

Capacity Building for Better Agricultural Statistics

The Perspective of the Countries

By

Samia Zekaria

Director General

Central Statistical Agency

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What is Statistical Capacity?

- Statistical **capacity** is **the ability** of countries to meet user needs for **good quality statistics** – usually those statistics that are considered to be “official” (i.e. those statistics produced by governments as a public good).
- Statistical capacity building is sometimes part of broader programs (e.g. budget support, health, education), which cannot be easily identified and/or quantified, since statistics are not always identified as a sector in their own right. (P21, 2006)



What are the Statistical Capacity (SC) indicators?

- The SC indicators measure the statistical conditions in a country through:
 - **Quantitative indicators** cover **resources** (domestically and externally funded annual budget, staff, and equipment), **inputs** (survey and administrative data sources), **statistical products**;
 - **Qualitative indicators** focus on **relevant aspects** of environment (institutional and organizational), of core statistical processes, and of statistical products.



Initiatives to Build Statistical Capacity in Africa

- The African statistical community and its partners have undertaken several initiatives to build statistical capacity at the national level over the past four decades. The Addis Ababa Plan of Action, adopted in 1990, was one of those initiatives.
- By the end of 1990s the evaluation identified the problems encountered with implementation, i.e. the problems related:-
 - to the lack of ownership of the plan,
 - the lack of leadership of national statistical systems,
 - the lack of financial resources, and
 - the inadequacy of institutional and human capacities.



Initiatives to Build Statistical Capacity in Africa(cont'd)

- There have been several initiatives including:
 - The establishment of PARIS 21 Consortium,
 - The promotion of GDDS including the accompanying DQAF,
 - The creation of several forums including the Advisory Board on Statistics in Africa (ABSA) and the Committee on Development Information (CODI) and Forum on African Statistical Development (FASDEV) ,
 - The preparation and implementation of the ICP-Africa with its Statistical Capacity Building Program.



Initiatives to Build Statistical Capacity in Africa (cont'd)

- The Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics (MAPS), a plan for improving statistics in developing countries, came out in the 2004 when the meeting identified better statistics as a priority of the results agenda.
- To achieve this goal, PARIS21 assists developing countries to design, implement, and monitor a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS).
- An NSDS is expected to provide a country with a strategy for strengthening statistical capacity across the entire national statistical system (NSS).



Initiatives to Build Statistical Capacity in Africa (cont'd)

- Recently Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa) was established as the apex inter-governmental body in charge of statistics and **statistical development** in Africa.
- Despite statistical capacity-building initiatives in Africa over the past 40 years or so, the capacity of most countries in the region remains weak, and there is little use of data by policy-makers.
- It is to be noted that all of the above mentioned initiatives represent an **international consensus** on the way forward for **developing statistical capacity** in Africa.



Agricultural Statistics in Africa

- Despite the importance of the agriculture in African economies and societies, agricultural statistics systems in many countries are among the weakest components of national statistical systems.
- Mostly limited resources contributed to weak capacity for producing agricultural statistics resulted poor data quality in many African countries.
- The FAO evaluation report found that the quantity and quality of agricultural data has declined since the early 1980s.



Agricultural Statistics in Africa

- Various studies conducted recently by FAO showed that national statistical capacity specially for agricultural statistics has significantly deteriorated over the last decades.
- One of the most important factors contributing to the weakness of agricultural statistics system in many countries is that **agricultural statistics is not adequately integrated** into the National Statistical System, and the National Strategies for the Development of Statistics do not adequately cover the agricultural sector.



Institutional Framework of Agricultural Statistics

- In Africa, some countries have relatively centralized systems with National Statistical Offices which is in charge of producing all major official statistics including agricultural statistics while in other countries, Ministries of Agriculture through their Agricultural Statistics Units are generating data on agriculture sector.
- Particular attention should therefore be paid to establishing an institutional framework, firmly embedded in an interdisciplinary national effort, to promote a continuous dialogue between producers and users of statistics.



