



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
12 October 2010

Original: English

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Committee on Statistics

Second session

Bangkok, 15-17 December 2010

Item 4(a) of the provisional agenda

**Global initiatives: Integration of agricultural statistics
into national statistical systems**

Implementation plan for the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics

Note by the secretariat¹

Summary

The present document outlines steps for the development of the implementation plan of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics. Following the endorsement of the Global Strategy by the United Nations Statistical Commission, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in collaboration with partners, started to work on the development of the implementation plan. The document articulates the principles on the basis of which this work is being carried out and outlines the governance framework and regional approach that are being adopted. It highlights the leading role of the African region in this process and presents the timeline and expected milestones.

¹ The present document draws largely on the text of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural Statistics (see E/CN.3/2010/3) and the Implementation Plan for Africa.

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I. Introduction

A. Importance of agricultural development for achieving the Millennium Development Goals

1. Three out of four poor people in developing countries live in rural areas and most rely directly or indirectly on agriculture for their livelihoods. Agricultural development is increasingly recognized to play a vital role in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and particularly the targets relating to poverty, food security and environmental sustainability.²

2. This growing awareness has led to a renewed commitment to agriculture and rural development within the donor community. The urgency of supporting agriculture escalated with the recent food crisis in a global context of skyrocketing food prices and low food stocks. Moreover, concerns regarding the impact of agricultural activities on the environment are pervading the current climate change debate.

3. The need to measure agricultural performance and the results of agricultural investment has therefore become an increasingly pressing priority.³ Decisions about aid and investments that are intended to foster agricultural growth need to be based on sound information about land use, use of factors of agricultural production, and the prevailing economic and social situations that producers face. The impacts of these factors can only be measured and evaluated effectively with appropriate statistics.

² World Bank, *World Development Report: Agriculture for Development*, 2008.

³ See, for instance, “The Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme” www.nepad-caad.net; “Joint Donor Principles for Agriculture and Rural Development Programs”, The Global Donor Platform for Rural Development, 2009; *World Development Report: Agriculture for Development*, World Bank, 2008.

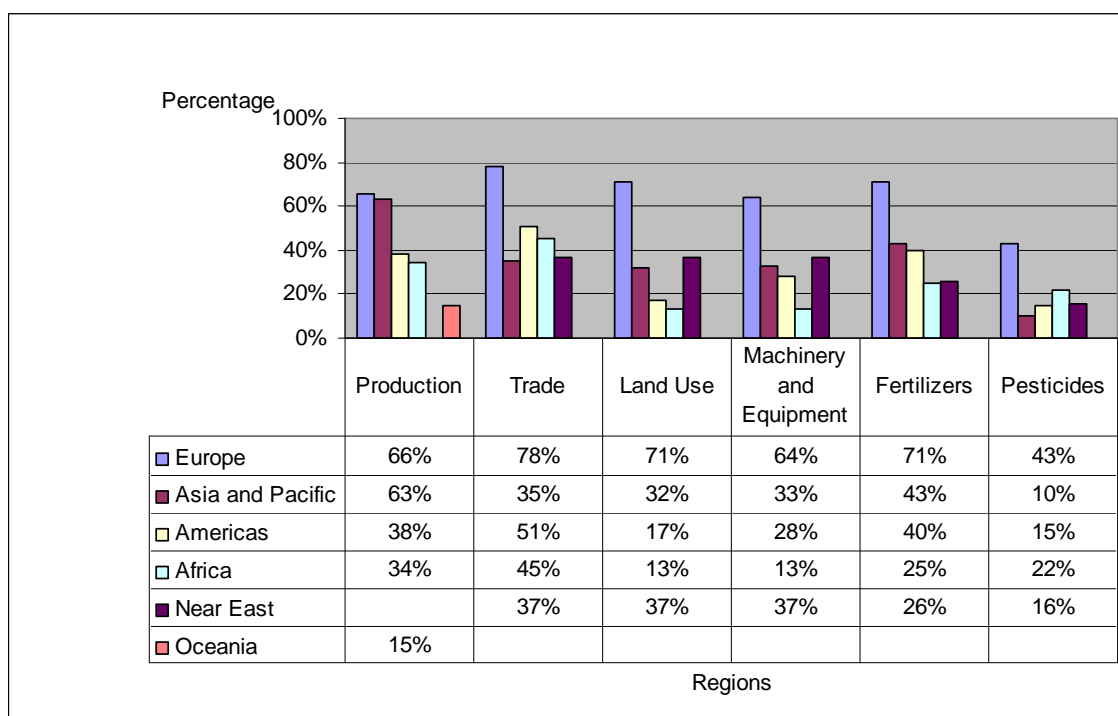
4. There is at present, however, a serious paucity of statistical data on which to base marketing, investment or policy decisions, or with which to assess the efficacy and efficiency of current policy measures.

