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From the Editor

Welcome to the April 2005 edition of the Statistical Newsletter. Various regional and international events took place in the first quarter of this year. Two of the regional meetings were the third UNSIAP/UNESCAP Management Seminar and the Forum for Asia-Pacific Statisticians (APEX-1). They both proved to be of great value for the exchange of updated information on developments in international statistics and in strengthening the capacity of National Statistical Offices in the region.

This issue will also highlight two international events of regional interest: the 36th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission held in March in New York, and the 22nd East-West Center Population Census Conference, which took place the following week in Seattle.

Several other topics will be brought to your attention, including ICT statistics and DevInfo. And for the interested reader, there is information on training activities coming up this summer.

As always, we wish you enjoyable reading!

Third Workshop for Improving Disability Statistics and Measurements, 3–4 May 2005, Bangkok, Thailand

As part of the two-year (2004-2005) project activities for improved disability measurements, funded by the Republic of Korea, UNESCAP plans to carry out field testing of some disability question sets in selected countries in the region to evaluate the operational feasibility of these questions. Two workshops have been scheduled this year: one to train statisticians on the pre-testing techniques and another to discuss the results from the testing activities. The first of the workshops, the Third Workshop for Improving Disability Statistics and Measurements, has been scheduled for 3 and 4 May in Bangkok.

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the Pacific

Third UNSIAP/UNESCAP Management Seminar for the Heads of National Statistical Offices in Asia and the Pacific, 31 January – 2 February 2005, Bangkok

This Management Seminar was the third in a series of management seminars that UNSIAP and UNESCAP launched in 2002 for strengthening leadership and management capabilities of the heads of National Statistical Offices (NSOs). The series of seminars provide a platform where the heads of NSOs of Asia and the Pacific can share experiences and learn from each other while addressing the main statistical challenges that confront them today as they carry out their mandates in an environment of economic, social, political, and technological change.

“Managing Change” was the topic of this seminar, as had been recommended by the heads of NSOs during the second seminar that took place in Luang Prabang, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, in January 2004. The seminar was jointly organized by the United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific and the Statistics Division of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, with support from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Statistics New Zealand, the Statistical Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the United Nations System Staff College, the World Bank, and the PARIS21 Secretariat. It drew together 36 delegates from NSOs of 30 countries in the region.

NSOs operate in a constantly changing environment with advances of technologies and globalization, not to mention the changes that take place in the internal



Third UNSIAP/UNESCAP Management Seminar for the Heads of National Statistical Offices in Asia and the Pacific
31 January – 2 February 2005, Bangkok

Back Row: Mr Jeong-Su An (Republic of Korea), Mr Wei Liu (UNESCAP), Mr 'Ata'ata M. Finau (Tonga), Mr San Sy Than (Cambodia), Mr Eric Hermouet (UNESCAP), Mr Pietro Gennari (UNESCAP), Ms Margaretha Barkhof (UNESCAP), Mr Brian Pink (New Zealand); **Fourth Row:** Mr Blaise Ehounoubakrohi (UNESCAP), Mr Jeong-Seob Kim (Republic of Korea), Mr Laupua Fiti (Samoa), Mr Alzhan Braliev (Kazakhstan), Mr Angsumal Sunalai (Thailand), Mr Iete Rouatu (Kiribati), Mr Frederic A. Vogel (World Bank), Mr Rabi Singh (Nepal), Mr Gérard Baudchon (New Caledonia), Mr Choiril Maksum (Indonesia), Mr Fang Kuan (China); **Third Row:** Mr Hamidreza Navvabpour (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr Ohn Kyaw (Myanmar), Mr Nguyen Anh Tuan (Viet Nam), Mr Jong-Joon Ryu (Republic of Korea), Mr Joel Jere (UNESCAP), Ms Mok Iun Lei (Macao, China), Ms Aishath Shahuda (Maldives), Mr Timoci Bainimarama (Fiji), Mr Khorol Bajiikhuu (Mongolia), Mr Govindan Raveendran (India), Mr Kuenga Tshering (Bhutan); **Second Row:** Ms Normah Mohd Aris (Malaysia), Ms Patricia Alexander (UNESCAP), Ms Han Ryu Gum (DPR Korea), Mr Nguyen Van Tien (Viet Nam), Mr Frederick Wing Huen Ho (Hong Kong, China), Mr Gyung-Tae Kim (Republic of Korea), Mr Heinrich Brüngger (UNECE), Mr Dennis Trewin (Australia), Mr Roberto Pagan (UNESCAP), Mr Faqirshah Mahran (Afghanistan); **Front Row:** Ms Fatimah Abdul Hamid (Brunei Darussalam), Ms Ferdous Nurun Ara (Bangladesh), Ms Ri Chol Hui (DPR Korea), Ms Carmelita N. Ericta (Philippines), Mr Wellitarage Sumanasiri (Sri Lanka), Mr Aung Tun Thet (Resource Person of the UN System Staff College), Mr Tomas P. Africa (UNSIAP), Ms Ch. Davaasuren (UNSIAP), Mr Andrew J. Flatt (UNESCAP), Ms Gombosuren Oyuntsetseg (Mongolia)

social and economic structures of the countries. The success of an NSO is very much determined by how well these changes are captured in the official statistics that it produces for the use of planners and policy makers.

