

REPORT

1. The First Meeting of Coordinators of SAARCSTAT Technical Sub-Groups was held at Dhaka on 16 April 2008. Mr. AYM Ekramul Hoque the Director General of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and the leader of the delegation of host Government was elected Chairperson of the Meeting.
2. The Coordinators of concerned with various activities of the Technical sub-groups presented their Base Papers and briefed the Meeting about the progress achieved by them on the following areas:

SAARC Statistical Yearbook

3. The Meeting underlined the importance of ensuring the intra-regional comparability of data available in the Yearbook across Member States. The Meeting observed that SAARC Statistical Yearbook should be published as early as possible. Conversion of data for non-compatible units of recording, where required, should be the responsibility of the countries supplying the data. Similarly, data aggregation as per nomenclatures of the table formats should also be done by the countries concerned. The meeting decided that relevant data for the Yearbook will be provided by the Member States directly to Bangladesh, with a copy to the SAARC Secretariat.
4. The Meeting noted with appreciation the efforts made by Bangladesh in preparing the first draft of the first issue of the SAARC Statistical Yearbook.

Technical Sub-Group on Informal Sector

5. The delegation of India, as Coordinator, briefed the Meeting about the status and made a presentation. The delegations from other Member States also informed the Meeting about the national level surveys they are doing for collection of data in respect of informal sector. The Meeting held discussions on the importance of collection of data relating to the informal sector. It agreed that each Member State may set up a national Expert Group to develop country-specific requirement for collection of data, methodology of data collection, minimum set of data variables and tabulation policy, and to determine the share of informal sector in GDP for respective countries.
6. The leader of the delegation of India mentioned that the Draft Manuals for the Delhi Group on Informal Sector, set up by the United Nations as one of the city groups, are already available in the website of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India (www.mospi.nic.in).

Technical Sub-Group on Capacity Building

7. The leader of the delegation of India, as Coordinator, made a presentation on the status of progress in this regard. The Meeting discussed the matter and agreed to exchange the list of institutions providing training facilities in the field of statistics. It was agreed that initially three regional/sub-regional training programmes of specific duration, along with detailed financial implications would be designed by India for 2-3 participants from each SAARC Member State.

8. The SAARC Secretariat would explore the possibility of funding support from international agencies for the approved proposals. The Member States would continue to cooperate on capacity building efforts through existing bilateral mechanisms.

Technical Sub-Group on SAARCSTAT Action Plan

9. The leader of the delegation of India, as Coordinator, briefed the Meeting about the status of implementation of SAARCSTAT Action Plan. He expressed concern at the slow pace of action on implementation of various recommendations contained in the Action Plan. The Meeting endorsed the action plan and emphasised the need to prioritize the activities listed therein. The Meeting noted that a couple of Action Plan proposals are already under various stages of implementation. It also welcomed the offer of the Maldives to develop and publish (a) Catalogue of Publications; and (b) Directory of Statistical Experts of SAARC Member States.

Technical Sub-Group on Website

10. Pakistan as the Coordinator of the Sub-Group briefed the Meeting. After detailed discussions it was agreed that the SAARCSTAT Website be established at the earliest. At the initial stage, the SAARC Statistical Yearbook may be uploaded on the website and the websites of national statistical organisations of Member States and relevant international organisations dealing with statistics be provided hyperlinks on it.

Technical Sub-Group on SNA (Coordinator : Sri Lanka)

Technical Sub-Group on Classification (Coordinator : Pakistan)

11. Sri Lanka and Pakistan, as Coordinators of Technical Sub-Groups on SNA and Classification respectively briefed the Meeting.

12. The Meeting noted that a Workshop on the above two Technical Sub-Groups was organised by India on 5-6 June 2006.

13. It was decided that Sri Lanka, as the coordinator for the TSG on SNA, would collect information on methodology followed by the SAARC Member States in compiling GDP. Based on the information given by the Member States, Sri Lanka would prepare a template for data compilation of comparable GDP for the region. With regard

to industrial activity, trade and product classification, Pakistan would prepare a template for data compilation for the region.

Review of progress in the Project on Concepts, Definitions and Standards of Health Statistics for the SAARC region.

14. The delegation of India made a presentation on the Project on Concepts, Definitions and Standards of Health Statistics for the SAARC region. The delegation of India, as the Coordinator of the Project, urged the Member States to send their comments on the project proposal at the earliest.