B. The decline in the availability and quality of agricultural statistics

5. Many countries, especially in the developing world, lack nowadays the capacity to produce and report even the minimum set of agricultural data necessary to monitor national trends or inform the international development debate. Figure 1 below, which is based on country responses to FAO questionnaires, provides an indication of basic data availability in various regions.

6. A number of recent studies, in particular the report of the independent evaluation of FAO's role and work in statistics⁴ prepared in 2008, found that the capacity to produce and disseminate in agricultural statistics has significantly deteriorated in many developing countries lasting recent decades.

Figure 1
Rates of country responses to FAO questionnaires on 2007 data



7. A number of problems are common to most developing countries:

(a) Limited staff and capacity in the organizational units that are responsible for collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of agricultural statistics;

(b) Lack of adequate technical tools, statistical methodology and survey framework to support data production efforts;

⁴ See FAO document PC 100/3a, available from http://www.fao.org/pbe/pbee/common/ecg/373/en/PC_Statistics_Evaluation.pdf.

(c) Insufficient funding allocated for agricultural statistics from development partners and national budgets;

(d) Lack of institutional coordination, which results in a lack of harmonized and integrated data sources;

(e) Lack of capacity to analyse data from a policy perspective, which results in a significant waste of resources as large amounts of raw data are not properly used.

(f) Difficulty for data users in accessing existing data with no metadata or indication of quality.

C. The Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics

8. The initiative to develop the Global Strategy came as a response to the declining quantity and quality of agricultural statistics and the need to provide relevant statistical information to support emerging data requirements in such areas as biofuels, global warming and food security. Its preparation was triggered by the Fourth International Conference on Agricultural Statistics held in Beijing, which underlined the lack of direction regarding data requirements posed by the Millennium Development Goals and by the conclusions of the Independent External Evaluation of the FAO, which stated that “the time has come for a total re-examination of the statistical needs for the twenty-first century and how they can best be met.”⁵

9. The United Nations Statistical Commission gave a strong push to develop a Global Strategy during its fortieth session, in February 2009, where a consensus was reached on the need to address the current unsatisfactory situation of agricultural statistics and to launch a renewed initiative on statistical capacity-building to make the necessary improvements. The Statistical Commission established a working group of national and international representatives, called “Friends of the Chair Group”, to steer the development of the Global Strategy. The process involved extensive consultations with all key stakeholders, including national statistical offices and ministries of agriculture, during meetings and sessions of FAO governing bodies. An online forum was also organized to reach out to a broader audience through a Wikipedia web page (wiki.asfoc.ibge.gov.br).

10. The Strategy was finally prepared by the World Bank and FAO with substantial input from the Friends of Chair working group. The document (E/CN.3/2010/3) was then presented at the forty-first session of the Statistical Commission, in February 2010, at which it was unanimously endorsed.⁶

1. Content of the Global Strategy

11. The purpose of the Global Strategy is to provide a framework to enable national and international statistical systems to produce the basic information needed to guide decision making in the twenty-first century. This Strategy is based on three pillars:

⁵ Ibid., p. 13.

⁶ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2010, Supplement No. 4* (E/2010/24-E/CN.3/2010/34), Chap. I, Sect. B, Decision 41/102.

(a) Establishing a minimum set of core data that countries will disseminate on a regular basis to meet current and emerging demands;

(b) Integrating agriculture into national statistical systems in order to meet policymaker and other data user expectations that it will be possible to link statistical information across the economic, social and environmental domains;

(c) Fostering the sustainability of agricultural statistical systems through governance and statistical capacity-building.

12. The Strategy defines a comprehensive conceptual framework for the production and use of agriculture and rural statistics and information requirements of various data users.

13. It identifies a minimum set of core data which is intended to be used as a starting point in building agricultural statistics systems for the twenty-first century. A methodology for determining the content, coverage and frequency of national agricultural statistical indicators beyond the core set of data is also provided. The emerging data requirements, the conceptual framework, the assessment of national agricultural statistical systems, and the choice of a core set of indicators all point to the need to integrate agriculture into national statistical systems.

14. The Strategy identifies the main tools with which this integration will be achieved. The development of a master sample frame for agriculture will be the foundation for all data collection based on sample surveys or censuses. An integrated survey framework will be established to provide comparable data over time and across countries using an annual survey of selected core items and periodic data collections from a set of rotating panels covering economic and environmental issues. The concept of integration across data domains will also be ensured by an integrated data management system for all official statistics related to agriculture.