Many NSOs in the region have basic to adequate experience in developing systematic strategic plans for statistical activities. Aside from visioning and assessing the internal strengths and weaknesses, and external threats and opportunities of the NSO, a strategic plan should clearly state what it is planning to achieve and the approach that it intends to follow in its implementation. Once a strategic plan is prepared, it has then to be translated into measurable actions and developed in an action plan, or, into the day-to-day functioning of the NSO. Basically the real action plan of strategic planning should address the following questions: What needs to be done in order to achieve these objectives? Who will do it? By when must it be done? What resources are needed to do it?

The seminar focused on how to manage change through the integration of people and process within a given timeline to better meet the demand on statistics. It studied the translation of strategic planning into action planning, and gave participants some ideas about techniques used in results-based management and shared practices in developing national action plans for the national statistical systems.

The seminar introduced a national strategy for the development of the entire national statistical system as an integrated and well coordinated statistical system. This is a spin-off from the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics which calls for the preparation of such a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) in low-income countries, with an emphasis on providing a strategic framework for developing relevant poverty-focused statistical development programmes. The main objective is to provide timely, reliable and consistent data for rational policy development; and for improving 'the evidence base' base to 'manage for results'. The participants were briefed on the different phases of NSDS, extending from diagnosis to the implementation plan.

The programme of the seminar was divided into four modules. The first three modules discussed understanding, planning, implementing and consolidating change. The modules consisted of a presentation from a resource person, group work on case studies of four NSOs (Bhutan, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran and Mongolia) and plenary discussions. The fourth module provided background on the National Strategies for the Development of Statistics, with presentations by the PARIS21 Secretariat on an overview of NSDS, by the World

Bank on its initiative to improve statistics and by UNECE on issues related to the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics that have to be considered in an NSDS.

The seminar increased the awareness and preparedness of the delegates of NSOs on various aspects and facets of managing change in the national statistical system. It highlighted also the need for NSOs to look internally at their functions and procedures in the process of change management. In the closing session participants expressed the wish that the management seminars continue to be conducted to strengthen the capacity of NSOs. They recommended the topic "Project Management Framework" for the next seminar.

Documents used during the seminar and working group reports can be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.unescap.org/stat/meet/mgm3/index.asp>.

Forum for Asia-Pacific Statisticians (APEX-1), 3-4 February 2005, Bangkok

With the new UNESCAP conference structure coming into force in 2003, the need was felt to maintain a high-level 'Asia-Pacific Excellence in Statistics' (APEX) forum of official statisticians in the region that would be in a position to influence national decision-making on statistical matters as well as provide regional input to global discussions at the United Nations Statistical Commission. While under the auspices of the United Nations, the new forum is being organized on a collegial basis by the leading official statisticians in the region, and follows a seminar format.

The first session of the Forum for Asia/Pacific Statisticians, or APEX-1, was held in Bangkok in early February. The Australian Bureau of Statistics and its supporting partners set the agenda for this first forum and mobilized many of the delegates to produce a set of interesting papers and presentations. The National Statistical Office of Thailand and UNESCAP co-hosted the meeting.

Many National Statistical Offices (NSOs) in Asia and the Pacific were represented in the Forum. Delegates came from Afghanistan; Australia; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; China; Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Fiji; Hong Kong, China; India; Indonesia; Islamic Republic of Iran; Japan; Kazakhstan; Kiribati; Macao, China; Malaysia; Maldives; Mongolia; New Caledonia; New Zealand; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Samoa; Thailand; Tonga and Viet Nam.

Various international agencies were also represented with participants from the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the World Bank, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), the United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (UNSIAP) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).

The seminar was divided into four half-day sessions. Each session had four to six presentations and the participants were given the opportunity to interact in plenary after each of the presentations. This led to a fruitful exchange of ideas and experiences.

The objective of the first session on the role of NSOs in National Statistical Systems was to better understand how NSOs can influence official statistics that are not their direct responsibility. The discussion focused on coordination across the main statistical providers and the key role NSOs should have in National Statistical Systems; on some of the key elements of National Statistical Systems and how they should be delivered, such as the importance of common frames being used throughout National Statistical Systems and the responsibility NSOs may have for important infrastructure such as business registers, household survey frames and classifications; on branding of official statistics derived from the National Statistical System; and on how to manage the National Statistical System.

