Draft report of the Workshop on ICT statistics

Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development, by Esperanza Magpantay, ITU

The representative from ITU gave an overview of the " Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development" project. The partners involve organizations such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics, UN Regional Commissions (ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP, and ESCWA), United Nations ICT Task Force, World Bank and some NSOs from developed countries. The presentation also highlighted the three main objectives of the partnership namely: (i) achieve a common set of core ICT indicators that are comparable at an international level; (ii) build statistical capacity in developing countries; and (iii) to develop global database that will contain data for the core ICT indicators. Ongoing and planned activities at the international, regional, and national levels were also presented. Based on the discussions, countries highlighted that there is a need to build statistical capacity in the area of ICT through workshops and training materials. In almost all cases, the issue of funding was raised and considered an important barrier for NSOs in carrying out an ICT survey and consequently request the assistance of partners in this area. It was also highlighted that countries should make a case inside their own government by showing the importance of ICT statistics and ask to increase the budget of NSO in order to start the data collection of ICT statistics. The importance of collaboration and coordination among and between ministries, regulators and national statistics offices were also highlighted.

Developing indicators in Africa: the SCAN ICT project, by Makane Faye, ECA

In addition to building the capacities of policy makers and regulators and promoting the the development of networks on ICTs for development, AISI has a major focus on monitoring ICT penetration and impact in African countries. In this regard, the Scan-ICT project was launched in November 2000 as a collaborative project between the Acacia programme of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), with financial support from the European Union (EU) and the Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation (NORAD).

Scan-ICT is a multi-partnership project that seeks to build support for the development of a comprehensive African capability to define, collect and manage key information needed to support the growing investment in ICTs as well as the transition of Africa to the Information Society. Also, by making available relevant data and information, Scan-ICT will be able to influence ICT investments and promote the development of sound policies as well as applications and content.

In the pilot phase of the project, Scan-ICT baseline studies were carried out in six African countries, namely, Ethiopia, Ghana, Morocco, Mozambique, Senegal and Uganda. The pilot phase dealt with strengthening institutional structures and organizational mechanisms for the collection of reliable ICT indicators, according to a harmonised methodology and the identification of common areas for data collection. The pilot phase included also a mapping exercise on the state of connectivity in Africa and a sectoral study on school networking. Among the recommendations of the first phase review, we can cite the following:

- There is need to extend the second phase of the project with inclusion of more countries
- National Statistics Offices should be included in the next phase of SCAN
- There is need to support the private sector engaged in R&D/software development
- There is need to expand & increase ICT access points in order to bridge the urban-rural infrastructure gap
- It is crucial to continuously monitor and capture data to facilitate informed decisions

On the SCAN ICT phase 2 project, it was indicated that the project will be supported by the Government of Finland. The following countries are potential beneficiaries of the second phase: Botswana, Gambia, Mauritius, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and Tunisia. In addition to collecting core indicators following the SCAN ICT methodology, the second phase is also expected to:

- promote linkages with various national ICT initiatives and projects
- undertake gender desegregation of indicators according to age, gender and disability
- undertake data collection on key sectors such as education, agriculture, health, public administration and e-commerce

On discussing the presentation, one delegate raised the question of common indicators to be agreed upon globally by the 2005 WSIS Summit. He thought that this may not be feasible given the different number of players, which are over 8 and that most of the global agreements have to be consensus based. Asked which type of support was given by the different partners to facilitate participation of LDCs in influencing decisions on ICT indicators. He also said that while acknowledging needs for partnership, there was need for synergy, to avoid duplication of efforts. In this regard, he advised to assign roles and responsibilities to each partner.

One participant asked the meaning of meta data as opposed to data, to which the chairperson replied satisfactorily. He further indicated that the national cooperation model which is being advocated for the national level should also be extended to regional and international levels.

On the reference date for indicators and the mechanism of updating the surveys, it was indicated that the SCAN surveys used cut date far beyond the dates of their

commencement and that strategies have been put in place for update through a national network of researchers and research assistants as well as focal points. On the budget and costs of the surveys, it was indicated that each country was requested to submit a budget and a programme of work to carry out the activity.

On a question on to which extend did SCAN include existing surveys, it was replied that existing data collection and survey mechanisms at the national level were extensively consulted and most of the time used.

On how to strengthen regulatory frameworks while at the same time not putting emphasis on monopolies, one delegate said that Universal Service Obligations if appropriately planned will encourage investment, impose social obligations, empower disafranchized groups and empower women in the ICT sector using ICT tools to ensure that national goals are advanced. He said that Universal Access Funds should contribute to universal access by extending facilities to rural and disenfranchised/marginalized sectors of society.

Results of the Regional metadata Collection, by Mohamed Timoulali, ECA

At its first meeting held in Addis Ababa from 10 to 11 May 2004, the Advisory Board on Statistics in Africa (ABSA), recommended that ECA should cooperate with the National Statistical Systems to begin the collection of statistics on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) using a harmonized framework.

