

**Ministry Paper # 24/07**

**Assuring Integrity in National Statistics**

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Published by  
**The Statistical Institute of Jamaica**  
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**ISBN 976-610-758-0**

Printed in Jamaica by The Printing Unit  
Statistical Institute of Jamaica  
84 Hanover Street  
Kingston  
Jamaica.

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## **Preface by the Minister of Finance and Planning**

The Government of Jamaica's economic objective is to build a strong economy and a society in which there is opportunity and security for all. Accordingly, a number of strategies are being implemented to promote work and enterprise, reform the public sector and make the operations of government more accountable, open and transparent.

The Public Sector Reform Programme has focused, among other things, on the use of technology to drive the modernisation process. The increasing demand for statistical information requires that information be produced at a faster pace and be more relevant. The modernisation process in government must therefore not only address the issues of technology but it must also address the issues with the quality of data that are collected, shared and disseminated within the public sector and to the wider community, here and abroad. The Statistical Institute of Jamaica, STATIN, the national statistics office for Jamaica, must lead the process of reform of the National Statistics System.

The individual, the private sector and the public sector are fundamental stakeholders in the provision of good quality statistical information on Jamaica. As such, each sector continues to demand more information in order to ensure efficient allocation of limited resources. It is in this context that the generation of reliable, timely and relevant statistical information will allow for policies based on empirical evidence and will result in an improved standard of living for all Jamaicans.

Good statistics is one of the underpinnings of democracy. The proposed amendments to the Statistics Act to facilitate the establishment of the Statistics Commission and the general improvement to the legislative and operative framework in which national statistics are processed will augur well for the sustainability of the democratic process of government in Jamaica.

*Sgd. Omar Davies*

Omar Davies, M. P.

Minister of Finance and Planning

January 25, 2007

## Foreword by the Chairman of the Board of Directors

Since 1989, the heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) have been on the road towards achieving the vision of a CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). As a first stage, the leaders for the sub-region have embarked upon the Caribbean Single Market which had its formal launch on January 30, 2006 in Kingston, Jamaica. Harmonised statistical data will be an essential element of the information landscape on the Region. In order to achieve this objective, the CARICOM Secretariat, in collaboration with the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians, has developed the Regional Statistics Work Programme which was approved by the Community Council of Ministers on January 5, 2005.

The Regional Statistics Work Programme has incorporated the underlying principles of statistics which are enunciated in UN Principles of Official Statistics. Included among those principles are:

- a. the need to broaden the scope of official statistics to include the collaborative process between users and producers of information;
- b. the establishment of a coordinating mechanism aimed at improving the quality of official statistics and
- c. the establishment of and/or improvement to the legislative framework that will seek to engender confidence in the statistical system.

In Jamaica, the statistical information that is produced within the National Statistical System is of a fairly high standard, notwithstanding, there is room for improvement in some areas. In particular, there needs to be more collaboration between users and producers of the information and currently the system is fragmented, a situation that needs to be addressed. In addition, there is the need to strengthen the Statistics Act.

This White Paper, *Assuring Integrity in National Statistics*, identifies and addresses the weaknesses in the system and establishes the framework in which national statistics will be produced and disseminated. This framework assures that the products of the system (a) will satisfy user demand, (b) are produced in accordance with the standards that have been established and (c) are produced in a manner that is free of political interference. In developing these plans, the issues raised during the consultation process on the Green Paper, *Quality Statistics - An Imperative for Jamaica*, have been taken into account.

Our aim is to establish Jamaica among the leading countries in the production of good quality statistical information – information that is user friendly, timely, relevant and dependable.

*Sgd. A.G. Wint*

Alvin G. Wint

Chairman of the Board of Directors

Statistical Institute of Jamaica

January 19, 2007

## Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Government of Jamaica is committed to enhancing the integrity, both actual and perceived, of official statistics. Official statistics provide a picture of the state of the economy and society, are used in decision making and debate, and offer a window for the assessment of the work and performance of government itself. It is the responsibility of the Government to ensure that official statistics are reliable, timely and that the public has confidence in them. Despite improvements in recent years, concerns remain about the integrity of official statistics, both generally and in specific areas.