The second session on the use of technology to improve the quality or reduce the cost of population censuses sought to provide insight into how technology might be better used for the 2010 round of population and housing censuses and to appraise how international agencies might best assist countries. The UN proposals for the 2010 global population census round were presented, as were the setting up of a Regional Census Programme in support of the 2010 global programme and the recommendations emanating from the regional Expert Group on Population and Housing Censuses held in December 2004 (see Newsletter No. 136). Several presentations demonstrated the range of technologies that could improve the efficiency and effectiveness of population censuses. The acquisition of technology had proved to be the best way of

upgrading census technology in various countries. However, country experiences also showed the importance of incorporating planned future uses of the technology and the coverage of support and maintenance costs in forward technology plans.

It was recognized that UNSD and regional bodies had an important "clearing house" role to ensure there is good knowledge transfer on this topic. The Inter-regional Census Adviser would also play an important role and assist with the co-ordination of international and regional efforts.

Challenges in economic measurement in the Asia-Pacific region was the topic of the third session. Its objective was to reflect on the practical means of upgrading economic statistics for the region. It discussed the implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts in the Asia-Pacific region. One of the key problem areas identified in the presentation by the IMF was source data; in particular, low response rates to business collections and poor access to administrative data were a problem. The initiative of UNSD to improve distributive trade statistics was welcomed in this light. Such an initiative could, among others, respond to the particular need for a practical guide on distributive trade statistics.

The third session also paid attention to the area of measurement of the informal sector, which is relatively large for many countries in the Asia-Pacific region, and to the importance of developing good measurement methods. The session was closed with a presentation on the legacy of the International Comparison Programme (ICP) of the World Bank for price statistics for participating countries, which included the Standard Product Definitions, the ICP Manual and the Toolpack software package.

The last session discussed current topics in international statistics. The delegates spoke about



New Government Statistician appointed in Tonga

The UNESCAP Statistics Division would like to congratulate Mr 'Ata'ata M. Finau on his appointment as Government Statistician of Tonga on 26 January. Mr Finau has an enormous amount of experience in the Tonga Statistics Department, where he was Chief of the National Accounts Division before taking up his new assignment. We wish Mr Finau all the best and success in his new role as Government Statistician.

making the United Nations Statistical Commission more effective and concluded that the focus of the Statistical Commission should be on technical matters rather than political issues. Also, they thought issues of concern to developing countries should help to drive the agenda and discussions.

The global and regional progress on ICT statistics was discussed in the final session. Since there is more news on ICT statistics to report in this Newsletter, this topic will be discussed in a separate item (see: New steps towards harmonized ICT statistics). Finally, the forum paid attention to the cost of commercial software to national statistical agencies, which was a problem for many countries.

The APEX-1 forum allowed for the exchange of updated information on developments in international statistics. The forum was thought useful and the delegates decided to proceed with an APEX-2 forum. This second forum is to be scheduled for late 2006 or early 2007.

Background documents, presentations, papers and the final report are available from the UNESCAP website at: <http://www.unescap.org/stat/apex/index.asp>.

New steps towards harmonized ICT statistics

In February 2005 the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) statistics recorded several new steps towards the formation of a core set of harmonized and internationally comparable ICT statistical indicators. This result was achieved by the World Summit on the Information Society's (WSIS) Thematic Meeting on "Measuring the Information Society", organized by the Partnership for Measuring ICT for Development.

This Partnership is a new entity formed by several international and regional agencies with the interest of advancing ICT statistics and the measurement of the information society. The Partnership involves the International Telecommunication Union (ITU); the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); the Institute for Statistics of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); four regional commissions of the United Nations, including the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP); the United Nations ICT Task Force; the World Bank; and Eurostat.

The meeting, held in Geneva from 7 to 9 February 2005, was successful on various fronts, including its global participation. It was attended by approximately 270 people, representing countries and many United Nations and other international as well as regional organizations.

The meeting had four well defined objectives:

- Achieving agreement on a core list of ICT statistical indicators.
- Beginning to set the way for designing effective capacity building activities for national statistical systems.
- Exploring the relationship between the development of ICTs and the progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.
- Deciding about the feasibility of creating an international database on ICT statistics.

The meeting succeeded in adopting a list of core statistical ICT indicators, which will be the basis for internationally comparable statistics in this field. It also began to discuss capacity building initiatives in concrete terms.

Although the meeting agreed that an international database on ICT statistics is feasible and would represent a step forward, international data reporting will be undertaken by UNESCAP only as a voluntary exercise to avoid excessive burden on countries not yet ready to provide easily such statistics, and following appropriate statistical capacity building initiatives.

As mentioned before, ICT statistics were briefly discussed during the APEX-1 Forum for Asia-Pacific Statisticians, which was held a few days before the WSIS Thematic Meeting. The discussions in the forum highlighted the fact that the interests of countries in developing their ICT statistics varied according to their ICT policy initiatives. The delegates underlined that, to be useful, statistics had to be policy relevant. They also expressed concern about the use of composite indices to rank countries on ICT matters as the validity of these indices was found debatable. These considerations about the need to go beyond composite indices by making use of a more comprehensive set of core indicators and about the relevance of indicators for policy-making were shared at a global level by the WSIS Thematic Meeting.

