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**The 13<sup>th</sup> East Asian Statistical Conference**
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# The Challenges for the Development of National Statistical System in Lao PDR

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# The Challenges of the Development National Statistical System in Lao PDR

**1. Brief Introduction on Lao's National Statistical System (NSS)**

- National Statistics System is a Decentralize System
  - Vertical line includes provincial, district and village authorities
  - Horizontal line includes ministries, ministry-equivalent agencies
  - The Department of Statistics (DoS) is an organ of the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI). Based on the Statistics Law, currently DoSupgraded its status to a sub-Ministry and renamed as Lao Bureau Statistics (LSB) under MPI;
  - The LSB is the coordinating body of production and dissemination of statistics and information within the national statistical system.

- Legal frame work and Development Strategy
  - Before 2002 Statistics Decree 127/PM. Decree 140/PM of August 20, 2002 regarding the "organizational structure and operation of the National Statistical System"
  - StatisticalLaw approved by the National Assembly in June 2010
  - Strategy for Development of National Statistics System 2010-2020 approved in May 2010 by the Government of Lao PDR.

**2. Key achievements in producing statistics production**

- *Basic official statistics* in the areas of economic statistics, national accounts statistics, price statistics, fiscal and financial statistics, social statistics and poverty statistics to support the formulation and monitor the implementation of the seventh five years social-economic development plan, monitoring the progress of MDGs and monitoring other national programs.Data are available in annual year book publication, electronic form and website.

- *Data sources:* most of dataavailable is mainly based on administrative data reporting system. However, since 1990 with the recognition, commitment of Government together with the financial and technical support from development partners and donors, data collection and information system have been improved. The census and sample surveyed have been conducted. They are included:
  - Population and Housing Census in every ten years cycle (1985, 1995 and 2005), next round will be 2015;
  - First Economic Census in 2006, second Economic Census will be conducted in2012/1013 and next 2017/2018;

- First Agricultural Census in 1999, 2011and next will be conducted 2020;
- Lao Expenditure and Consumption Survey 1992/93, 1997/98 , 2002/03 and 2007/08, and 2012/2013 is ongoing data collection andnext will be conducted 2017/2018;
- Annual Household Survey 2003-2006, 2011 and plan for 2012 onward;
- Annual Enterprise and Establishment Survey 2002-2007, plan for 2012onward;
- Labor Force Survey 2010/2011 and plan for 2015;
- Lao PDR Social Indicator Survey (LSIS) (combining two surveys (Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey and Reproductive Health Survey) conducted in 2011and will be conducted 2015.

## 3. Data Gap

There are many areas where gaps exist in the statistics produced in the country:

- Most of social-economic statistics indicators produced on annually basis,except the Consumer Price Index and inflation are on monthly basic;
- Breaks within time series social-economic statistical data produced by many of the line ministries and agencies;
- The extent of compilation and presentation of statistical data are not in a form that are readily usable and therefore require further analysis;
- Some of the social-economic indicators produced by the LSB and line ministries and agencies are often in conflict with each other due to different methodologies, definition of concepts and timing;
- Social- Economics Statistical data not adequately disaggregated to meet user needs. This has become an important issue in the decentralization of the public administration, socio-economic planning and development to the district level;
- National Accounts Statistics partially available, supply and use and input output tables has not been compiled. For the next five years the improvement of economic statistics will serve for development and compilation of SNA include the compilation of SUT;
- Povertydata, population, and gender statistics are not adequately to meet user needs, particularly on disaggregate level.
- Environmental Statistics is new area, therefore data is still limited.

## 4. Key Challenges

- Organization restructure of NSS base on Statistical Law is in the process and number of challenges ahead:

    - vertical line organization statistical system to complete of new function and recruit new staff at central, province, district and village level,

    - horizontal line organization statistical system to encourage the ministries to establish statistics office in each ministry.

- *New emerging development strategies demand at the national, regional and global levels on economic, social and environmental statistics for evident base policies has been increased.*Different requirements for social-economic statistics are varied among national and international programs: National Social Economic Development (NSEDP), MDGs, ASEAN Community Integration, WTO membership, LDC and Human Development status assessment have brought the gaps in the statistics produced as new types of statistical data are being demanded.

- *Numbers of social-economic indicators needs cross the programmes are different* at aggregate and disaggregated level (e.g. input, output, and outcome and impact indicators) for Monitoring and Evaluation short-term and long-term perspective.

- *Develop and strengthen administrative and survey data collection system, methods as well as information System to improve coverage, quality of statistical data collection and production.* Maintain and expand existing survey program. Quality of statistics has to be assessed on regularlybasis and efforts to improve the reliability and transparency(e.g. Industrial statistics, foreign trade in goods and services (IMTS and SITS), FDI statistics, improvement of national accounts statistics based on 1993 SNA and new updated 2008 SNA). Improve and create an information system that is the most cost-saving and effective.

- *Develop business registers for statistical purposes* as a tool for the preparation and coordination of surveys, as a source of information for the statistical analysis of the business population (e.g. economic census 2012/2013, access to administrative database on the business registration).

- *Develop civil register system* to improve data on birth, death, migration and other social indicators.

- *Maintain and upgrade technological infrastructure and communication equipment* which are up-to-date, durable, and can link vertical and horizontal organizational networks. To establish network and link NSS databases to government-wide ICT infrastructure.

- *Maintain and increase sufficient number and competent of human resource at central and provincial level.* In order to ascertain a successful implementation of SDNSS 2010-2020 Numbers of staff in LSB increase from 92 at present to 160 by 2015 and to 200 by 2020. Numbers of statistical staff in each ministry and in each province should on average be 8

to 15 people. Numbers of statistical staff in each district should on average be 6 to 8 staff at district level and at village level should be at least 1 or 2 permanent staff to collect village data.

- Sufficient resources to train and upgrade periodically knowledge, skills and competence of Statisticians NSS.
- Sufficient Resource mobilization from Government and Development Partners/ Donors for effective implementation of SDNSS 2010-2020 include the execution of censuses and sample surveys programs.
- Improve dissemination and exchange of statistics. Enlarge official statistics database, and increase varieties of formats to make it easy for users to understand and use them statistically correctly.

## 5. The way forward

Statistical Law and decree for implementation Statistical Law is key legal tool for improvement the way Statistics development in Lao PDR, it would need to widely disseminate, promote of using Statistical Law more effectively.

SDNSS 2010-2020 is targeted at developing and strengthening factors to support of the country's statistical system based on its positive experiences accumulated and adopt new international statistical practices.

The implementation of SDNSS will gradually restructure the entire statistical organization at central and provincial level.List of indicators has been identified for all types of statistical data that need to be collected and processed by the National Statistical office and other ministries and agencies.

Four strategy objectives, 12 work programs and key priority activities in each work program are defined in SDNSS namely: (i) improving policy, regulatory and institutional framework (6 work programs); (ii) developing statistical infrastructure ( 2 work programs); (iii) Data development and management ( 2 work programs); and (iv) ensuring activities of statistical networks (2 work programs) as to facilitate to *achieving better and more coordinate statistical capacity building and statistical production process.*

It is very importance to notethat increasing demand on statistics and development framework Statistical Law and SDNSS brought LSB the great opportunities and challenges.The successful implementation of Law and SDNSS will requirecomprehensive institutional arrangement, capacity building program; good coordination mechanism, sufficient human resources and financial support from the Government, Development Partners/International Donors and other stakeholders to perform work programs.

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