2. Approval of the Global Strategy and decision of the Statistical Commission to prepare an implementation plan

15. The final version of the Strategy was discussed during the forty-first session of the Statistical Commission in February 2010. The Commission unanimously endorsed the technical content and strategic directions of the Global Strategy. It urged FAO and the Friends of the Chair to expedite the development of an implementation plan aimed at strengthening national agricultural statistical systems. It recommended that the implementation plan include a comprehensive technical assistance programme, an articulated training programme and a well targeted research agenda as well as clear indications on funds management and governance arrangements at the global, regional and national levels. It also recommended that consideration be given to grouping countries according to their statistical development.

II. Global Strategy implementation plan

16. Following the decision of the Statistical Commission, an inclusive process has been established to develop the implementation plan. Similarly to what happened for the Global Strategy, the implementation plan will be developed by FAO in collaboration with the Friends of the Chair of the Statistical Commission and with the involvement of all key stakeholders at the national and international levels and will then be submitted to the

Statistical Commission forty-second session, in February 2011 for endorsement.

17. The document will be reviewed in a number of regional and global meetings. The first worldwide consultation will take place at the fifth International Conference on Agriculture Statistics, to be held in Kampala, Uganda, from 13 to 15 October 2010.

18. As a work method, the Friends of the Chair have formed four task teams to draft documents on each of the key technical components: assessment of countries agriculture statistical systems; a technical assistance programme; a training programme; and research agenda.

19. In order to take into account regional specificities and varying level of statistical development, a regional approach to developing the implementation plan is being adopted.

A. Principles underlying the development of a global implementation plan

20. The implementation plan will be in line with the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness,⁷ the Accra Agenda for Action⁸ and the Dakar Declaration on the Development of Statistics⁹ to harmonize the strategy with existing initiatives and align with partner country priorities.

1. Ownership

21. As the implementation of the strategy will be owned by partner countries, the Global Strategy will be integrated with national statistical development strategies (NSDSs). Areas where greater support for agriculture statistics are required will be identified and countries will be supported to incorporate these in their NSDSs. The implementation plan will include the preparation of relevant guidelines and frameworks for the integration of agricultural statistics into NSDSs and national statistical systems.

2. Alignment with partner strategies and systems

22. The plan will play a catalytic role in strengthening countries' statistical systems and strengthening development capacity through coordinated support.

23. The implementation plan will be carried out using existing institutions at the national, subregional and regional levels and building the institutional capacity of statistical systems to an appropriate level. The increased capacity will enable countries to collect core basic data and disseminate relevant indicators, keeping the core set of indicators of the Global Strategy as a guideline. Hence, specific governance arrangements

⁷ Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness: Ownership, Harmonization, Alignment, Results and Mutual Accountability, adopted at the High-level Forum on the question of "Joint Progress towards Enhanced Aid Effectiveness: Harmonization, Alignment, Results", held in Paris from 28 February to 2 March 2005 (see www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/41/34428351.pdf).

⁸ A/63/539, annex.

⁹ E/CN.3/2010/29, annex.

may vary across countries depending on type of institutions and coordination mechanisms present at the national level.

24. The strengthening of country and regional systems will be based on a comprehensive assessment of their technical and operational capacity that will identify actions at the country, regional and international levels in order to define priority areas, resources required and the timeframe.

25. This will form the basis for adapting the implementation plan to individual country needs. Activities will accordingly be adapted to the level of development of national statistical systems and to country priorities. For many developing countries, assistance from donor agencies and technical cooperation agencies will be needed to support the initial phases of capacity building.

3. Harmonization and coordination

26. Capacity development will be carried out using a regional approach to allow for coordinated support and avoid duplication of initiatives. While some research activities and country assessments pertain to the global level, activities which are primarily of regional and country interest can be implemented at the regional level (for example, fund allocation across countries, regional governance), others at the country level (such as setting priorities, setting a master sample, develop an NSDS). This will avoid duplication and allow for common arrangements at the regional level. To facilitate this, regional/subregional partners will act as drivers of the regional implementation plans as part of the collaborative process and in alignment with the principles and programmes of existing institutions. This will facilitate the establishment of links and synergies with other global and regional initiatives.

4. Predictability and sustainability

27. The implementation of the Strategy will allow partner countries to plan and manage their development programmes effectively. The implementation plan is a long-term strategy of statistical capacity development that will be rolled out over a 15-year time frame which will proceed in phases. While donor funding and support will continue to be paramount in order to improve national statistical systems, the goal is for the implementation plan to be coherent and linked to partners' operational development strategies for statistics and reflected in annual budgets rather than being donor-driven.

28. There will also be an integrated approach to the three main components (technical assistance, training, research agenda). For example, outputs from the research agenda will need appropriate training materials, and technical assistance will depend on the capacities/requirements of countries in that particular area. This will be done in stages and avoid duplication of effort. This calls for expertise in specialized advanced areas which many countries find difficult to maintain. The implementation plan will therefore face many challenges, requiring a concentrated effort from all stakeholders.