Information on the Partnership for Measuring ICT for Development as well as other Technical documents on ICT statistics produced by national agencies of Asia and the Pacific are available through the new pages set up on the UNESCAP Statistics Division's web site. For more information, please visit the following web pages:

<http://www.unescap.org/stat/ict/index.asp>
<http://measuring-ict.unctad.org/>

International Comparison Programme (ICP) Workshops in Asia-Pacific

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) conducted an International Comparison Programme (ICP) National Accounts Workshop from 15 to 17 February 2005 at the Asian Institute of Technology in Pathum Thani, near Bangkok, Thailand. The Workshop agenda included a review of the national accounts data required for computation of Purchasing Power Parities (PPP), methods for completing expenditure weights for government consumption and the 110 basic headings for private consumption, and round table discussions. The workshop was one of a series that the ADB has organized for the 23 countries and areas participating in the ICP Asia Pacific programme.

36th Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission: Major Decisions and Recommendations, 1-4 March 2005, New York

The United Nations Statistical Commission held its 36th session in New York from 1 till 4 March. The Commission had a record attendance of over 75 Member States, including 17 from the UNESCAP region and several which were participating for the first time. As usual, the Statistical Commission had a wide range of substantive topics on its agenda, almost all of relevance to UNESCAP. The main issues of interest to the Asia-Pacific region are being reported here. For a more complete account of the Commission's decisions and recommendations, interested readers may refer to the United Nations Statistics website at

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/sc2005.htm>.

Energy statistics

The Commission acknowledged the importance of high quality energy statistics for all countries from both a socioeconomic and environmental perspective. It noted the needs for a closer link to energy policy, a better integration of energy statistics with other statistical systems including economic-environmental accounting, and assistance to developing countries in strengthening their capacity to produce energy statistics. The exchange of best practices was considered an important way forward in improving the quality of energy statistics.

National accounts

The Commission recognized the need to help countries improve their infrastructure for basic data collection and promote the use of administrative data for national accounts, inter alia through the provision of manuals on best practices. It encouraged countries to intensify advocacy and reach out to users and policy-makers in order to strengthen their awareness of the importance and usefulness of national accounts. Also, the Commission recommended maintaining the existing timetable (2008) for completing the 1993 System of National Accounts (SNA) Rev. 1. The informative website of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) on the 1993 SNA Update Issues was particularly commended by the Commission as the website has facilitated transparency and world-wide involvement of the statistical community in the updating process. (For the interested reader: see <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/sna1993/issues.asp>).

Informal sector statistics

The Commission took note of the report by the Delhi Group on Informal Sector Statistics. It encouraged the Delhi Group to continue the development of clearer definitions for producing data on the informal sector and measuring its contribution to the GDP and employment. It suggested that the Delhi Group study the social aspects of the informal sector to supplement its current focus on the economic side. Also, the Commission noted that the Inter-secretariat Working Group on National Accounts will actively seek collaboration with the Delhi Group to improve the presentation of the concept of the informal sector in the updated 1993 SNA.

Population and housing censuses

The Commission had a lengthy discussion on population and housing censuses. It endorsed the recommendations of the Symposium and the Expert Group Meeting on Population and Housing Censuses as presented in the report on population and housing censuses. With UNSD acting as an umbrella organization for standard setting, provision of technical expertise and establishment of standards, the Commission requested that the strategy for the 2010 Census Round revolve around regional arrangements to the fullest possible extent. Those arrangements provide a flexible framework for developing regionally comparable statistics, sharing of knowledge and resources and taking into account regionally relevant issues. The Commission also noted that the census trust fund that has been established would be used according to regional needs and that the work on the census round would be closely coordinated with regional initiatives.

The Commission requested that UNSD proceed with its work on the revision and update of the *Principles*

and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses. The work should specifically focus on the needs to assess the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals through census data; to study the application of ICT and its sustainability; to address public trust in safekeeping the privacy of data providers; and to articulate the utilization of census results to make the value of censuses more visible and the use of data more diversified. Other specific issues to be addressed were the appropriateness of the use of emerging approaches, such as population registers and Geographical Information Systems (GIS), in both data collection and dissemination.

Health statistics

On health statistics the Commission welcomed the efforts of the World Health Organization (WHO) to

Training: 58th annual Summer Institute in Survey Research Techniques by the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan

The annual Summer Institute is a training programme in survey research techniques taught by the staff of the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan and other research specialists. The programme is for students and professionals who work or need to work with surveys and survey data, work in a statistical office, or are interested in quantitative research methods in general.

The courses offered this year vary from one week to eight weeks in length, from 6 June to 29 July 2005. The course topics include: research design, survey sampling methods, cognitive foundations of survey interviewing, questionnaire design, web surveys, survey quality, qualitative methods, survey data analysis, nonresponse and missing data methods, hierarchical linear models, event history analysis and structural equation modeling.