1.2 Official statistics need to be of assured quality and be compiled and presented in a way which is free from political interference. In August 2005, the Government, through the Statistical Institute of Jamaica, published a Green Paper, "*Quality Statistics – An Imperative for Jamaica*", which set out this goal and sought to stimulate debate on the future arrangements for official statistics in the Island. *The Green Paper* focused on the concept of 'National Statistics' which refers to the collective set of output that are produced and released within the statistical system. This concept of National Statistics is used throughout this document and Chapter 4 sets out the Government's views on the scope of National Statistics.

1.3 *The Green Paper* presented for consideration, the results of a review of the issues relating to the legislative and regulatory framework in which the national statistics system operates. It also presented the recommendations and proposals that had been made regarding amendments to the legislation to facilitate a more efficient and reliable system of national statistics. It was expected that the public consultations on the proposals for improvements to the institutional and legislative structure would contribute to enhancing the credibility of, and trust in, national statistics. It was also expected that another outcome of the consultations would be the formulation of publicly acceptable recommendations as they relate to, among other things, the development of a coordinating mechanism for national statistics and the improvements in the delivery of statistical services and products to stakeholders and members of the public.

1.4 Specifically, the public was invited to submit comments and proposals on the following:

- a) Whether the legislation should specify that the Director General should be the chief statistical advisor to the Government and elaborate the specific functions of the Director-General of STATIN.
- b) The establishment of an advisory body and questions relating to:
  - Composition - The appointment of its members, their representation and functions.
  - Comments on the form the body should take - whether an Advisory Council or a Commission. The status of one vis-a-vis the other.
  - The relationship between the advisory body, the Minister, the Director General of STATIN and other public entities, which comprise the national statistics system and which are engaged in the collection and production of official statistics.

- The reporting relationship of the advisory body - whether to the Minister, the Cabinet or the Parliament.
- c) Whether the penalties for non-compliance and other offences under the legislation should be increased and if so, the recommended levels.
  - d) The arrangements, which should be legislated for maintaining professional statistical standards across government departments and agencies.
  - e) The measures to ensure compliance with professional standards.
  - f) What mechanisms may be provided to efficiently coordinate data collection and avoid duplication of statistics at the national level.
  - g) The procedures, which may be developed, to ensure that STATIN has access to data collected by all public agencies.
  - h) What provisions are to be included in the Statistics Act and/or other legislation so as to inform persons and/or operators at the startup of businesses, that they are required to provide information for statistical purposes.
  - i) What recommendations are to be made to develop and maintain good working relationships among data providers, users and producers of official statistics.

## **Consultations**

1.5 The series of consultations were held during the period September 1 through December 7, 2005. Participants in the consultations included Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Departments, Public Sector Agencies, Universities, the Private Sector, and the public. The summary report of the consultations is annexed to this White Paper – **Appendix B**.

1.6 The recommendations made in the consultations were considered by an internal Committee and their proposals have been included in this White Paper- “*Assuring Integrity in National Statistics*”. This White Paper, **Appendix A**, sets out the proposed amendments to the Statistics Act that the Government of Jamaica has decided to implement in order to achieve the objective of providing quality statistics to and for Jamaica.

## **Current Legislative Framework**

1.7 There is no single piece of legislation which governs official statistics in Jamaica. The Statistics Act regulates the collection and release of information by the Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN). The Statistics Act is complemented by several other pieces of legislation, which provide for the collection of information. Relevant legislation in this context includes, but are not limited to, the Bank of Jamaica Act, the Planning Institute of Jamaica Act, the

Registration (Births and Deaths) Act, the Companies Act, the Financial Services Commission Act, The Aliens Act and the Immigration Restriction (Commonwealth Citizens) Act, and the Customs Act.

1.8 These complementary pieces of legislation are administered by Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies under whose portfolio they fall. Their statistical components are subject to the policy directions of the relevant Minister and/or other appropriate official. The data collected by them are tailored to their individual needs and how they measure against international standards vary. Further, although there is some dialogue within the system, there is no real coordinated approach to setting standards and a national framework for the production of national statistical information.