29. A strong commitment will thus be needed to rebuild the statistical capacity required to improve the statistical systems in some countries. The implementation will be supported by resource mobilization and advocacy at the global, regional and country levels. The establishment of a global multi-

donor trust fund for agricultural statistics and regional funds will allow for predictability and effective management in programming.

5. Delivering results

30. The management of the implementation will ensure results-oriented reporting and assessment frameworks. The plan is implemented at the national and regional levels, but reporting will be done at the global, regional and national levels. This is to be achieved through the governance mechanism, which ensures national and regional ownership in implementation but also provides for reporting to all the main stakeholders, including those at the global level, through the development of a results-based assessment framework and an effective monitoring and evaluation system to track results.

31. The strong emphasis in the design of a research programme for the development of new cost-effective methodologies and tools in the collection of source data and in data analysis and presentation is in line with the Dakar Declaration on the Development of Statistics.

B. Governance framework

32. Effective implementation of the Global Strategy will require good governance at the global, regional and country levels. A governance structure is required to establish common implementation policies, to provide the needed technical support in a way that ensures all stakeholders take ownership in the outcome, to coordinate the activities effectively, given the complexity of issues to be tackled, to monitor the progress in the implementation against agreed milestones and to ensure full transparency about the use of resources and the outcomes achieved. It is essential to establish a set of statistical standards and methodology that can be consistently applied and accepted as best practices by all participants.

33. The proposed governance framework provides the roles and responsibilities of the global, regional, and national governing bodies. The governance framework to be developed should bring agricultural statistics organizations into all levels of governance starting at the global level. This integration will require a significant effort in those countries where agricultural and related statistics are carried out by institutions outside the national statistical system. Even where agriculture has been integrated to varying degrees; the re-engineering effort and required capacity-building will still impact those countries as well.

34. The proposed governance framework entails defining also linkages among governance structures at all levels. In elaborating the governance mechanism, other considerations have been taken into account, including past experiences in implementing global statistical initiatives, the need to leverage existing structures, the need to involve data users and the need to spell out clearly reporting lines.

1. Global governance framework

35. The integration of agriculture into the national statistical system needs to begin at the global level and build off the structure that is currently in place.

36. The apex statistical body is the United Nations Statistical Commission, which by design includes national statistical organizations.

Agriculture is only represented in the Commission if it is already fully integrated into the activities of the national statistical office. The development of the Strategy was guided by a “Friends of Chair Working Group” established by the Commission that was made up of heads of national statistical offices. Ministries of agriculture were brought into the development of the Strategy through the FAO governing bodies.

37. The first step should be the establishment of a Global Strategy steering committee that includes national statistical offices and ministries of agriculture. The Friends of Chair Working Group in effect will become integrated into the Global steering committee. The Global Steering Committee should also include representatives of the regional coordinating organizations and representatives of key data users. The overview of the governance follows in figure 2 and is described in more detail in the sections to follow.

38. The primary role of the Global Strategy steering committee is to ensure that ministries of agriculture and national statistical offices both have a voice in decisions taken by the Commission on matters relating to agricultural statistics. In addition, the steering committee should provide strategic leadership and oversight of the global coordinating office to ensure the implementation follows the principles provided in the Strategy.

39. The global coordinator should be located in the FAO Statistics Division. The main responsibilities of the global coordinator are to establish standards, provide centralized technical and practical guidance, and rule on issues that can be interpreted in different ways across regions. More specifically, the global coordinator will:

(a) Provide the focal point for seeking funding to support the implementation of the Strategy, especially the completion of necessary research, the development of training materials, and the provision of technical assistance to the regions and countries;

(b) Serve as the secretariat for the Global Strategy steering committee and prepare the annual progress reports to the Commission;

(c) Provide the framework under which the assessment of the current agricultural statistical system will be completed. This assessment should include a review of the quantity and quality of the data being provided, the statistical capabilities of each country, and their readiness to implement the components of the Strategy;

(d) Based on the findings of the assessment, and in collaboration with the regional secretariats, establish the framework for a training programme and technical assistance for the regions and countries to determine the core set of data for the national programme and implement the technical systems required by the Strategy;

(e) Develop statistical methodology for the creation of the master sample frame, sample and survey designs for the integrated survey, the design of the data management system and the uses of other data, such as those from administrative sources, remotely sensed data, and those coming from expert judgment; document these methodologies in a series of statistical manuals that will provide the standards and best practices;