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involve both national and international statistical offices in the development of health statistics. It stressed the need for the Inter-secretariat Working Group on Health Statistics to continue work on a coordinated and integrated agenda for the production

of health statistics and to agree on standard definitions, classifications and methodologies in health statistics. The Commission recognized that the Health Metrics Network (HMN) was a promising approach for developing countries to strengthen their health information systems.

Poverty statistics

The Commission noted progress towards the preparation of a UN Handbook on poverty statistics. It recognized that the current scope of the handbook is adequate, but that there might be a need to address newly emerging aspects of poverty in the future. The Commission took note of an announcement of the Rio Group on Poverty Statistics that it will publish a Compendium on poverty statistics in 2005 and expressed its disappointment that UNSD and the Rio Expert Group had not been able to work towards a common publication.

Environmental accounting

The creation of a Committee on Environmental-Economic Accounting was endorsed. The Committee should be considered as having a programme of work with a long-term perspective, while its work should proceed in parallel with the improvement of environment statistics. The Statistical Commission stressed the importance of promoting environmental accounting in the users' community and taking on board the needs of the users. It also recognized the need to assist countries through compilation manuals and technical assistance programmes.

Statistical capacity building

The Commission had an extensive discussion on statistical capacity-building, stressing that technical cooperation in this critically important area should be demand-driven, responsive to local conditions, nationally controlled and better coordinated. It particularly noted the effectiveness of regional and subregional approaches to statistical capacity-building programmes which allows for the exchange of practical experiences relevant for the local socio-economic context.

The importance of strengthening statistical training centres and supporting in-house training, as part of a sustained statistical capacity-building effort, was emphasized. In this context the Commission noted the need for training on management and programme planning skills alongside training on substantive statistical areas. It welcomed the activities of PARIS21 in supporting capacity building in developing countries and agreed with the usefulness of National Statistical Development Strategies (NSDS).

The Commission agreed to the formation of a Friends of the Chair Group to define the modalities of a regular

report to the Commission on the ability of countries to produce individual Millennium Development Goal (MDG) indicators and on how metadata should be presented to accompany indicators on all MDGs. This Friends of the Chair Group would also develop suggestions on processes that can be used to bridge the information gap between users and producers of MDG indicators.

Indicators for monitoring the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

The Commission took note of the work carried out by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators and the advancement by the Expert Group in compiling indicators for global monitoring. It also noted that many countries still lack the capacity to produce the necessary data and that a review of indicators currently being produced at the national level was necessary for all the MDGs. It considered this as an opportunity to inform the policy makers of the realistic level of statistical capacity in producing the MDG indicators and their quality at country level for all the MDGs.

Like last year, the topic of MDG and other development indicators led to prolonged discussions. The Commission was unable to reach agreement on wording in the final report during its scheduled sessions. It therefore extended its work into the afternoon of the final day and eventually the report had to be adopted by vote.

Other topics on the agenda of the Statistical Commission included statistics on international trade in services, service statistics, the International Comparison Programme (ICP), price statistics, disability statistics, environment statistics, international economic and social classifications, presentation of statistical data and metadata and common open standards for their exchange and sharing, information and communication technology statistics, and coordination and integration of international statistical programmes.

New version of DevInfo software

Following a successful launch in 2004, the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have been conducting consultations in preparation for the next version of the DevInfo software. For that purpose, a DevInfo Field Reference Group Meeting was held in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, from 21-23 March 2005. UNESCAP participated in the meeting.

Built on the experiences of the ChildInfo software, DevInfo was launched in 2004 as a database system to organize, store and display statistical data in a uniform format. DevInfo is primarily intended to assist countries in their reporting on the Millennium Development Goals, but it also allows data producers to build databases with their own sets of indicators for monitoring national development goals. Key to the success of DevInfo is the ease-of-use of the package, allowing representation of statistical time-series as tables, graphs, and maps in just a few steps. Several national statistical offices in the Asia-Pacific region are readying or have already launched products using the DevInfo technology: Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Fiji, Georgia, India, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Mongolia, and Nepal.

The new version of DevInfo, Version 5.0, is currently under development. The testing phase is planned to take place towards the end of the year 2005, before a launch in early 2006. The major innovation of the new version will be the web component which will allow the publication of DevInfo databases on websites. The web version of DevInfo will keep a similar "look and feel" as the CD-ROM version and will retain the same core functionalities to create tables, graphs and maps. The web version is to be developed on the basis of a pilot version designed for the National Bureau of Statistics of Tanzania. Although the final version is likely to evolve from this pilot version, interested readers may get a glimpse of the current version at www.tsed.org.