1.9 The existence and operation of the several pieces of legislation, each administered by a separate entity, has led to a loose and ill-defined system in which conflicting information is sometimes disseminated on the same subject. Although the Statistics Act gives STATIN a general coordinating role, there is no supporting framework to carry out this function and there is no standardization in concepts and definitions across the system, particularly in the area of social statistics.

1.10 An important element of the Modernization Programme for STATIN was the review of the legislative framework within which STATIN operates and the recommended amendments to the Statistics Act and other related pieces of legislation that will allow the Institute to meet its long term strategic goal. Critical to the improved performance of STATIN and the improved efficiencies in the National Statistics System, is an institutional arrangement that includes a national coordinating body with responsibility for the governance of national statistics services. This coordinating body will address matters pertaining, but not limited to standards, quality assurance and ethics. The importance of this mechanism lies in the long-term goal that requires a national statistics system that is responsible for official statistics to ensure quality, transparency and accountability.

## **Overview of the White Paper**

1.11 This White Paper, “*Assuring Integrity in National Statistics*”, sets out the decisions which the Government has taken in light of the wide range of views expressed during the consultation period and the outcome of the various reviews discussed above. The overriding objective is to provide a sound platform that engenders public confidence in official statistics.

1.12 In particular, the White Paper outlines the accountability and governance arrangements which the Government intends to introduce, as embodied in the creation of a Statistics Commission, independent of both Ministers and the producers of National Statistics. The Commission will play a key role in quality assurance and priority setting, thereby ensuring that official statistics are trustworthy and responsive to public needs. Chapter 2 provides more details on the proposed accountability and governance framework and on the respective roles and responsibilities of the various parties involved in the National Statistics System - the Statistics Commission, professional statisticians and line Ministers. Reflecting the views of a number of



respondents to the consultation, the Government also believes that it would be desirable for Parliament to play a role within the new arrangements.

1.13 Chapter 3 outlines the mechanism the Government intends to use to achieve the highest standards of integrity in the National Statistics System by delivering on quality and ensuring freedom from political interference. Chapter 4 sets out the Government's position on the other main issues raised in the Green Paper: the scope of National Statistics, the allocation of responsibilities, and the maintenance of professional standards across all statistical work in government. The administrative and operational issues faced by STATIN and the recommended corrective measures are set out in Chapter 5.

1.14 The next major steps toward the coordination of the National Statistics System will focus on drafting of the legislation, the appointment of the Statistics Commission and the work associated with the implementation of the coordinating mechanism. These steps are described in Chapter 6.

## **Chapter 2: ACCOUNTABILITY & GOVERNANCE**

### **Creating the Right Framework**

2.1 The consultation process highlighted the need for a framework for National Statistics that would ensure that:

- There would be a change in the culture from a supply driven orientation in the production of statistical information to a demand driven one;
- There would be a mechanism for establishing priorities within the system;
- Statistical information is produced to high professional standards;
- Support be provided to strengthen the capacity of the producers of official statistical information within the national system;
- Steps would be taken to minimise duplications within the system.

Simultaneously, there must be controls on the formal survey system to reduce respondent fatigue, taking account of Government's mandate to minimise the burdens on business operations.

2.2 The Green Paper, "*Quality Statistics – An Imperative for Jamaica*", proposed the establishment of a "Coordinating Mechanism" for strengthening and improving the quality of statistical information. The Paper examined institutional arrangements in certain selected examples from countries that have a similar historical common-law background to Jamaica. The options considered and proposed the establishment of either:

- a. A Statistical Council which, by its title, would be more operational or
- b. A Statistical Commission which would be more strategic and authoritative.

2.3 The discussions noted the experiences gained from the establishment of the Vital Statistics Commission and that of Jamaica Social Evaluation Project (JASPEV) in gathering data to

support the Social Policy framework. While Jamaica's data are of a fairly high standard, there are issues within the system that need to be resolved at a strategic level.

2.4. A comparative analysis of some jurisdictions which faced challenges similar to those Jamaica is currently experiencing, supports the general conclusion that those countries all seek to incorporate the elements of the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (**Appendix E**) in their national statistics systems. One of those Fundamental Principles is that coordination among statistical agencies within countries is essential to achieve consistency and efficiency in the statistical system. It was therefore imperative that the analysis focused on systems that included a body with the valuable role of checking the quality of official statistics and advising on statistical priorities with a national focus.