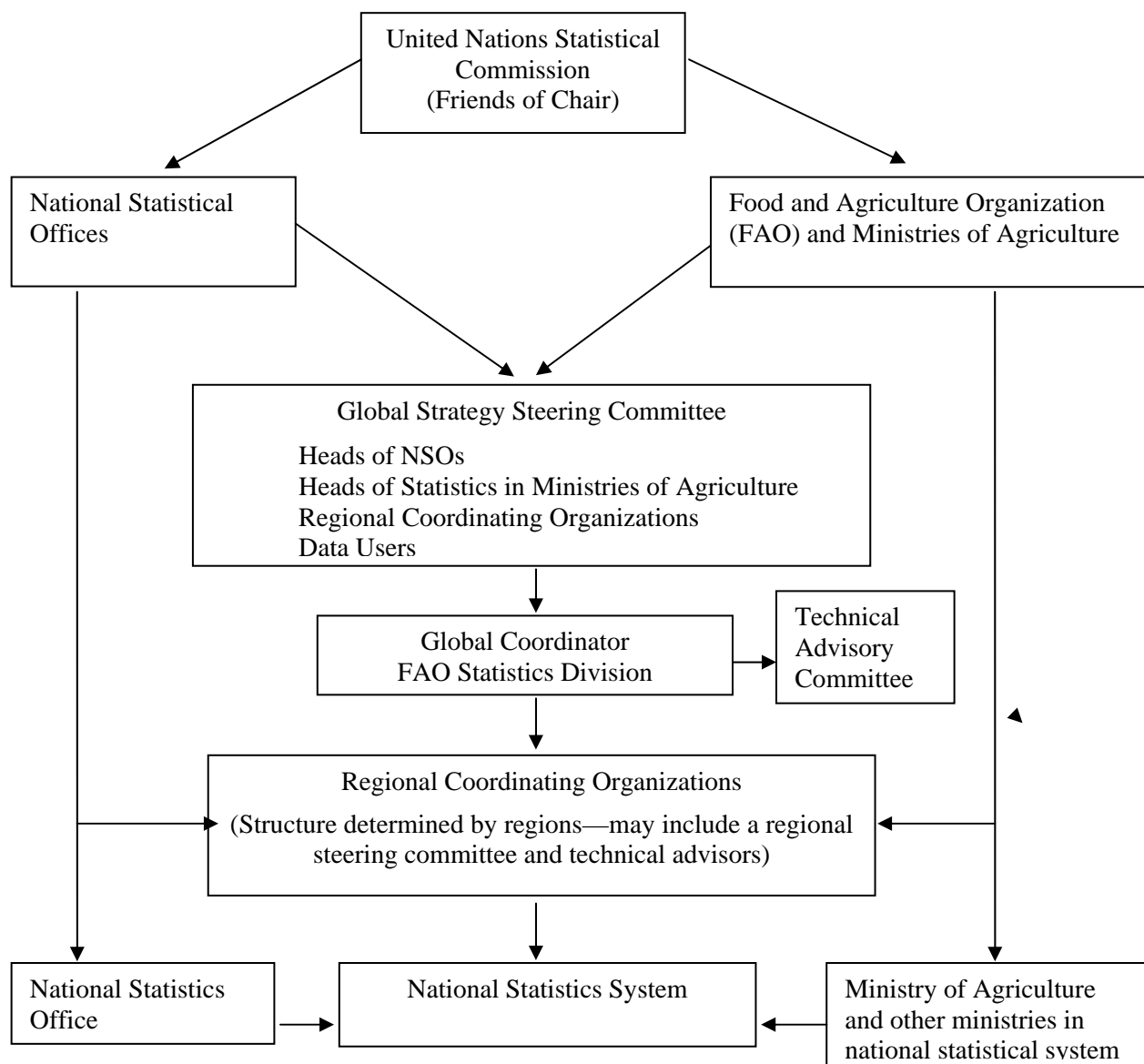
(f) Provide overall coordination support for countries in regions that do not have a viable regional coordinating body;

(g) Form a technical advisory committee comprised of experts in: sample frame development; sample and survey design; development of

statistical databases for dissemination purposes, and the use of technology such as remote sensing, geo-positioning sensors, and uses of electronic data collection devices. This technical group should also pursue the uses of administrative data;

(h) Work in collaboration with the Wye group formed by the Commission to develop best practices to link the farm operations with the farm household(s).

Figure 2
Overview of the governance structure to coordinate the implementation of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics



2. Regional governance framework

40. Regional coordinating bodies have the major role of providing direct training and technical assistance to the integrated national statistical system. The regional coordinating bodies should also liaise with international, regional, and subregional offices within their region to coordinate their efforts with countries in order to avoid duplication of efforts and to ensure that global standards are being followed. In particular, the regional coordinators are responsible for the following items:

- (a) Seeking and providing funding to support the implementation of the Strategy, especially the completion of necessary operational research, the development of training materials to supplement those provided by the global coordinator, and the provision of technical assistance to the regions and countries;
- (b) Providing technical support to countries to carry out the assessment of the national statistical systems for agriculture. Assist countries with the documentation of the results;
- (c) Ensuring that the national strategies for the development of statistics are revised to reflect the principles of the Strategy;
- (d) Working closely with the Global Coordinator to use the results of the assessment to jointly determine the training and technical assistance requirements for the region;
- (e) Adopting and adapting methodologies provided by the Global Coordinator to meet the requirements of the countries of the region;
- (f) Conducting research as required to determine how to implement the methodology provided by the Global Coordinator;
- (g) Forming regional steering committees as desired and required to ensure the integration of agriculture into national statistical systems;
- (h) Providing the overall coordination of training activities and technical support to be carried out in the region;
- (i) Developing partnering arrangements between countries with well-developed statistical systems to support those needing capacity-building.