A second important innovation of DevInfo will be the addition of a data exchange module to facilitate the export and import of data and metadata between DevInfo systems and other database systems. The data exchange module will include specific data bridges with DevInfo and software commonly used in statistics: SPSS, Stata, CSPro ... as well as specific data bridges between DevInfo and a number of global databases from various United Nations agencies: Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) of the World Food Programme, Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems (FIVIMS) of the Food and Agricultural Organization, Country Response Information System (CRIS) of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. The data exchange module, using the XML technology, will also include generic tools to allow database administrators developing their own data bridges with other database systems.

A number of other enhancements are to be included in the new version:

- New data types (Text, Boolean) to complement the numerical only type currently handled by DevInfo;

- Greater flexibility for users to organize the database query interface, which will facilitate the display of statistics with long names (these names are often truncated in the current version);
- Improved support of multiple languages (notably for non-UNICODE languages);
- Improved management of maps with a map database; and
- Possibility to generate maps to represent several statistical indicators on a single chart

For further information regarding the future version, interested readers may visit the DevInfo website at <http://www.devinform.org>.

22nd Population Census Conference, 7-9 March 2005, Seattle

The 22nd East-West Center Population Census Conference was held in Seattle, Washington, U.S.A. from 7-9 March. The conference was organized by the U.S. Census Bureau and the East-West Center in cooperation with the Association of National Census and Statistics Directors of America, Asia and the Pacific (ANCSDAAP). The Conference was attended by some 50 participants from 21 countries and selected United Nations agencies and academic institutions. Various UNESCAP member countries were represented.

The theme of this year's conference was "Innovations in Collecting, Processing, Using, and Disseminating Census Data." A wide range of census-related topics were discussed, including the analysis of census data, improvements in census operations, the use of mapping and GIS-related techniques, data utilization and dissemination, planning and financing of censuses, and regional and international cooperation. Many of the presentations focused on the forthcoming 2010 round of population censuses, and are a valuable source for future work in this field.

UNESCAP was represented at the conference and contributed two presentations. One was on the secretariat's plan to set up a Regional Census Programme in support of the 2010 World Programme of Population and Housing Censuses, and the other on measuring disability in censuses based on the UNESCAP experience with the disability statistics project.

For presentations and papers of the 2005 Conference, see <http://www.ancsdaap.org/cencon2005/Agenda.htm>, or refer to <http://www.ancsdaap.org/> for information on Population Census Conferences in general.

Training: 2005 Summer Workshops by the U.S. Census Bureau

The U.S. Census Bureau offers Summer Workshops in statistics at the International Programs Center (IPC) in Washington, D.C.. The workshops fill a specialized need in statistical training, they are product oriented and focus on the practical skills needed in a statistical office. The first of five courses offered in the 2005 Summer Workshops programme is scheduled for July 2005.

The following workshops are offered:

- Census Planning and Management Workshop
11–22 July 2005 (2 weeks, US \$2,000)
- Measuring Techniques and Methods Regarding Poverty
25 July–5 August 2005 (2 weeks, US \$2,000)
- Disseminating Official Statistics
8–26 August 2005 (3 weeks, US \$3,000)
- Statistical Methods for Measuring Economic Development and Growth
29 August–16 September 2005 (3 weeks, US \$3,000)
- Microcomputer Processing of Censuses and Surveys (CSPro)
19 September–14 October 2005 (4 weeks, US \$4,000)

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Website: <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/cspro/>*

IMF/UNESCAP Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) Outreach Seminar for Asia and Pacific Region, 28 March – 1 April 2005, Bangkok

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) established the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) in 1996 to guide countries that have or seek access to international financial markets in the dissemination of economic and financial statistics to the public. SDDS is the first tier of the data standards initiative of IMF and has become the cornerstone of a new information architecture to promote greater transparency in and more efficient functioning of international financial markets. It has been subject to continuous review by the IMF Executive Board and, thereby, has evolved to meet new challenges. As part of the fourth and fifth reviews, the Executive Board encouraged as many



**IMF/UNESCAP Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) Outreach Seminar for Asia and Pacific Region
28 March - 1 April 2005, Bangkok, Thailand**

