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Challenges facing of CSO in Myanmar

Statistical System of Myanmar is a decentralized one, with the Central Statistical Organization functioning on a national level since 1952, whilst some ministries such as Ministry of agriculture, Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Conservation and Forestry, Ministry of Health and etc. set up their own planning and statistics departments. And also, many departments have statistical units to meet their needs.

Today we can see a stronger trend of global economic integration and fundamental changes in the economy and the society across countries. In this connection this meeting is important and relevant. Official statistics is facing various challenges.

1. CSO needs to amend the Statistical authority Act
 2. National Statistical Coordination Board should be formed as new organization
 3. To capture of private sector data in timely and regularly
 4. Need to fulfill the data gaps such as environmental statistics, tourism statistics, trade statistics and some indicators such as HDI, Happiness Index and Well-being Index
 5. Frequency of census & survey to estimate the absence of real data
 6. Need of human resources, financial assists, technical support and IT resources
 7. Consistency in data from different sources
 8. Timeline of data & reports
 9. Plan for National Statistical Development Strategies to overview, monitor and evaluate management system for statistics
1. CSO needs to amend Statistical Authority Act

CSO needs to amend 1952 Statistical Act No. 32. CSO is collecting & compiling the data from different sources according to that Statistical Authority

Act. At present Myanmar is reforming in a new era of development featured by the economic transition & building of a well-off society. The new government has laid down the four national economic policies recently & one of them is “Emergence of reliable statistics and amending of statistical system”. This new situation calls for new and higher requirements for official statistics and huge challenges as well. Therefore CSO need to amend relevant Statistical Law to meet the current situations of the country.

2. National Statistical Coordination Board should be formed as new organization

CSO play the central role in the national statistical system and has been disseminating economic and social statistics in cooperation with the source agencies. However one may note that, in Myanmar, planning & statistics department exist in almost all ministries. Statistics are being compiled individually by each ministry to serve the own and immediate purposes. Coordination and facilitation of statistical activities is really lacking. There is no national mechanism or institutional arrangement to standardize concepts, definitions, methodologies and classifications, to ensure coordination of statistical work enhance co-operation in execution, to eliminate duplication and save resources, unify results and improve data dissemination. Therefore National Statistical Coordination Board should be formed as new organization to lay down all necessary and appropriate policies for statistical operations, covering all ministries and sectors of the economy and developing a national integrated system of statistics.

3. To capture of private sector data in timely and regularly

According to the new economic policy, promotion of the private sector is the most single task of the market-oriented economic system. In Myanmar, private activities in agriculture , manufacturing and processing , trading, services , housing construction, banking and insurance, hotels and tourism , international ports and airport and foreign direct investment etc.. have gained momentum attempt need to be made more fully cover the private sector and make available not only aggregate data but also disaggregated form, for the professionals in the government complex and the user among the business and general public. And also price statistics and monetary statistics need to be fully developed and

disseminated in a timely fashion, as they are indispensable to business decision-making and economic management at macro and micro level. It will also include producing new publications of specialized statistics on energy statistics, environmental statistics. Especially for the production data of private manufacturing sector is difficult to get due to avoid the taxation. So it is needed to trust between government and private sector in order to get the reliable data in timely and regularly in line with the statistical standard.

4. Need to fulfill the data gaps such as environmental statistics, tourism statistics, trade statistics and some indicators such as HDI, happiness Index and well being Index

Regarding environmental statistics, CSO and National Commission for Environmental Affairs are developing relevant indicators Myanmar context, for planning and preparation of programme for conservation of the environment relating with environmental statistics such as greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide emission, deforestation, disaster statistics which would be new field statistics for CSO. It would be needed many technical and financial assistant together with methodology. To promote the cooperation among related government agencies, private sector, community, INGOs, local NGOs and civil society & to obtain technology knowhow, equipments concerning the measurement of environmental situation.

And also relating with tourism statistics, non-observed economy statistics, trade statistics (Illegal trade), Human Development Index, Happiness Index and Well being Index would be new field statistics for CSO. It would be also needed many technical and financial assistant together with methodology.