3. National governance framework

41. Governance at the national level involves the organization of a national statistical system that brings together the national statistical office and sector ministries and other agencies that provide data. In the case of agricultural statistics, this will include the ministries responsible for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and any other institutions that collect agriculture-related data.

42. The coordination mechanism should ensure that the different data producers adhere to a common set of standards following the principles defined in the Strategy and brought forward with the global and regional implementation plans. Their compliance with these standards prevents duplications of efforts and resources as well as the publication of conflicting data from different reporting agencies. It also ensures statistical integrity by making the data available and accessible. The coordination mechanism should provide a common voice for seeking resources for the agricultural statistics system within the framework of the national statistical system. The governance it provides should enable the ministries and agencies involved in the collection of agricultural data to integrate agriculture into the preparation of the national strategies for the development of statistics.

43. Where an institutional coordination mechanism is not in place, a governance body, such as a national statistics council, should be established to organize the efforts of statistics stakeholders. Such a council would include the ministry of agriculture, the national statistical office, and other organizations providing statistics or administrative data to jointly organize and coordinate the development and use of the master sample frame, the

integrated survey framework, and the database. It may be determined that certain ministries are best suited for activities such as those involving the master sample frame or the collection of specific types of data. All data collected, whichever ministry or agency collects them, will be based on the master sample frame in an integrated survey system with the outcomes stored in an integrated database. The role of each institution should be clearly defined and should build on its knowledge and technical expertise (crops, livestock, aquaculture and fishery, forestry, land, and water).

44. The integration of agricultural statistics into a country's national statistical system does not mean that all responsibilities fall on the national statistical office, the ministry of agriculture, or any other agency in particular. It does mean, however, that the organizations with overlapping data needs must accept the master sample frame, integrated survey framework, and database principles. In particular, the requirements at the national level begin with the formation of a national governing body, which will be responsible for the following items:

(a) Carrying out the detailed assessment of the current content and scope of the nation's agricultural statistics and statistical capabilities, using the guidance of the regional and/or global coordinator;

(b) Preparing or revising national strategies for the development of statistics and identify the respective roles and responsibilities of each organization in the national governing body;

(c) As needed, implementing or revising legislation clarifying lines of authority and responsibility, including regulations regarding confidentiality of information. In other words, the integration of agriculture into the national statistical system will need to be reflected in the statistics laws of the country;

(d) Developing a strategy to foster public support for funding to support a sustainable statistical system;

(e) Reaching agreement on the content, scope, frequency and coverage of data to be provided by the national statistical system—in other words, determining the set of core data as prescribed by the Strategy;

(f) Developing a national work plan to implement the Strategy. This work plan should determine the training requirements and technical assistance needed to implement the statistical components of the Strategy.

III. Process to develop a global implementation plan

A. The leading role of the African region

45. AfDB and ECA, with the support of FAO, have taken the lead as regional coordinators in preparing the first (regional) implementation plan for Africa with the participation of several regional partners, such as the African Union/NEPAD, AFRISTAT, ECOWAS, UEMOA, SADC. The Plan for Africa was drafted and has already been discussed with partners at two conferences in 2010, and the advanced draft will be discussed at the ICAS-V in October 2010. This Plan is therefore at a more advanced stage than the global implementation plan, and the work done will serve as a basis for its development.

46. The Plan is articulated in three separate but related components, namely technical assistance, training and research components supported by a governance mechanism. Consistency between the technical components is

ensured through an overall technical framework which also allows the integration of the regional implementation plan with the global implementation plan. The implementation plan will have a long-term perspective (10 to 15 years) but will follow a phased approach with the first phase covering the next 5 years (2011-2015). Moreover, implementation will be rolled out beginning with 15 countries in the first wave (Year 1), another 15 in the second wave (Year 2) and all countries in the third wave (Year 3).

47. A regional trust fund will be established to be managed by the AfDB. The initial estimation of the budget needed for this first phase will be about \$50 million.

1. Regional governance mechanism

48. The proposed regional governance structures for the implementation of the Global Strategy in Africa include a regional steering committee and a regional implementation secretariat.

