



## **First Meeting of the Heads of Statistical Organisations of SAARC Member States**

**Kolkata, India, 26-27 May 2005**

**SAARC/01HSO/3**

F. No.M-12013/3/2004-ICT  
Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation  
Government of India

**Subject: SAARC FRAMEWORK FOR COOPERATION IN STATISTICS  
(SFCS) – A PROPOSAL**

The proposal to have SAARC Framework for Cooperation in Statistics may have the following objectives and area of cooperation:-

- (a) The areas of cooperation may include:
  - i) exchange of views on statistical standards, programme and projects through annual meetings;
  - ii) collaboration on SAARC Region wide projects and activities;
  - iii) capacity development (training and human resource development) in statistical administration and cooperation; and
  - iv) other areas of cooperation for promotion of official statistics in the Region.
  
- (b) The objectives of the SAARC Framework for Cooperation in Statistics (SFCS) may be:
  - i) to enhance statistical cooperation among the Statistical Offices of SAARC countries;
  - ii) to develop common definitions, classifications, and measurement of statistics in SAARC region;
  - iii) to promote comparable statistics and statistical indicators in participating SAARC member countries;
  - iv) to support SAARC institutions/organizations devoted for regional planning and policy making;
  - v) to enhance the technical and managerial capabilities of SAARC statistics offices;
  - vi) to promote compliance of basic principles of official statistics developed/adopted by the United Nations Statistical Division;
  - vii) to establish the best possible professional standard in statistics among the member countries;

- viii) to coordinate in the development of SAARC positions (views/stand) on statistical issues in the concerned international forum; and
  - ix) to advocate appropriate governmental support to the priority statistical activities of the Member SAARC countries.
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**Comments received from the Government of Bangladesh on the above proposal of the Government of India are reproduced below: -**

**Quote**

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Planning Division  
Statistics Wing  
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka**

No. PB/PM/Sec-5/145/2004-275

Date: 08-05-2004

**Subject:        Comments of the Planning Division on the proposal of SAARC  
Framework for cooperation in Statistics**

| <b>Contents as drafted</b>   | <b>Comments</b>   |
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| <p><b>a) The areas of cooperation are:</b></p> <p>(a) Exchange of views on statistical standards, Programmes and projects through annual meetings;</p> | <p>Planning Division will extend its cooperation in this area to improve its own quality of statistical standards, programmes and projects. The SAARC countries would be benefited by sharing knowledge through meetings with its counterparts. <u>However, biennial meeting may be more effective.</u></p> |
| <p>(b) Collaboration on SAARC Region wide projects and activities.</p>   | <p>Planning Division is agreeable to work in any project or statistical activity launched by SAARC Secretariat.</p>   |
| <p>(c) Capacity development (Training and human resource development) in statistical administration and cooperation; and cooperation; and</p>          | <p>This is the core area where Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) is interested to cooperate. BBS can vastly develop its standard of works by capacity development through training. In some areas BBS can also provide training.</p>  |
| <p>(d) Other areas of cooperation for promotion of official statistics in the Region;</p>  | <p>For promotion of official statistics in SAARC region Planning Division vis-à-vis BBS will extend</p>   |

