



## **Record of the Proceedings**

**Chairs: Pali Lehohla, Statistics South Africa & Richard Manning, OECD/DAC**

*Friday, 11 May 2007*

### **I. Welcome Statement**

The ADETEF representative welcomed participants to the premises of the Ministry. He underlined the importance of statistics and the support the Ministry lends to this issue. Mr. Richard Manning, the donor representative co-chair, commented on the donor community's real commitment to support statistics, as expressed at the Hanoi Roundtable on Managing for Development Results (RT3) and the 14 April meeting held in Washington on scaling up support to statistics (4/14 meeting). With the new census round approaching, the time is right for a stronger and new focus on investment in statistics. Mr. Pali Lehohla, the developing country representative co-chair, mentioned that recent years have seen many changes in African statistics, with African ministers of finance endorsing statistics as a central focus of economic development.

### **II. Adoption of Agenda**

The Eurostat representative requested that he be permitted to report on the European Commission (EC) evaluation of statistical development projects under the "Other Business" item in the afternoon. This proposal was approved, and the agenda was adopted without further modification.

### **III. Progress Report and Work Programme for 2007–2008**

The Secretariat Manager presented the progress report (document: *P21-SC1-07-PROG*) and work programme for 2007–2008 (document: *P21-SC1-07-WKPG*). The output of the PARIS21 Secretariat's work is to help countries design and implement NSDSs through advocacy, regional programmes, and partnership. As countries implement and assess the quality of their NSDSs, partners are requested to strengthen the knowledge available to countries on specific issues as well as provide financial and technical assistance.

With the Partnership reaching the limit of the value in organising regional events yet recognising that some regional activities will continue to take place, the Secretariat Manager proposed that PARIS21 now support country programmes more directly. A focal point should be created at the country level where partners can meet to support statistical development in countries. As part of intensified country activities, a country event could be organised to energise this partnership; participants would include the different stakeholders of the national statistical system (NSS) and representatives of key policymakers, analysis and research centres, private sector, and technical and financial partners.

### ***Discussion***

Discussions focused mostly on the momentum that PARIS21's advocacy efforts have helped create in supporting statistical capacity building in developing countries. The Middle East representative stressed that advocacy needs to be formalised in order to push the process forward for strategy implementation. He called on the World Bank and IMF, as the two major players in countries, to highlight statistical areas in their staff reports. This would go a long way in supporting statistics in developing countries. The OECD representative pointed out that the momentum created by PARIS21 has increased the demand for technical assistance; the Partnership therefore needs to work more with the statistical offices of OECD countries to sensitise them on the very important role they can play, not just in providing technical assistance to developing countries but also in advocating to their own development agencies to support developing countries as well. The ex-officio

representative welcomed the focus on helping NSOs with their advocacy to policymakers and governments in the proposed work programme. Attention has traditionally been weakest in this area, so PARIS21 advocacy materials should be disseminated not just to NSOs but also to policymakers. The Francophone Africa representative stated that, while PARIS21 is the reference for advocacy in statistics in Africa, there is a light feeling of fatigue among African NSOs. The more we speak of statistics, the less data producers receive attention. He proposed that a series of pilot countries who have designed their NSDSs be targeted for specific support to implement their strategies. The African Development Bank (AfDB) representative said that PARIS21 is well placed to help countries in securing resources from partners to implement their strategies. He proposed that events be organised with the AfDB to energise an international dialogue and review advocacy tools, for example. This would be to reach out to the Bank's country representatives, who have the closest contact with the country decision makers. The South Asia representative identified a need for a paper listing important statistical indicators and how they can impact policy decisions, as it would help statisticians advocate for statistical support in their country. He added that peer reviews at the regional level would also be helpful and highlighted the importance of paying attention to sub-national statistics. The chair said that getting to the policy communities remains a great challenge to the Partnership. One way of addressing this issue would be to better articulate the demand for statistics among the analysis community. The Secretariat Manager added that bringing the analysts on board may also help with the South Asia representative's request for a listing of indicators compared to policy data needs.