49. The regional steering committee will be responsible for overall coordination and accountability for implementation of the Strategy. It will be chaired by the Chief Economist and Vice-President of AfDB to raise the profile of the Committee and its role in the implementation of the Strategy in Africa. Members of the Committee will include key stakeholders in agricultural statistics in Africa, including: regional members of the African Statistical Coordination Committee,¹⁰ regional members of the Friends of the Chair¹¹ of the United Nations Statistical Commission and representatives of four other selected countries, the Bureau of StatCom-Africa (5 countries), the Chair of the African Commission on Agricultural Statistics (AFCAS), representatives of three statistical training centres, representatives of FAO regional offices for Africa based in Accra (Ghana) and Cairo (Egypt), and representatives of international organizations, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.¹² The Committee will report to the Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa),¹³ the African Commission on Agricultural Statistics (AFCAS), the Global Steering Committee, and NEPAD (through the African Union's Committee of Directors-General), and other such bodies.

50. A regional implementation secretariat will be established at AfDB as part of its current statistical capacity-building infrastructure. The other two technical component leaders (FAO and ECA) will be members of the secretariat. Its responsibilities will include mobilizing and allocating

¹⁰ Regional members of ASCC are: African Development Bank, African Union Commission, African Capacity Building Foundation and the UN Economic Commission for Africa, Afristat and Regional Economic Communities.

¹¹ These countries are: Ethiopia, Morocco and Uganda.

¹² With funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the World Bank and other organizations are working in six African countries to develop and implement household surveys and analyse survey data with a strong emphasis on agriculture. The countries are: Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

¹³ The Statistical Commission for Africa is the apex intergovernmental body in charge of statistics and statistical development in Africa. It was established by and reports to the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development as well as the United Nations Statistical Commission.

resources, monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the implementation of the Strategy. Where appropriate, regional economic communities and subregional organizations, such as Afristat,¹⁴ and regional statistical training centres will be involved in the implementation of the Strategy. Countries, which are the main beneficiaries of the Strategy, will be assisted to implement the Strategy using, whenever possible, the existing statistics coordination structures.

2. Technical assistance component

51. In implementing the Strategy, some African countries will need technical assistance, hence the technical assistance component. The purpose of technical assistance will be to help African countries strengthen their statistical infrastructure and adopt more cost-effective methods for agricultural and rural statistics, based on a detailed assessment of their actual capacities and needs. For the technical assistance to be effective, provision has been made for its delivery to: (a) take into account the United Nations guidelines on technical cooperation in statistics and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness; (b) take into account the level of agricultural statistical development in each country relative to other countries in the region; (c) leverage existing structures; (d) harness regional capacities; and (e) use relevant international guidelines and expertise.

52. This component will specifically provide support to: (a) improve institutional and organizational aspects of the agricultural statistical systems, including aligning legal frameworks for agricultural statistics with other legal provisions, including the national statistical legislation; (b) undertake advocacy and policy dialogue between government and development partners to mainstream agricultural statistics in sector development programmes; (c) promote and enhance coordination for agricultural data production and use; (d) assist countries in better planning and managing their agricultural censuses; (e) assist countries in designing integrated survey frameworks and integrated databases; (f) assist countries in reviewing and auditing methodologies and instruments in use for the production of agricultural administrative data; (g) assist countries in assembling, reviewing, analysing and documenting good practices as well as existing agricultural datasets; (h) assisting countries in verifying the accuracy and reliability of the agricultural production data series; (i) supporting data analysis, research and development; (j) assisting countries in establishing and/or strengthening CountrySTAT,¹⁵ and (k) assisting countries in the compilation and reporting/dissemination of the minimum core data set.

3. Training component

53. Implementation of the training component of the Strategy will be aimed at: (a) strengthening the capacity of national agencies concerned with

¹⁴ Afristat operates in 19 mostly French-speaking countries in sub-Saharan Africa for the harmonization of concepts, standards and methods in the areas of national accounts, price and informal sector statistics.

¹⁵ CountrySTAT is a statistical framework and applied information system for analysis and policy-making to organize, integrate and disseminate statistical data and metadata on food and agriculture coming from different sources. CountrySTAT gathers and harmonizes scattered institutional statistical information so that information tables become compatible with each other at the country level and with data at the international level.

the collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of agricultural statistics by increasing the knowledge, skills and competencies of their staff, and (b) strengthen and sustain the capacity of African training centres to develop and deliver good quality training in statistics related topics.

