

Challenges for Official Statistics in the Asia/Pacific region

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1. Role of Official Statistics in Society

"Official statistics are collected by government to inform debate, decision making and research both within government and by the wider community.

They provide an objective perspective of the changes taking place in national life and allow comparisons between periods of time and geographical areas.

Open access to official statistics provides the citizen with more than a picture of society. It offers a window on the work and performance of government itself, showing the scale of government activity in every area of public policy and allowing the impact of public policies and actions to be assessed.

Reliable social and economic statistics are fundamental to ...open government (and) it is the responsibility of government to provide them and to maintain public confidence in them."

United Kingdom White Paper on Open Government, 1993

*Asia Pacific Conference on Measuring Well-Being and Fostering
the Progress of Societies, 5-6 Dec 2011, Tokyo, Japan*

2. Clear support of Key Stakeholders for a robust Official Statistical System

- Politicians, government officials, media, business and community groups within society as well as the general public

NEED TO

- value the key role official statistics can, and should, play in assisting and encouraging informed decision making, research and discussion at all levels of society

3. Adequate ongoing resources for National Statistical Offices (NSOs)

- Ensure sufficient staff with appropriate skills and experience within NSOs to develop and sustain a core program of official statistics

Core program should cover the four key pillars of national statistics; economic, social, population and environment

4. Administrative records as key sources of official statistics

- Recognition by politicians and senior government officials of the strategic importance of many administrative records as sources of official statistics (eg births, deaths, taxation, health and education records)
- Strong collaboration between NSOs and other government agencies to maximize the use of these sources (a core part of any National Statistical System)

5. Better coordinate the disparate technical assistance initiatives in the ESCAP region

- Ensure initiatives meet the real priority needs of the countries themselves not those of the donors
- International efforts to build capability of NSO's in the region
MUST BE PROPERLY
- coordinated,
- prioritized, and
- **most important of all, implemented in a sustainable way**