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Doha Declaration on Statistics in the Arab Region



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Preamble

The first Conference of the Al-Khwarezmi Committee of the International Statistics Institute (ISI) was held, in conjunction with Qatar National Statistics Day, on 6 - 8 December 2010 in Doha, Qatar. The conference was organized and chaired by H.E. Sheikh Hamad bin Jabor bin Jassim Al Thani, President of Qatar Statistics Authority (QSA), Chair of the Al-Khwarezmi Committee, and held under the patronage of Qatar's Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabor Al Thani. The main objective of the Al-Khwarezmi committee is to act as a catalyst to help Arab statisticians become active partners in knowledge creation and improve statistical practice in the Arab region.

The scope of the conference covered key areas of statistics with emphasis on topics of interest to the Arab countries.

More than 200 participants, including statisticians, policy-makers, researchers and academics from across the region, as well as representatives of key regional and international multi-lateral organisations attended the conference. The participants acknowledged with appreciation the convening of the conference and anticipated effective regional cooperation in statistics through the Committee's activities. The significance of the Al-Khwarezmi committee stems from its mission, which is to stimulate and encourage closer cooperation between Arab and regional statistical communities.

Al-Khwarezmi committee on statistics strives to achieve excellence in statistical practice, statistical education and research in the region.

The participants unanimously emphasized the significance of creating effective statistical systems as a driver to elevate good governance in all countries, contributing to effective nation building. Conference participants focused on statistical methodology and the use of statistics in support of evidence-based decision making. They encouraged Arab governments to take effective steps towards strengthening statistical capacity in the Arab region.

Following serious deliberation the participants agreed upon this declaration on Statistics in the Arab region:

- To enhance the role of statistics, countries of the region are encouraged to define their priorities, in line with national developmental goals, through the preparation and implementation of the national strategies for the development of statistics.
- The statistical systems in the Arab region shall adopt the UN basic principles for standard statistical classifications through the usage of international standards and recommendations, in all areas of statistics including the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).
- Improve the national statistical systems in the region to generate and maintain up-to-date, high quality statistics needed to support national objectives, women empowerment, caring of elderly citizens, promoting access to decent and productive work, ensuring sustainable development and managing the impact of globalization.
- Call upon the countries of the region to promote and strengthen dialogue between the users and producers of national statistical data.
- Emphasize the role of statisticians in promoting the use of statistics in decision and policy making at local and national levels including disseminating statistics and making use of new technology in innovative ways.
- Countries of the region shall work together through existing regional organizations to ensure that the voice of the Arab region is properly represented at international statistical fora.
- There will be enhanced cooperation between academic researchers and official statisticians to bridge the gap between theory and application.
- Arab countries shall make available external technical assistance offered through the UN agencies and other international partners in promoting capacity development, emphasizing south-south cooperation including through peer reviews, and to ensure effective use of the expertise and experience available in the region.
- Statistical agencies in the Arab region shall make their data (including all relevant information) more accessible, while maintaining confidentiality of individual respondents.
- Promote the statistical aspects in the declaration of the Arab Conference on Population and Development, held in Doha on 18 - 20 May 2009.
- Promote evidence-based policies in areas of education, health, nutrition, child protection, culture, communications, science, and technology, and develop sector-wide approach to education statistics with special emphasis to measuring education outcomes, with education for all approach. Extend efforts to develop cultural statistics based on the 2009 UNSECO framework, and improve the measurement of research and development.

- Encourage statisticians in the Arab region to be part of the Al-Khawarezmi Committee and support the nomination of qualified statisticians for election for ISI membership.

Next Steps

The participants supported the call for the strengthening of activities by the Al-Khawarezmi Committee, through the implementation of the 2010 Doha Declaration. It will organize biannual conferences and increase the membership of Arab statisticians within the ISI and the Al Khawarezmi Committee.

The participants requested QSA to provide the necessary support to the Committee to start its functioning.

Doha, Qatar

8 December 2010