

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Committee on Statistics

First session
4-6 February 2009
Bangkok

**Cooperation among members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
(SAARC) in the field of statistics¹**

1. The area of regional cooperation in the field of Statistics has been a recent area of focus and priority in SAARC.
2. With a view to prioritize cooperation in this field the Heads of National Statistical Organisations of SAARC Member States met at Kolkata, India in May 2005 and constituted a permanent “SAARC Group on Statistics”, also termed as SAARCSTAT, with the following objectives:
 - Support regional cooperation and initiatives in statistics;
 - Plan and undertake policy initiatives for comparable and timely statistics;
 - Harmonise classifications, concepts, definitions;
 - Adopt international good practices;
 - Promote improvement in the official statistics; and
 - Promote human resource development
3. In pursuit of above listed objectives, SAARCSTAT, within the framework of its programmes and activities, pursues the following specific functions:

¹ This document was contributed by Mr. Vinay Kwatra, Director, Economic, Trade and Finance (ETF) Division, SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu, Nepal. It has been reproduced without formal editing. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations.

- i. Initiate regional cooperation on Statistics among the Member States;
- ii. Develop common concepts, definitions, classifications, standards, measurements and codes in statistics and harmonise the same to promote the production of comparable statistics and indicators in the region;
- iii. Adhere to the basic principles of Official Statistics developed/adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission;
- iv. Promote human resource development in the field of statistics for improving the technical and management capabilities of Statisticians;
- v. Provide technical support to Statistical Institutions and Organizations of Member States to enable them to become Centres of Excellence;
- vi. Advocate support to the priority statistical programmes, projects and activities at the regional level;
- vii. Promote improvements in the official statistics generated by the Member States;
- viii. Coordinate in the development of SAARC position on statistical issues of common interest in the international fora.

4. The SAARCSTAT has also constituted the following seven technical sub-groups to pursue cooperation in specific areas within the field of Statistics. Activities of each sub-group are coordinated by the selected Member States from SAARC.

Technical Sub-Groups
SAARC Statistical Yearbook
Informal Sector
Capacity Building
SAARCSTAT Action Plan
SAARCSTAT Website
Classification
SNA93

5. The work on each of the above technical sub-groups is progressing well. SAARCSTAT is expected to come out with the first edition of SAARC Statistical Year book shortly. It has also work to finalize a dedicated web-site for SAARCSTAT.

6. The addresses of websites of statistical organisations of SAARC Member States are given below:

Bangladesh	:	www.bbs.gov.bd
Bhutan	:	www.nsb.gov.bt
India	:	www.mospi.nic.in
Maldives	:	www.planning.gov.mv
Nepal	:	www.cbs.gov.np
Pakistan	:	www.statpak.gov.pk
Sri Lanka	:	www.statistics.gov.lk

7. The Third Meeting of the SAARCSTAT is scheduled to be held in Thimphu, Bhutan in April 2009.

.