

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia - Central Department of Statistics

A Historical Glimpse

Statistical activity in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has officially begun with the issuance of the Imports & Exports Statistics System according to the Royal Decree No. (326) dated 3/2/1349H. This task was assigned to the Customs Department then later transferred to the Ministry of Finance & National Economy.

The Central Department of Statistics (CDS) was established in accordance with the Kingdom's General Statistics System introduced by the Royal Decree No. (23) dated 7/12/1379H.; whereby CDS was subordinated at that time to the Ministry of Finance & National Economy, instead of the Statistics Section of the Ministry's General Directorate for Economic Affairs, which is considered CDS's nucleus. According to the Ministerial Decree No. 7/2870 dated 22/9/1392H. CDS was subordinated to the Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Budget & Organisation and became a public agency with an independent budget. Then according to the Ministerial Decree No. 95/5304 dated 25/9/1395H. CDS was subordinated to the Ministry's Undersecretary for Economic Affairs, and later CDS was elevated and subordinated to the Minister of Finance & National Economy according to the Ministerial Decree No. 17/3961 dated 23/8/1400H.. The mandate of CDS was spelled out in the Kingdom's General Statistics System, where CDS is considered the sole official source for statistics in the Kingdom and is assigned to undertake all statistical operations needed in all fields of development. CDS is responsible for providing government departments, public and private agencies, and individuals with information & official statistics. According to the Cabinet's decree No. (55) dated 19/3/1416H. the subordination of CDS was transferred from the Ministry of Finance & National Economy to the Ministry of Planning. In addition, several Cabinet and royal decrees, emphasizing the importance of CDS's role in availing information and statistics to governmental and private organizations, researchers, and regional as well as international bodies, were issued, the last of which was the Cabinet's decree No (284) dated 24/11/1426H. endorsing the recommendations of the ministerial committee for administrative organization. The recommendations, embodied in the minutes of the thirtysecond meeting of the ministerial committee, contained critical technical assignments as well as important administrative procedures, the most important of which were : availing all requirements needed for establishment of data bases in all fields to be connected to an electronic network, with the aim of establishing a data bank; rapid formulation of plans and programs needed for data collection; and changing the title of CDS to the Central Department of Statistics & Information (CDSI).

The most salient statistical operations undertaken by CDSI throughout its lifetime were the Kingdom's population censuses, which were organized in accordance with the royal decree No (m/13) dated 23/4/1391H., and were carried out in 1394H., 1413H., and 1425H.. In addition. CDSI carried out establishments censuses in 1387H., 1391H., 1396H., 1401H., 1414H, and in 1424H.. Moreover, CDSI carries out different statistical surveys in the areas of population, social, and economic statistics. Furthermore, CDSI prepares statistical studies continuously and periodically (monthly, quarterly, biannually, annually).

What has been mentioned so far might emphasize the fact that CDSI's role is not confined to mere collection of statistical data & information , but rather goes beyond that to cover strengthening and developing statistical work in other governmental agencies through

coordination with statistics' sections in such agencies with respect to the preparation of different official statistics and providing CDSI with them.