5. Frequency of census & survey to estimate the absence of real data

In Myanmar, the last Population census was conducted in 1983. It has been made for this information for three decades until now. Therefore Ministry of Immigration and manpower is preparing to conduct the population census in 2014. Due to the absence of real population data, some indicators are calculated based upon the estimated population. And also the last labour force survey was in

1990. For the weakness of the labour statistics, Ministry of Labour try to prepare to conduct the labour force survey after the Population census. For these purpose, it is necessary to conduct censuses and surveys regularly and frequently including informal survey. So we need to get technical and financial assistant together with modernize methodology.

6. Need of human resources, financial assists, technical support and IT resources

The generating the adequate and reliable statistics, the compiling, computing, analyzing and reporting are important and it is depend upon the skill of statistical staff. So CSO needs skilled and efficient statisticians' capable computer programmer and technician for the requirement of resource and technical assistance for IT activities and networking. Data analysis for using the statistical software such as SPSS, STATA will be necessary to be efficient timely statistics and producing. Harmonization of classification, concept, definition and measurement has to be undertaken to be able to mention international comparison. Therefore overall methodology of sample survey for in-house training with job attachment would be rather appropriate would for the staff skill enhancement to conduct training on statistics for relevant staff of line ministries down to township level. CSO is drawing human resources development program with the frame work of National Human Resources Development project. The proposed training courses are:

- Diploma/Master in statistics regular course
- Analysis, Interpretation and use of official statistics
- Price Statistics
- International merchandise trade statistics
- Compiling, analyzing and reporting on statistics of trade and services
- Statistical survey methodologies
- Poverty reduction
- Development indicators
- Software development techniques
- Computer office application
- Demographic analysis

- Industrial and commercial statistics
- I.C.D 10 training

7. Consistency in data from different source

CSO collects and compiles various kinds of statistics by means of three different ways.

(a)CSO itself collects and compiles the data needed by conducting ad-hoc or regular surveys in the specific region or specific field as well as the nationwide.

(b)Some data are collected and compiled by CSO in collaboration with other departments.

(c)The rest way to collect and compile the data is by asking or requesting data from other concerned departments according to Statistical Authority Act 34 of 1952. The data is coming from administrative records

Some data like population & tourist data are different between various sources. CSO make a focal agency to cooperation & coordination between respective ministries.

To settle coverage and quality of data (administrative records) generated administrative systems by CSO need rules and regulations, standardization according to the law. And also need to conduct training on statistics for relevant staff of line ministries down to township level.

8. Timeline of data and reports

Some surveys and indicators were developed during the central planning economy still made for the time being. And also there is inclusive demand for statistics from the new market-oriented economic system that requires statistical information to actually reflect the national conditions and strength to record and describe the process of economic and social transactions, to report and monitor the performance of the economy, to collect and analyze the public opinions and views and to solve the problems in the course of economic and social development .The demand of statistical data is increasing from the public in

general who are more closely watching and using statistical information's released by government statistical agencies. To computerize on data compilation & to establish networking and communication facilities is important for timeliness, accuracy and comprehensiveness.

9. Plan for National Statistical Development Strategies to overview, monitor and evaluate management system for statistics

To emerge the qualitative statistics and to strengthen the national statistical system, we need to implement National Strategies for Development of Statistics with the aid of technology assistants from United Nation Statistics Division. So the consultation meeting was held in July on the needs for statistical capacity building with respective ministries to coverage the quality of data generated by administrative system.

First, a strong quality management system for national statistics will be setup to ensure the accuracy, timeliness and soundness of national statistics data.

Second, we will make efforts to enhance the capacity of statistical monitoring and analysis. Comprehensive evaluation system that meets the scientific concept of development will be explored in order to closely monitor the national economic performance timely depicts trends of economics development and indentifying problems. It also helps to make policy recommendations to decision makers by government at all level.

Third, we will promote wider public access to statistical information.

Conclusion

Now CSO is facing severe challenges; a long way ahead of us in the course of reformed and develop an efficient statistical system. We are confident that we can work hard to improve Myanmar official statistics but we need strong supports and assistances from our colleagues from other countries and international organizations.

I sincerely hope that we can make joint efforts to promote the development of international statistics by developing closer exchanges and co-operation and by learning from each other.