Back Row: Mr Sornchai Kanokmongkol (Thailand), Mr Wei Liu (UNESCAP), Ms Fathimath Zuhaira (Maldives), Mr Sirawat Na Pompech (Thailand), Ms Prangtip Busayasiri (Thailand), Mr Neramit Dhanasakdi (Thailand), Ms Aishath Shahuda (Maldives), Ms Chanmany Vonglokhom (Lao PDR), Ms Margaretha Barkhof (UNESCAP), Ms Patchawan Chalongviriyalert (Thailand), Mr Seok Dong Wang (UNESCAP), Ms Chalalai Jiwasukapimat (Thailand), Mr Blaise Ehounoubakrohi (UNESCAP); **Third Row:** Ms Tippawan Macharoen (Thailand), Ms Kanarat Pitinan (Thailand), Mr Yongqiang Guo (China), Mr Jingping Zheng, (China), Mr Visoth Ung (Cambodia), Mr Ilpo Survo (UNESCAP), Mr Ean Sokvat (Cambodia), Mr Avarzed Baatar (Mongolia), Ms Baasanjav Radnaabazar (Mongolia), Ms Phetsamone Sone (Lao PDR), Ms Nobuko Kajiura (UNESCAP), Mr Chol O Han (UNESCAP); **Second Row:** Ms Pusadee Ganjarerndee (Thailand), Ms Wanida Mahakit (Thailand), Ms Sharlene Lu-Quintana (ADB), Ms Kanaengnid Tantigate (SEACEN), Mr Joel Jere (UNESCAP), Mr Roberto Pagan (UNESCAP), Ms Meri Gardashkhanova (Azerbaijan), Mr Tapdyg Amiraslanov (Azerbaijan), Ms Laksanalert Prempree (Thailand); **Front Row:** Ms Lukana Yuvaprakorn (Thailand), Mr Ishaque Ahmed Ansari (Pakistan), Mr Muhammad Ishaq Rana (Pakistan), Mr Gerard G. Raymond (IMF), Mr Andrew J. Flatt (UNESCAP), Mr Padej Sukachevin (IMF), Mr Nguyen Ba Khoang (Viet Nam), Ms Cao Thi Van Anh (Viet Nam), Mr Md. Zobdul Hoque (Bangladesh), Mr Tula Raj Basyal (Nepal)

Fund members as possible to subscribe to SDDS in the context of the Fund's crisis prevention efforts and to broaden access to international financial markets. At present, there are 60 subscribing countries.

Various countries that aspire to subscribe to SDDS are hampered by, among other things, lack of awareness and knowledge of the SDDS requirements in terms of producing data with the required timeliness, frequency, periodicity and other quality aspects. The Special Data Dissemination Standard Outreach Seminar for Asia and Pacific region was held in Bangkok, Thailand, for a number of potential SDDS subscribers in the Asia-Pacific region with the objective of facilitating their early subscription. It was organized jointly by the IMF and UNESCAP and attended by Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan and Viet Nam. Delegates from the Bank of Thailand and the National Statistical Office also participated to share their experience as an SDDS subscriber.

The seminar addressed several operational issues helpful to potential subscribers, including the origin,

impact and evolution of SDDS; a review of SDDS requirements; the day-to-day operations of SDDS; the role of the SDDS coordinator; the IMF staff monitoring; and technology issues such as the enhancements to the Dissemination Standards Bulletin Board (DSBB), the SDMX initiative for increasing access to statistical metadata, and an introduction to the data module of the Report on the Observance of Standards and Codes (ROSC).

The seminar provided an opportunity for participants to raise questions on SDDS, while one-on-one discussions with IMF staff allowed them to discuss their countries' potential subscriptions to SDDS. Data dissemination practices in each country were discussed in light of SDDS requirements, and outstanding issues needing to be resolved prior to subscription were highlighted for future action.

For more information on SDDS, please refer to the Dissemination Standards Bulletin Board of the IMF at <http://dsbb.imf.org/Applications/web/sddshome/>.

Training: Seminars of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), U.S. Department of Labor

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is one of the largest labor statistics organizations in the world. Each year the BLS International Labor Statistics Center conducts seminars of one to four weeks' duration at its training facilities in Washington, DC. The seminars bring together statisticians, economists, analysts, and other data users from countries all over the world.

2005 Seminar Schedule

- Labor Market Information Systems
2–20 May 2005 (3 weeks) \$4,335
- Technology and Survey Processing
9–20 May 2005 (2 weeks) \$2,890
- Wages, Earnings, and Benefits
6–24 June 2005 (3 weeks) \$5,135
- Employment & Unemployment Statistics
11–29 July 2005 (3 weeks) \$5,135
- Constructing Price Indexes
11 July–5 August 2005 (4 weeks) \$6,580
- Projecting Tomorrow's Workforce Needs
8–19 August 2005 (2 weeks) \$2,890
- Survey Methods
12–16 September 2005 (1 week) \$1,445
- Economic Indicators
12–30 September 2005 (3 weeks) \$5,135
- Managing Statistical Programs
17–28 October 2005 (2 weeks) \$2,890
- Analyzing Labor Statistics
17 October–4 November 2005 (3 weeks) \$5,135
- Training of Trainers
Training of Trainers is held the first 3 work days of the week following most seminars.
(3 days) \$867

Seminars Under Development

- Advanced Topics on Employment & Unemployment Statistics
1–5 August 2005 (1 week) \$1,445
- Advanced Topics on Price Indexes
8–12 August 2005 (1 week) \$1,445
- Data Dissemination
29 August–2 September 2005 (1 week) \$1,445

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Missions of UNESCAP Statistics Staff

Mr. Andrew J. Flatt, Director, Statistics Division undertook missions to:

New York and Seattle, U.S.A. (26 February-11 March): To represent UNESCAP at the 36th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission and the fifth session of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities; to participate in consultations between the regional commissions of the United Nations and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) in the field of statistics; to attend the Human Development Report Statistical Advisory Panel of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); and to represent UNESCAP at the 22nd session of the East-West Center Population Census Conference in Seattle.