54. This component will specifically involve: (a) integrating training needs in agricultural statistics with other elements of national statistical systems; (b) providing training and support to the managers of human resources in agricultural statistics agencies; (c) helping countries to conduct detailed training needs analyses; (d) strengthening the skills and knowledge of the staff responsible for the development and presentation of both academic and in-service training courses; (e) strengthening the capacity of training centres through twinning arrangements; (f) reviewing, designing and producing syllabuses and relevant teaching materials; (g) financing the preparation and delivery of seminars, workshops and short courses in priority areas, including the promotion of distance and e-learning; (h) upgrading training facilities and improving access to relevant books and journals; (i) harmonizing and synchronizing curricula and qualifications between training centres and countries; (j) financing participation in approved courses up to master's level in Africa; (k) financing participation in approved short courses and other training opportunities; and (l) establishing a process for accrediting courses and qualifications where relevant.

4. Research component

55. This component of the implementation plan is aimed at improving agricultural data collection and management by preparing technical guidelines and handbooks on advanced methodologies, standards and tools related to the pillars of the Global Strategy to Improve Agriculture and Rural Statistics in the following priority areas:

(a) *Reference framework*: Framework for the development of an integrated agricultural statistics programme; mainstreaming agriculture into the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS);¹⁶ implementation of an Integrated Survey Framework;

(b) *Master frame for integrated survey*: Use of latest technology, such as the Global Positioning System (GPS) in the production of agricultural statistics; linking area frames with list frames; use of remote sensing;

(c) *Data collection methods*: Improvement of estimation of crop area, yield and production; methods for estimating crop area, yield and production of mixed crops, repeated cropping, continuous cropping; methods for estimating the yield of root crops; cost of production;

¹⁶ The National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) is a robust, comprehensive and coherent framework to facilitate the development of statistics across sectors. A well-designed NSDS addresses data limitations, mobilizes and prioritizes the use of resources for statistics, integrates statistics within national policy, planning and budget processes as well as into sector strategies to generate performance indicators for programme-based budgeting (for example, agriculture, health, education, justice and security, water and environment), looks across the whole national statistical system and provides a coherent framework for all national and international statistical programmes and for donor support to those programmes, provides an action plan for statistical capacity-building; and acts as a catalyst for change.

methodology for enumerating nomadic livestock, estimating livestock products; adoption of new technologies; forestry and deforestation; crop forecasting and early warning; inland fishery, aquaculture; interaction between climate, environment, global warming and agriculture; land use/land cover monitoring;

(d) *Food security*: Methodology for the estimation of supply utilization account, food balance sheets, food stocks and edible forest products, nutrition indicators, use of household surveys/LSMS for food security indicators;

(e) *Market information*: Estimation of farm gate prices, collecting data on agriculture rural and border market prices, collecting data on factors and product markets affecting agricultural activities;

(f) *Data analysis*: Reconciliation of census data with survey data, determination of user's information needs for decision making, use of small area estimation methods for improving agricultural statistics;

(g) *Administrative data*: Improvement and use of administrative data for improving agricultural statistics, estimation of informal cross-border trade data;

B. Indicative timeline for next steps

56. The following milestones will be considered for the development of the implementation plan:

(a) ICAS-V Conference on 13-15 October 2010:

- (i) Friends of the Chair meeting on 14 October 2010 to discuss and make progress in the development of the Global implementation plan;
- (ii) First Regional Steering Committee meeting on the Implementation Plan for Africa on 13 October 2010;
- (iii) Donors' round-table meeting on 14 October 2010 to present the draft implementation plan for Africa and the outline note for a Global implementation plan as a first step in building a donor coalition, the Global Trust Fund and Regional Fund for Africa;

(b) 15 December 2010: Deadline for submitting a draft progress report on the preparation of the Global implementation plan for discussion at next Statistical Commission meeting in February 2011;

(c) February 2011: Presentation of the progress report on the Global implementation plan at the 42nd meeting of the Statistical Commission;

(d) Second quarter, 2011:

- (i) Draft implementation plan to be prepared and reviewed by FAO and the Friends of the Chair;
- (ii) Second donors' meeting to revise the Global implementation plan and mobilize required funding.

IV. Conclusions

57. The Committee may wish to review the proposed implementation plan for the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics.

The Committee may also wish to provide guidance and advice on the involvement of the secretariat, in implementing activities related to agricultural statistics on a regional basis in collaboration with other regional organizations. In particular, the Committee may wish to:

(a) Provide its views on the need for the ESCAP secretariat to play a leading role, in collaboration with other regional organizations, in the development and implementation of a regional programme for the improvement of agricultural statistics, as part of the overall regional programme for the improvement of economic statistics;

(b) Endorse the overall strategy for the preparation of the global implementation plan and regional plans. In particular, the Committee may advise on the articulation of the set of core data and indicators recommended in the Global Strategy with the core set of economic statistics for Asia and the Pacific;

(c) Provide advice on synergies and complementarities to be established between the technical components proposed in the implementation plan (training, research, technical assistance) and corresponding activities of the regional programme for improvement of economic statistics;

(d) Encourage member States and development partners to support the efforts to improve agricultural and economic statistics in the region.