#### **IV. Partnership**

The Secretariat presented the partnership paper (document: *P21-SCI-07-PART*), which takes account of comments from the November 2006 Steering Committee meeting plus those of the March 2007 Bureau meeting. This paper is an attempt to understand the types of behaviour to achieve our common goals and to apply the principles of the Paris Declaration to statistics. The Partnership must encourage country ownership, donor alignment, harmonisation, and managing for results, critically using country procedures and mechanisms rather than imposing new systems. The paper outlines the needs of partners and their roles in delivering PARIS21 outputs and outcomes. The Secretariat proposed several actions:

- Endorsement at senior level of PARIS21 principles, calling for the endorsement, championing, and intensification of good practice
- Intensifying activities in developing countries, developing a mechanism to conduct dialogue around NSDS for both the national statistical community and development partners
- Country workshops on statistical development
- Reporting by donors on their support to statistical development
- Statistical development co-operation event (e.g., Norway event)

The paper outlines what the partnership (not just the Secretariat) could do to improve collaboration, in particular at the country level, as that is where a real difference can be made.

#### ***Discussion***

Participants welcomed the principles expressed in the paper and in particular were in favour of focusing PARIS21 efforts at the country level, while recognising that the international statistical partnership must be maintained and strengthened as well. They strongly suggested linking PARIS21 work with the Managing for Development Results agenda, possibly by developing a sort of Paris Declaration for Statistics. One of the advantages of this approach would be aligning statistical development with the larger development context and avoiding the view that statistics are a single sectoral interest. The partnership needs to expand to include partners with whom PARIS21 has not engaged as deeply in the past: for example, other major bilateral donors, non-governmental data users, data analysis experts, operational bodies within donor institutions, and central banks. The South-East Asia representative stressed the need for greater emphasis on increased government (not just donor) funding. There was mild support expressed for the letter endorsing PARIS21 principles. If such a letter were to be sent in future, it should be addressed to heads of bilateral and multilateral agencies and ministers of finance, chief statisticians, and all data-producing units in developing countries. It would of course have to be adapted accordingly. For the donor institutions, the letter should challenge them to champion these ideals and engage their operational people. This discussion was continued in the following session when it was decided that the letter was not appropriate at this time.

## V. Follow-up to Hanoi & Washington Meetings

The UK and World Bank representatives jointly presented the outcomes from the RT3 and 4/14 meetings. Statistical capacity building and NSDSs (in particular their implementation) were placed very high on the list of priorities at Hanoi. There was strong general support for the continuing relevance of the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics.

The World Bank and PARIS21 estimated that roughly US\$ 200 million per year extra is required to scale up support and implement NSDSs. It was pointed out that this is a relatively low figure, particularly considering the costs of not funding statistics. At the 4/14 meeting, there was less support for a central fund except possibly as a last resort to finance censuses. Many favoured a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach at country level.

The presenters then proposed an initiative whose activities would include developing a mechanism to co-ordinate donor efforts in countries, employing experiences of sector-wide approaches (SWAp), and finding ways to resource and deploy technical assistance. Five or more initial countries would be identified to launch this new initiative. Possible criteria for identifying them were proposed as follows:

- State of statistical capacity and extent of need
- Potential for high impact and good quality NSDS
- Level of political commitment and demand for change
- Good management capacity
- Countries already prioritised by development partners
- Alignment with existing programmes, such as the Accelerated Data Programme

The presenters asserted that this approach would need to be implemented at the country level and adapted to the individual country realities. Furthermore, the donors absent at the 4/14 meeting should be brought on board with the approach and engaged fully in the process. The presenters proposed a monitoring system to help focus efforts, for example by expanding the existing Country Statistical Information System maintained by the World Bank and incorporating the work of the PARIS21 Task Team “Reporting System on Partner Support to Statistical Development.” The chair suggested that the DAC could be a venue for reaching out to the new donors and for monitoring these activities.

The UK and World Bank representatives then proposed the following draft work plan:

<b>What?</b>	<b>Who?</b>	<b>When?</b>
Identify focus countries, develop SWAp approach	Group of participating donors and agencies, lead donors in specific countries, partner countries	September 2007
Outreach to other donors and developing countries	PARIS21, World Bank, UN, DAC chair, others	September 2007
Develop monitoring systems	PARIS21, World Bank, partner countries	End 2007
Proposals for deployment of Technical Assistance	PARIS21 Task Team	End 2007
Develop guidance for SWAps in statistics	PARIS21, World Bank, donors	September 2007

The intention is that by October 2007 enough activities would have been launched that the initiative could be reviewed in the Autumn meetings of the World Bank and IMF.