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|   | cooperation in any suitable area of statistical activity useful for planning and policy making.  |
| <p><b>Objective:</b><br/> <b>b) The objectives of the SAARC Framework for Cooperation in Statistics (SFCS) are proposed as;</b></p> <p>(i) to enhance statistical cooperation among the Statistical Offices of SAARC countries;</p> | <p>To broaden the scope, this objective may be rephrased as follows:<br/>         “To establish role of statistics towards poverty and enhance statistical cooperation among the SAARC countries alleviation.”</p>   |
| <p>(ii) to develop common definitions, classifications and measurement of statistics in SAARC region;</p>   | <p>To make data comparable it is essential to follow common concepts, definitions and classifications in SAARC Member countries.</p>   |
| <p>(iii) to promote comparable statistics and statistical indicators in participating SAARC Member countries;</p>   | <p>It is essential to have comparable statistics and indicators in SAARC Member countries for collective effort for socio-economic development in the area. Planning Division will work in promoting comparable statistics and indicators in SAARC Member countries.</p> |
| <p>(iv) to support SAARC institutions/ organization devoted for regional planning and policy making.</p>  | <p>Planning Division welcomes the role of statistics for regional and country specific planning and policy making.</p>   |
| <p>(v) to enhance the technical and managerial capabilities of SAARC statistics offices;</p>  | <p>Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics needs to enhance its technical and managerial capabilities. BBS will be highly benefited, if this objective is materialized.</p>  |
| <p>(vi) to promote compliance of basic principles of official statistics developed/adopted by the United Nations Statistical Division.</p>  | <p>Planning Division is committed to comply the “Basic Principles of Official Statistics” developed /adopted by the UN.</p>  |

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| (vii) to establish the best possible professional standard in statistics among the member countries.                                     | May be dropped since the objective is already covered by the objectives (ii) & (iii) |
| (viii) to coordinate in the development of SAARC positions (views/stand) on statistical issues in the concerned international forum; and | Seems to be alright.   |
| (ix) to advocate appropriate governmental support to the priority statistical activities of the member SAARC countries.                  | Seems to be alright.   |

**Concluding remarks:**

The proposed Framework for cooperation in statistics from the SAARC Secretariat is very relevant and will help improve statistical system of Bangladesh Bureau Statistics. This will help improve quality and timeliness of statistics of BBS. However, it seems that the framework needs further development and it may contain goals, objectives, areas of cooperation, mechanism to achieve objective vis-à-vis goals, dissemination mechanism, role of each countries and mechanism for benefit sharing.

(Mustak Hassan Md. Iftekhar)  
Deputy Secretary

**Unquote**

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**Comments of Royal Government of Bhutan**

**Quote**

Adhering to the proposed framework, the cooperation in Statistics among the SAARC countries would help in ensuring integrity, transparency and public access in the region. In the areas of cooperation, the National Statistical Bureau agrees with what has been proposed, while in the point (i) of objective (b) it would be helpful mechanism if we could add a point emphasizing on staff exchange program among the National Statistical Offices in the region.

The National Statistical Bureau also proposes an initiative for dealing with coverage, periodicity, timeliness and in the quality and relevance of macro-economic statistics.

**Unquote**

**Comments of Government of Sri Lanka**

- (a) (i) Department of Census and Statistics (DCS) – Sri Lanka is agreeable to this proposal of exchanging views on these three areas. SAARC countries will be able to identify new areas of projects and programmes which will benefit the country concerned. Annual meetings will be fine.
- (ii) DCS – Sri Lanka is willing to participate and contribute to any regional level projects launched by SAARC Secretariat.
- (iii) Capacity building of statistical personnel should be a continuous project and DCS – Sri Lanka is interested in participating and exchanging knowledge with other countries in the region. Countries can provide training in the areas where they are strong and areas can be identified later.
- (iv) Seems to be alright
- (b) (i) Seems to be alright.
- (ii) DCS – Sri Lanka follows the United Nations definitions to enable comparability within the ESCAP region. We hope these will not be changed.
- (iii) SAARC Countries are at different levels in terms of certain indicators. For example Sri Lanka has achieved better levels in terms of social indicators such as on education, health and gender disparities in these areas, but are at lower levels in terms of economic indicators. Therefore when identifying common set of statistics/indicators it should be done carefully in order to represent the country specific needs as well.
- (iv) We will be able to provide statistics/indicators which are required for regional planning and policy making.
- (v) This will be useful for Sri Lanka and willing to participate.
- (vi) Seems to be alright
- (vii) Can be done through above items
- (viii) Agreeable and all countries could discuss and decide the common issues to be discussed in the international forums
- (ix) Seems to be alright.