical information on employees in both government and private sectors. The Ministry of Defense shall be exempted from providing the statistical information which the Supreme Defense Council considers confidential.**
- ⇒ **Supervision of the statistical works performed by the concerned departments in all ministries, organizations, institutions, and companies which the government subscribes to its capital...and coordination of their statistical works. Every ministry or governmental organization or institution shall establish a statistical section.**
- ⇒ **Unification, coordination and analysis of the statistical information and dissemination of statistical data and studies through the various information media to achieve the social and economic objectives of development without compromising any private individual information.**

Major Statistical Activities:

1. Censuses:

General censuses cover Population, Dwellings, and Establishments and are conducted every ten years. The most recent censuses were conducted in 2005.



2. Surveys:

- Annual surveys which cover industry, internal trade, construction, transport, agricultural services, livestock, national accounts and foreign trade statistics.
- Quarterly Surveys cover wholesale and retail price indices.
- Periodic non-annual surveys usually every five years such as Household Income and Expenditure Surveys and Labor force Surveys.

3. Periodic Statistics:

SCS publishes 40 statistical bulletins (monthly, quarterly and annually (consult the web site for a list of publications).

Regional and International Cooperation:

Development of national statistical work entails innate institutional and manpower capacity building. This endeavor entails considerable cooperation and coordination at the regional and international levels. In this regard, SCS firmly believes in the importance of forging strong relationships and partnerships with regional and international central statistical offices. At the regional level, periodic meetings are held between national statistical offices to exchange experiences on best statistical practices are in order to improve Arab statistical performance.

Within the GCC region, the five member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council ,Bahrain , Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have laid out a path to monetary union by 2010 and have agreed upon a set of convergence criteria. To monitor convergence and to support policy makers in this process, good quality statistics that are comparable across the Gulf States are a necessary condition for creating a single monetary policy framework. Coordination of statistical activity to achieve cross-country comparability has already been ongoing for some time, particularly in the form of bi-annual meetings of heads of national statistical offices. Other important aspects of cooperation include:

- Sustained efforts to unify statistical laws in the GCC Countries.
- Conducting a series demographic sample surveys at particular points in time in order to fill the time gaps in population statistics.



At the Arab level, SCS participates effectively in the meetings and activities of the Permanent Statistical Committee of the League of the Arab States (LAS). On the one hand, the sector plays an active role in the technical sub-committees and participates in the various studies and conferences organized by the Statistical Committee. On the other hand, SCS implements recommendations relating to unification of methodologies, definitions and concepts used in censuses and surveys.

SCS, by virtue of its membership in the Board of Trustees of the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics (based in Amman, Jordan), is also actively engaged in its activities.

At the international level, SCS realizes the importance of building strong ties with international organizations in view of their pivotal role in developing international concepts and methods and drawing strategies and policies of statistical work. In this regard, SCS joined a number of international projects most important of which are:

- **International Comparison Program (ICP):**

SCS joined the International Comparison Program (ICP), which is currently implemented by the World Bank under the umbrella of ESCWA, in 2003.

- **Gender Statistics Project:**

SCS also joined in 2003 the Gender Statistics Project which is being implemented by ESCWA to produce country portraits of women and men and construct Gender Equality Indicators. So far, SCS published three annual reports on gender issues.

- **Foreign Direct Investment Networking:**

Currently, SCS is implementing a multi-country project with ESCWA on Networking Foreign Direct Investment. The project aims at building a statistical data base for Foreign Direct Investment in order to serve clients in Kuwait (the Chamber of commerce and Industry) and abroad (potential foreign investors).



• **General Data Dissemination Standards:**

SCS is engaged in developing current statistical practices to comply with GDDS in terms of data quality, periodicity, timeliness, availability and transparency.

SCS Strategic Orientation (2006/2007 – 2009/2010):

Understandably, SCS, like many evolving national statistical offices in developing countries, faces many challenges at the institutional and operational levels. These challenges created opportunities for developing solutions within the framework of a Four-year strategy for SCS. The major challenges and envisaged solutions are:

1. **Structural Challenges:** There is need to revise the organizational structure of SCS in order to create units that provide information technology support for the statistical operations which is currently sought outside the sector and upgrading quality of statistical work as well as planning and follow-up.

Solutions:

- 1) Independence of SCS in developing statistical information systems (IT) by creating a statistical IT division in the organizational structure.
- 2) Creation of statistical quality control and planning and follow-up units in the office of the Assistant Under Secretary for Statistics and Census Sector..

2. **Building and Developing Statistical Capacity:** Statistical capacity suffers from shortages in specialized national staff because statistical work in the government is not attractive to young graduates. It is envisaged to increase the effectiveness of existing manpower capacity by 50% and build new capacity during the four –year period of the strategy.

Solutions:

- 1) Utilizing the incentives in the newly approved Statistical Cadre to attract national skills.
- 2) Full utilization of expatriate skills by assigning national employees to each foreign expert for intensive training and transfer of knowledge and experience.



- 3) Organization of periodic meetings with the departments of statistics in universities and institutions of higher education as well as organizing visits by undergraduate students to SCS.
- 4) Creation of a unit to oversee development of statistical capacity through training and short visits by international experts.
- 5) Upgrading employees' performance by specifying clear job description and linking incentives and rewards with performance.

3. Weakness of Statistical Awareness by the Private Sector and Members

of the Public: The Private Sector's response to data requests by SCS is relatively weak due to misconceived perceptions of breach of confidentiality and loss of competitiveness that might arise of supplying data. Members of the general public are unaware of the importance of statistics and how it can be of help in improving their livelihood and social habitat. The challenge being transformation of societal attitudes toward statistical work in general and the importance of statistics in particular.

Solutions:

- 1) Design a "statistical public awareness "campaign in collaboration with the Ministries of Information and Education. The plan should include lectures in schools, topics in educational curricula, symposia, workshops, articles in newspapers etc.
- 2) Dissemination of statistical information through traditional media channels as well as utilization of electronic means.

4. **Development of Statistical Projects:** Some important projects have been hampered or delayed by technical and administrative impediments. SCS is working from now to ensure success of the 2010 General Censuses on Population, Housing and Establishments.

Solutions: (See also the summary of SCS future projects- below)

- 1) Development of data collection methods by using computer and mobile technology such as hand-held devices.



2) **Application of Statistical Geographic Information Systems.**

5. **Management and Planning**: A major challenge and primary objective of the strategy is to activate the role of Management and Planning in the statistical work.

This is to be accomplished by adopting the following:

- A. Preparation of an annual work plan for the sector.
- B. Preparation of an annual program for publication and dissemination of statistics.
- C. Use of electronic mail in follow-up.
- D. Annual evaluation of the work plans.
- E. Annual evaluation of the statistical publication and dissemination program.

Summary of SCS Future Projects:

The strategy relies on optimal utilization of information technology in all stages of statistical work. The most important future projects include:

- Use of modern electronic devices for data collection such as portable personal computers and hand- held devices.
- Development of data processing through computer programming of all statistical applications.
- Utilization of new technology in the field of applications for statistical work such as the Geographic Information System(GIS) which displays statistical data spatially.
- Building Kuwait Statistical Data Warehouse which would organize statistical data and tables in accordance with the established principles statistical time series. As such time gaps and data inconsistencies would be eliminated from the series. Moreover, the economic, social and demographic data would be linked in a manner which allows prompt production of the various statistical indicators.



Another vital project is establishing data bases for a number of socio-economic phenomena with the objective of building various indicators such as:

- Millennium Development Goals Indicators (MDG)**
- Environmental indicators**
- Consumer Confidence Index**
- ICT Indicators**