



Statistical dissemination practices of countries in the ESCWA region

- Seminar on user relations, marketing and dissemination of official statistics
- Doha/Qatar, February 2003

27 January 2003

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Questionnaire

- The information in this presentation is based on the responses to a UNSD questionnaire
- 8 of the 13 ESCWA countries returned the questionnaire, so the picture is not complete, but is it biased?
- Presentation is about the broad lines, not the details
- Countries may wish to add details

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Responses

- Egypt
- Iraq
- Jordan
- Lebanon
- Oman
- Palestine
- Qatar
- Syria
- Yemen

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Printed publications

- Generally, countries publish 10-50 printed publications (titles) per year
- Egypt (100) and Iraq (121) seem to be outliers
- Number of annual recurrent publications ranges between 3 (Oman) and 66 (Iraq)

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Flagship publications

- In 6 countries, a Statistical Yearbook/Abstract is one of the flagships
- Lebanon and Egypt seem not to publish a Statistical Yearbook
- Other publications in flagship category: Enterprise/industry statistics, External trade statistics, National accounts, Employment/labor statistics, Consumer Price Index, Census report
- Mentioned once: Monthly Bulletin of Statistics (Oman)

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Copies printed and distributed/sold

- Number of copies printed varies widely, both between countries and between titles
- Typical print run numbers are 300-1000
- Outliers: 50 (Syria), 5000 (Palestine)
- Number of copies sold: often very limited, sometimes none (e.g. Iraq, Syria)
- Oman sells 300 (max), Yemen sells 40% (I.e. 600-800)

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Websites

- 7 countries have a website, the oldest ones being those of Jordan and Palestine (1996), the youngest Qatar (2002)
- Syria and Yemen will create a website shortly
- All or most of the websites were developed from scratch, not on the basis of an existing model

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What's on the website?

- Usually: general information, news and some numbers
- Most countries plan to put (all their available?) statistics (database) on the website
- 5 countries will give free access to statistical database on their website (Lebanon: free now, but later?)
- 4 countries intend to charge the users for some or all of the data

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Release calendar and why this is important

- Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Qatar publish a release calendar
- Lebanon, Yemen don't
- Jordan plans to have one
- Palestine has one for internal purposes, but finds it at this stage difficult to plan releases
- Oman: this is the responsibility of the Development Information Office of the Ministry of the National Economy



Press relations

- Almost all the countries regularly put out press releases (Palestine 100 per year)
- Most countries have occasional (2-10 per year) press conferences, sometimes only for important events (Yemen: census)
- 7 countries have organizational unit that deals specifically with the media



Pre-releases and why these should be restricted

- 7 of the countries never release any statistical data to anyone before they are made public for everyone
- Exception 1: Yemen – data are given to higher management of the Ministry of Planning and development, 4-8 weeks before publication
- Exception 2: Qatar – data in production are released upon specific request



Pricing

- Most countries distribute statistical publications free to government users, and charge some price (often marginal cost) to private users
- Most countries have the flexibility to do special work at the request of government users, but usually charge them for this



Marketing

- Many countries have special unit that deals with marketing and sales
- Some have a user council or other group that reviews publications program
- Some have a special, central unit that deals with requests for information
- [Oman: information unit of ministry]



Library

- Most countries have a statistical library that is open to the public
- Annual number of visitors ranges from 300-1500
- Collection size ranges from 800-10.000
- None of the libraries offer Internet access