### ***Discussion***

Participants proposed several new criteria for selection of countries, including local capacity to absorb aid, demonstrated commitment to statistical development, and participation in the last two Roundtables on Managing for Development Results. The chair cautioned against setting the criteria bar too high and proposed a transparent application procedure as used by the Millennium Challenge Corporation. While

participants welcomed the SWAp approach as it is an attempt to make the entire NSS function in concert, it was recognised that the proposal is not entirely clear to all actors. Furthermore, as statistics are not considered a sector, the term “SWAp approach” might be inappropriate and the identification of a lead donor challenging. The chair called on the World Bank and the PARIS21 Secretariat to draft a concept note by end of June on scaling up, based on an NSS-wide approach (a co-ordinated programme to support implementation of NSDSs, similar to the SWAp approach applied in sectors such as education and health). The note will set out what would be expected from donors and countries to signal their commitment and will refer to the application of Paris Declaration principles to statistics rather than PARIS21 principles. The first draft of the note will be discussed electronically with the Bureau. Once agreed, it will be circulated to all members of the Steering Committee to add any further comments. The entire Committee will agree it well in advance of the next Committee meeting in November.

## **VI. Other Business**

The Eurostat representative presented the results of an evaluation of EC support to statistics from 1996–2005. The exercise concluded that nearly all projects were relevant and the approach used was adequate. Technical assistance from Eurostat was assessed as beneficial in terms of quality. Recommendations include: incorporating evidence-based decision-making in all EC projects, producing guidelines to assist country delegations, and committing substantial technical and financial resources to support statistics. He commented that the recognition among EC policy people of the importance of support to statistics is a welcome development. The guide for delegations on how to include support to statistics in the design of their programmes will be disseminated in July 2007. Eurostat will approach Steering Committee members in mid-July to test this product.

## **VII. Overview of Decisions Taken**

The chair provided an overview of the decisions taken, which are presented in the table in Annex I.

## **VIII. Closing Statement**

The chair commented that the Partnership has grown from strength to strength, which does not make life easier but more complex. There never has been a better moment for statistics than there is right now. He closed by thanking the new developing country members (Andean Community / Central America, East Asia, Middle East, South Asia, and Southern Africa) for their participation and congratulated the PARIS21 Partnership for all the great success over the years.

## Annex I: Overview of Decisions Taken

#	Decision for the Steering Committee
1	<p><b>Does the Committee agree with the proposed Partnership activities outlined in the document <i>P21-SCI-07-PART</i>? In particular, to whom should the draft letter in Annex A be addressed? What constitutes an endorsement of PARIS21 principles?</b></p> <p>The worldwide letter is premature until the concept note on scaling up support to statistical development is finalised and agreed. A decision on what constitutes an endorsement will be shelved for now.</p>
2	<p><b>Does the Committee agree with the proposed activities in the PARIS21 work programme for 2007–2008, as outlined in <i>P21-SCI-07-WKPG</i>?</b></p> <p>The Committee agreed with the proposed activities, subject to any modifications proposed in the “scaling up” concept note.</p>
3	<p><b>Does the Committee agree to hold the next Steering Committee on 12–13 November 2007 in Paris, back-to-back with the Inter-Agency and Expert Group meeting? Does the Committee agree to the proposed format of (1) a full-day meeting on PARIS21, (2) a half-day seminar on the satellite programmes and Metagora? Does the Bureau agree to hold its next meeting in the margins of the CCSA meeting in Madrid, 10–11 September 2007?</b></p> <p>The Committee is content with the proposed dates of the Steering Committee and the proposed format. The MAPS Advisory Board will attempt to organise a meeting at the same time. The Bureau will meet at the latest in Madrid but may also meet earlier depending on concept paper preparation.</p>
4	<p><b>In light of the OECD Executive Committee’s decision to postpone review of PARIS21’s request to recruit nationals from non-OECD economies (see document <i>P21-SCI-07-PROG</i>, section 5.1, page 8), does the Steering Committee authorise the Secretariat to launch immediately the recruitment of a Deputy Manager within the current OECD regulations (i.e., only OECD nationals)?</b></p> <p>The Secretariat was asked to inform the Bureau immediately after the 25 May 2007 OECD Executive Committee meeting of their decision regarding the recruitment of non-OECD nationals. If the Executive Committee refuses, the Bureau was mandated by the Steering Committee take a decision on how to proceed.</p>