

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Committee on Statistics

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**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:

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- 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.

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