



## Namibia marks World Statistics Day - by Catherine Sasman

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WINDHOEK – “Unreliable statistics are as good as not having any or even worse, since you may base your planning on dubious statistics with deadly consequences,” emphasised Director-General of the National Planning Commission, Tom Alweendo.

Speaking at the first-ever World Statistics Day celebrated yesterday, Alweendo said Government is making “steady progress” to build sufficient capacity to produce reliable and timely statistics to assist with planning and execution of its consecutive development plans.

The day celebrated “official” statistics geared towards service provision, integrity and professionalism.

For Namibia to develop along the lines of its consecutive national development plans and Vision 2030, it needs accurate data collection and statistical analysis of, among others, poverty levels, extent of inequality, access to education, health and other social services.

Namibia has further just concluded the data collection for the 2009/2010 National Household Income and Expenditure Survey (NHEIS) and has begun preparations for the 2011 National Population Census and Housing survey.

Previous population census surveys were held in 1991 and 2001. Household income surveys were done 1993/4, 2003/04, and 2009/10 financial years.

Another statistical tool is the national accounts, and plans are afoot to change over from the 1993 International System of National Accounts to the latest System of National Accounts of 2008.

The national accounts have shown that the economic growth rate has dropped from 5.4 percent in 2007 to 4.3 percent in 2008.

But President Hifikepunye Pohamba said he is encouraged by the quarterly accounts of 2010 that show an improvement in economic performance, that show a growth by 0.8 percent.

He, however, noted that available statistics show that Namibia still faces challenges to expand the contribution of secondary industries to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

He said the country should work harder to change this “undesirable” situation and invest more funds for the development of the country.

“It is a paradox that despite our pressing development needs our country remains a net exporter of capital,” bemoaned Pohamba.

The Statistics Act of 1976 regulates Namibia’s statistical services, and a Bill has been introduced to Parliament to modernise this legislation.

This will include the establishment of an Autonomous National Statistical Agency that will be compliant with the United Nations Fundamental Principles on Official Statistics.

Over the years, statistical plans have been harmonised by the country’s medium-term plans to effectively monitor and evaluate the national development plans.