Mr. Ilpo Survo, Chief, Statistical Information Services Section, was on mission to:

New York, U.S.A. (31 January-11 February): To participate in the regional hand-over workshop for the UNDG project "Building capacity and statistical literacy for MDG monitoring at country level" at UNDP Headquarters in New York.

Mr. Eric Hermouet, Associate Statistician, Statistical Information Services Section, undertook a mission to:

Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania (21-23 March): To participate in the UNICEF/UNDG DevInfo field reference group meeting.

Mr Roberto Pagan, Statistician. Statistics Development Section, travelled to:

Geneva, Switzerland (7-9 February): To attend the WSIS Thematic Meeting on Measuring the Information Society organized by the Partnership for Measuring ICT for Development; to participate in a round table discussion with the regional commissions of the United Nations during the second session of this meeting; and to inform about activities in the field of ICT statistics in the Asia-Pacific region at large.

Ms Patricia Alexander, Regional Adviser on Poverty Statistics, visited:

Cambodia (26-29 January and 13-26 February): To prepare and deliver the UNSIAP country course on

statistical analysis of the Cambodia Household Social Economy Survey.

Chiba, Japan (6-10 February): To present a module on indicators for the MDGs, as part of the UNSIAP six-month course on official statistics.

Mr. Pietro Gennari, Regional Adviser on Economic Statistics, was on mission to:

Sri Lanka (9-20 January): To provide advisory services to the Department of Census and Statistic for completion of the project of the new labour force survey, restructuring the data processing and the dissemination system.

Maldives (24 February-7 March): To provide advisory services in economic statistics to the Ministry of Planning and National Development: review short-term economic indicators and their use for macroeconomic analysis; and review country practices on enterprise surveys.

Fiji (13-31 March): To provide advisory services in economic statistics to the Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, including in development of statistics on gross capital formation in agriculture and the informal sector; and to participate in the eighth meeting of the Expert Group on Informal Sector Statistics (Delhi Group), Nadi, 29-31 March 2005.

Visitors to the UNESCAP Statistics Division

1. **Mr. Joo-Hwan Kim**, Associate Professor, Dongguk University, Gyeongju, Gyeongbuk, South Korea.
2. **Mr. Peter Digby**, Consultant, Chiangmai, Thailand.
3. **Mr. Frederick Baker**, Senior Statistician, FAO, Bangkok, Thailand.
4. **Mr. Julian Payne**, Managing Director, SEAREP Limited, Philippines.
5. **Ms. Yayoi Sugihashi**, Lecturer, Institute for Gender Studies, Ochanomizu University, Japan.

Publications released by the UNESCAP Statistics Division

- *Statistical Indicators for Asia and the Pacific, 2004 Compendium, Volume XXXIV, December 2004*
- *Statistical Newsletter, No. 136, January 2005*
- *Statistical Newsletter, Compendium 2004, January 2005*

Staff Movements

Mr. Wei Liu joined the UNESCAP Statistics Division at the end of January 2005 as Associate Statistician in the Statistics Development Section. Mr. Wei Liu comes to the Division with expert knowledge in economic policy analysis and econometric analysis. He has more than five years of research and teaching experience, gained at the University of Birmingham, United Kingdom, where he was affiliated with the Applied Economic and Policy Research Group and worked on a World Bank research project in the Department of Economics. Mr. Wei Liu holds a Masters degree in Money Banking and Finance, and a Ph.D. in Economics, with a specialization in STATA 8 program.

In February 2005 **Ms. Lene Mikkelsen** retired after three years of service with the Statistics Division of UNESCAP, where she was in charge of the Statistics Development Section. Before arriving in Bangkok, Ms. Mikkelsen had served for 20 years in Geneva with the Statistical Division of the UNECE.

During her time with UNESCAP Ms. Mikkelsen contributed considerably to the development and promotion of official statistics and statistical standards throughout the Asian and Pacific region. She paid especial attention to building national capabilities to collect and disseminate statistical information in a wide range of areas concerning human development, including health and disability, education, gender equality and poverty eradication. She designed and led several statistical projects, the latest one being the on-going two-year project for improved disability measurement in the UNESCAP region.

We would like to wish Ms. Mikkelsen a happy retirement. Good luck and hope to see you again in Bangkok, Lene!



The UNESCAP Statistics Division farewells Ms Lene Mikkelsen, standing in the middle

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News items, articles and viewpoints on statistical matters from readers who wish to contribute to the *Statistical Newsletter* are most welcome. The Editor reserves the right to edit and publish manuscripts in accordance with the editorial requirements of this publication. All correspondence should be addressed to:

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