

Country Paper- Sri Lanka
First Meeting of the Heads of Statistical Organizations of SAARC Countries
Calcutta 26-27 May- India

Statistics is the basis of any information system. Data is the foundation for national and regional sustainable economic and social development with pro-poor and pro-growth strategies based on national and local values of the each country. The challenges to reach goals of high per capita GDP growth with economic stability, poverty alleviation, better health and education are confronted in all SAARC countries.

In this endeavour all planners, policy makers and other data users are needed timely, reliable, accurately and comparable data for all the fields of statistics. These are confronted us as the challenges for the statisticians of the SAARC region.

The proposed following objectives of the SAARC Framework of Cooperation in Statistics (SFCS) seem to be agreeable.

i. Objectives of the SAARC Framework of Cooperation in Statistics (SFCS)

Objectives- SAARC	Comments
a. To enhance and intensify statistical cooperation among SAARC Statistical Organization	
b. To harmonies concept and definition, standardize measurement of statistical indicators to provide comparable statistics to SAARC secretariat;	
c. To enhance the technical competence and managerial capabilities of SAARC Statisticians;	
d. To coordinate and promote SAARC positions on statistical issues in relevant International for a	
e. To promote improvements in the official statistics generated by the member countries; and	
f. To promote adherence to the fundamental principles of official statistics adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission.	

ii. MISSION OF SFCS:

To produce reliable and comparable Statistics to assist the process of

a. Acceleration of economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region through joint endeavours in the spirit of equality and partnership in order to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community of SAARC nation.	b. Providing statistics focussing on acceleration of economic growth with pro-poor and pro-growth and poverty reduction, social progress and cultural development in the region through joint endeavours in the spirit of equality and partnership in order to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community of SAARC nations.
c. Promotion of Statistical fraternity in the region through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law in the relationship among countries in the region.	
d. Establishment and maintain linkage with web-site of all NSO's of the region and promote the dissemination of country's good practices and disseminate statistics of SAARC indicators.	
e. Holding regular exchange of views among Statistical offices and other international statistical institutions.	
f. Organization of annual meets of the Heads of the Statistical Organizations in order to formulate the plan programmes of the region taking into account global as well as regional needs and priorities.	

iii SAARC STATISTICAL INDICATORS

The SAARC Secretariat recently undertook a programme to compile selected Socio-Economic indicators for the SAARC region. This was a satisfactory effort and it can be continue as an annual activity by updating the indicators and expanding the coverage as required. The attention can be given for the following major areas and Macroeconomic field is also important to cover adequately.

- a. Macroeconomic indicators

- b. MDGs (Sri Lanka has released its country report and MDS statistics)
- c. Social Development indicators
- d. Gender indicators
- e. External trade indices
- f. Industrial Production indices
- g. Environment Statistics
- h. Energy statistics
- i. Indicators relevant to NGO activities

iv. AREAS OF COOPERATIONS:

- In fact, areas of statistical cooperation have to be identified and focussed on the priority basis for the implementation from key selected fields of statistics for the SAARC region.
- In this connection, SAARC region has to be focused on mainly three sectors such as
 - a) Already identified by UN agencies as key areas such as indicators on MDG,
 - b) SAARC region specific information,
 - c) Making common statistical issues for the SAARC region for example harmonization of statistics, statistical capacity building and human resource development.

v. The way Forward and Comments:

- All these challenging tasks could be continued with a responsible Statistical Unit under the SAARC secretariat. Similar practices could be found as an example from other regional organizations. The SAARC secretariat Statistical Unit should consist of different fields of statistics to strengthen the task.
- Working programmes and Steering committees have to be set up for the purpose of acceleration of the identified each programme and continuation of these challenging task.
- Trade Indices: For the purpose of promotion of trade in SAARC countries, it is important to compile trade indices bi-laterally and multi-laterally for SAARC countries. Therefore, following trade indices/information can be suggested for your discussion. In this task, common practices based on common methodology are really important for the purpose of proper comparison.

Price indices

Volume indices

Value indices

Terms of Trade

Balance of Payments (BOP) for SAARC region.

- SAARC region -Web-Site: As indicated in the mission activity, SAARC can create a web-site linking with the web-sites of Statistical Organization of SAARC region. This can be created with the access to all other government web-sites.

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