

Integrating Agricultural Statistics in National Strategies for Statistical Development (NSDS)

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Abstract: In recent past, many developing countries have committed themselves to results-oriented management and the achievement of development results using such results agenda as Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which are targeted towards reducing poverty, and supporting sustainable and equitable economic growth. The results agenda is data intensive and has highlighted major weaknesses in national and international statistical systems, including: • weak statistical capacity • inadequate coordination – between data users and producers, among data producers and among development partners • inadequate links of national statistical systems to policy • data gaps on some key development indicators • unreliability of some existing data • inadequate use of existing data, and • unsustainability of current statistical systems.

The Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics, agreed at the Second International Roundtable on Managing for Development Results that was held in Morocco in 2004, urges poor developing countries to design and implement National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) to support production and use of better statistics now for evidence-based policy and decision-making at all levels, and to accelerate sustainable statistical capacity building for the future. Already, a number of developing countries have designed or are in the process of designing their NSDS. Although sectoral statistics constitute the bulk of statistics required to monitor progress in poverty reduction and national development, by and large, sectoral issues and concerns have not been given sufficient attention in national statistics or in the design of the NSDS in many countries. Consequently, statisticians from sectoral ministries have tended to be isolated, are rarely directly involved in discussions on statistical capacity building and many statistical projects and programs have tended to focus only on central needs. Moreover, sectoral components of the National Statistical System are often in need of more voice both within their sector and within the statistical system as a whole, and for more resources.

The paper sheds some light on the NSDS and its processes, making the case for the integration of agricultural statistics in particular and sectoral statistics in general into the NSDS and for better coordination of sectoral statistics with both national statistics and with other sectors. The bottom-up participatory approach the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) used in the design of its NSDS in 2005/06 which led to the preparation of a Guide on Mainstreaming Sectoral Statistics in Africa is used to illustrate how this could be done. Using this approach, Sector Strategic Plans for Statistics (SSPSs) were developed with assistance of UBOS and used as building blocks for the design of the overall NSDS. The paper underscores the role of PARIS21, the African Development Bank and development partners in the NSDS processes in Africa.