As a follow up to this recommendation and also as part of a multi-stakeholder initiative involving the United Nations Regional Commissions, ITU, OECD, UNCTAD and UNESCO, ECA has undertaken a survey on metadata collection of available ICT indicators in Africa, with a view to assessing the extent to which ICT issues are taken into account in statistical surveys in member States. The survey was also a response to a worldwide call for Information Society statistics in the framework of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

The objectives: of the survey were to:

- Collect data on activities undertaken by National Statistical Offices in relation to collection of statistics on ICT indicators
- Identify core Indicators
- Identify Technical Assistance needed in support to NSOs
- Exchange information and best practices on collection, management and dissemination of ICT indicators

Information collected is being entered into a data base which was developed by ESCAP for use by UN regional commissions and partners for ease of harmonization

Questionnaires were sent to all African NSOs and 18 responses were received. The 19th response was received during the conference.

Following Conclusions can be drawn from the survey :

-No ICT definition in the majority of NSOs
- Various Financing mechanisms are availalble
- Publications are done in the majority of countries
- Existing Demand for Households ICT statistics
- High demand for Business ICT Statistics in countries implementing an e-strategy, or have formulated a NICI Plan
- Existing collected ICT Statistics concerns mainly presence of Radio, TV , Fixed and mobile Telephony in Households
- Some countries address presence and usages of PCs and Internet
- Some countries collect other areas of ICT Statistics
- Some countries collect Business ICT Statistics
-Need for an harmonized Methodology and a core of ICT Statistics to be collected
- Take advantage of ECA experience with SCAN-ICT, and agree on a core Indicators for the second phase of the project

On training needs which were asked by one participant, the presentor said that an Academia Research Network on indicators has been set up by ECA and that they are undertaking a survey of training needs and training institutions and that NSOs will benefit from any training activity which will come out of that activity**.**

OECD methodology for indicators development, by Brigitte van Beuzekom, OECD

She presented the OECD Methodology for Measuring the Information Society on October 28, 2004. At first she gave a quick overview of the OECD and then the work on the ICT statistics. She present the ICT statistics released in the *Measuring the Information Economy* and also the *OECD S&T Scoreboard* publication. Both of these are available on-line for no fee at: http://www.oecd.org/sti/measuring-infoeconomy and http://www.oecd.org/sti/scoreboard. She then went on to present how the OECD defines and measures the ICT sector: the ICT sector definition of ICT using the ISIC Rev. 3.1 classification for manufacturing, and services as well as the ICT goods definition using the Harmonized System. She presented the OECD model survey for households and enterprises and went over the proposed changes. She then went on to outline the OECD work on *Guide to Information Society Measurement.*

In commenting the presentation, South African delegate said that the following important issues needed to be addressed by indicators: privacy and security, fraud, money laundering, criminality, terrorism, interception of messages related to all anti social activities.

Proposed list of core indicators, by Makane Faye, ECA

A presentation was made by the ECA representative on a list of 60 core indicators drawn from various sources including ITU and SCAN ICT. The list is in annex1.

Morocco proposed an additional list of indicators which might be of interest to member countries to ensure the smooth running of ongoing national projects, for example egov. In replying the presenter said that ECA was not imposing a long list of indicators except the core indicators which can be easily prepared by NSOs. However if the need is felt NSOs are free to add whatever indicators that may be useful at national level.

The Eritrea delegate wanted to know the criteria used in the selection of SCAN ICT countries and requested that his country be included in the list. The presentor said that the first criteria was an official request by member States to ECA. He added that to his knowledge no official has been turned down. He informed participants about the overall selection criteria as follows:

- Country's official request
- In-country capacity to undertake a Scan-ICT study
- Possibility of leading to reform of the ICT sector
- Scan-ICT partner preferences
- Geographic/linguistic/cultural balance in Africa (English, Arabic, French & Portuguese speaking countries)

Launch of SCAN ICT Phase 2 and pilot survey countries, by Makane Faye (ECA) and Esperanza Magpante (ITU)

After presenting the philosophy behind the SCAN ICT process and recalling partnership with key institutions such as ITU, UN ICT Task Force, Canada and others, and for sake of having comparable indicators and data, the presenter suggested that NSOs could concentrate on the core list of indicators while at the same time consulting with other national stakeholders on the collection of a more extended list of indicators available in the SCAN ICT methodology.

He said that the partners of SCAN ICT Phase 1, IDRC of Canada, EU and NORAD, would support pahse 2 which will also be financed by the Government of Finland. He called upon ITU, the UN ICT TF, Statistics Canada, OECD and other partners to support the exercise.

In reacting to the above presentation, the chairperson, indicated the following "I draw the attention of statistical services on the mandate and trust bestowed on them to embrace collection, processing and dissemination of indicators on the information society. This was done to enable sustainability of ICT data surveys".

The meeting concluded with presentations on the WITFOR and the Accra Regional Conference for the WSIS.

From the two days meetings, it is proposed:

- Adoption of the proposed list of core indicators

- Creation of a Regional Task Force on ICT indicators, to be composed of representatives from the 5 sub-regions (Senegal – Chair –, Mauritius – Rapporteur -, Morocco, Uganda, South Africa, Democratic Republic of Congo). A discussion list will be set up by ECA as soon as next week to facilitate discussions on information society indicators and to prepare for the African Regional Conference, especially agenda and time table.
- ECA and ITU together with other relevant institutions to develop a data base of ICT indicators
- Use of SCAN ICT phase 2 project as a framework for information society indicators and measurement in the continent.