Efforts of SCB in Agricultural Statistics in Ethiopia

- Statistical Capacity Building in agricultural statistics started as back as 1970s where FAO/UNDP have supported both technically and financially the Ministry of Agriculture.
- The assistances of FAO/UNDP and UNICEF to the CSA initiated the **National Integrated Household Survey Program in 1980s** in which the CSA has progressively kept building its capacity to date on this area.
- The first ever 2001/02 **Ethiopian Agricultural Census** including livestock census that also covered nomadic areas was supported by USAID both financial and technical, EU and DFID have contributed financial supports



Efforts of SCB in Agricultural Statistics in Ethiopia

- **2006 -2009** EC-funded project (Support to Food Security Information Systems), that FAO and CSA has completed its implementation, was designed to **improve agricultural statistics** including harmonizing agricultural statistics (acreage and yield) data.
- An ongoing FAO /TCP Project is put in place to improve agricultural statistics in Ethiopia through the implementation of **remote sensing in area frame** sampling, improved quality assurance procedures, and **cost efficient sample design**.



Efforts of SCB in Agricultural Statistics in Ethiopia (cont'd)

- The Upcoming Bill and Malinda Gates Foundation Grant is to fund in the implementation of remote sensing to improve agricultural production statistics. Two focus areas are envisioned:
 - The goal is to develop simple, efficient and effective methodologies and tools that will improve the quality and timeliness of Ethiopia's national agricultural statistical data.
 - It is anticipated that success of the methods and tools developed for Ethiopia may be eventually adopted by other sub Saharan countries.



Capacity Building in Human Resource Development

- Capacity building of middle and junior staff members is essential to bridge the efficiency gap and to promote staff harmony.
- Capacity Building of statistician is accorded highest priority by the CSA management in facilitating training opportunities in both national and international universities to attend Masters level courses, seminars, and workshops conducted by international forum.



Institutional Capacity Development

- With donors' support the Branch Statistical Offices (BSO) of the CSA have been strengthened and equipped with computers to decentralize data entry.
- Currently ten BSOs out of 25 can enter the data and simultaneously check them and transmit the file via electronic media to the data processing center.
- This is a big leap once we could connect all BSOs with the network. Start was made with agricultural statistics data entry in those ten BSOs.



Institutional Capacity Development (cont'd)

- Acquiring high technology such as Scanning Technology and IT equipments have improved the timeliness and the quality of statistics data.
- The introduction of PDA for price data collection proved to be very efficient in the production of price data on timely fashion in Ethiopia.
- The utilization of GPS for area measurement in agricultural statistics has also proved to be cost effective and efficient in improving the data quality as well as timeliness.
- Equal importance is given for metadata documentation, archiving and dissemination system



What Do We Share?

- **Lessons we share to effectively utilize the efforts of building statistical capacity in agricultural statistics are:**
 - The CSA always tries to own the techniques and know how obtained through capacity building, and empower its staff members to utilize it.
 - The leadership gives due attention and exerts a lot of efforts to improve progressively its agricultural statistics data through time.
 - The Ethiopian Government allocates annual budget for statistical activity as one its important sectors and utilizes the information for its policy formulation.



What Do We Share (cont'd)

- Continuous staff training at masters level both locally and abroad as capacity building components to build its human resources.
- Train a large group of staff locally as on job training for example in CSPro so that we could retain some of the trainee.
- The capacity building components that we design are demand driven as much as possible so that the gains from it could be sustainable.
- Realization and implementation new technologies and IT infrastructure for improved statistical activities



Challenges

- Staff retention,
- Not being autonomous
- Inadequate Office Infrastructure



What do we expect from GS

- *The success of the ongoing Global Strategy Implementation Plan especially in Africa should aim in building the capacity of agricultural statistics producers through:*
 - Conducting researches to improve the methodology of producing agricultural statistics and disseminate the results to the users through training and Technical Assistances.
 - Sharing experiences with those countries that advanced in utilizing new technology (south-south cooperation) and peer reviewing are important tools for capacity development.



What do we expect from GS cont'd)

- Human Resource development through training at different levels: from middle levels up to masters levels through twining arrangements with e-learning.
- The training centers need capacity building to revise their curricula so that they could provide practical and training rather than concentrating only in its mathematical aspects.
- Developing training materials and guidelines to improve the quality of administrative records by setting standards in utilizing common concepts and definitions.