2.5 The advisory body is to be seen as independent of political directive and really acts as an intermediary between the government, statistical authorities and the public. The independent status is further strengthened by its composition, which consists of persons who are chosen for their professional qualifications and from persons in both the private and public sectors. The independent status of the advisory body is important in securing public confidence in the national statistics.

2.6 There was overwhelming support, during the consultations, for the establishment of a statistics advisory body with "broad based membership capable of providing advice to STATIN and to the Minister on the improvement and coordination of statistical services and on statistical needs, priorities and programmes." Respondents emphasized the importance of having a body which was independent of the Minister and also the Director-General of STATIN and which would have prominence and authority to advise on statistical standards. The advisory body should be established at the highest level with reporting authority to Parliament as this would give transparency and prominence to the work of the body. This reporting mechanism would also enforce the independence of the advisory body and separation from line Ministries.

2.7 Having considered the responses from the consultations, the experiences gained from the Vital Statistics Commission as well as the lessons from the various reviews, the Government has been persuaded that an advisory body in the form of a **Statistics Commission**, independent of Government and the producers of official statistics, be established. This Commission will provide safeguards in relation to the quality of official statistics and assure stakeholders of their freedom from political interference and their ability to advise Government on such issues that are pertinent to the continued development and improvement in official statistics.

### **Roles within the framework**

2.8 The new operating environment requires that the roles and responsibilities of each element of the national statistical system be outlined.

2.9 The recommendation is that the Statistics Commission be established as an independent, non-executive body, (*similar to that of the Vital Statistics Commission, except that the Statistics Commission will exist into perpetuity*), that will advise Ministers, Parliament and producers of

official statistics on issues relating to the production of official statistics to include among other things establishing priorities and quality assurance. In performing its role, the Commission will draw on the views of users and producers of statistics. It will also advise on the scope of official statistics, more fully described in Chapter 4.

2.10 In broad terms, the role and responsibility of the main parties are described herein. The Framework Document, one of the output of the implementation process, will set out in more detail the roles and responsibilities.

i. The Statistics Commission

The Government has decided on the following elements of the Statistics Commission:

- a. The legislation will provide for the establishment of a Statistics Commission.
- b. The Commission will be appointed by the Minister.
- c. The Commission will be composed of persons from the public and private sectors with relevant professional interest in statistics.
- d. The Commission will report to Parliament.
- e. The Functions of the Commission will include:
  - Advising the Minister on statistical priorities with a national focus;
  - Advising the Minister on the areas of concern within the national statistics system;
  - Advising the Minister on the steps, which should be taken to ensure that all custodians of national statistics, including Ministries, Departments and Agencies of Government apply appropriate standards, classifications and procedures to improve quality, enhance comparability and minimize duplication and promote harmonization;
  - Promoting the coordination of statistical activities;
  - Promoting an environment, which is supportive of the collection, production, dissemination and use of official statistics and
  - Performing any function it considers necessary or expedient for the effective carrying out of the provisions of the Act.

ii. The Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN)

The role of STATIN as defined in the Act (see paragraph 5.5 herein) should be expanded. It was agreed that more specific coordination responsibilities are required in the legislation, in order to provide more compatible datasets and reduce duplication. The following are the features of the expanded scope for STATIN:

- STATIN will be charged with the responsibility to support the Statistics Commission in the promotion of national standards and the development and maintenance of a coordinated national statistical programme;
- STATIN will actively promote and establish national statistical standards and harmonisation throughout all official agencies, and those agencies would be

required to adopt the standards in any statistical work in which they are, or become, engaged;

- STATIN will also have a role of educating other agencies in the nature and application of national statistical standards;
- All new statistical investigations of a national scale planned by other agencies would require the input of STATIN to ensure that they comply with the national statistics standards, plan to use statistically valid approaches and will not result in unnecessary duplication of effort for either the respondents or for government;
- STATIN will provide technical and administrative support to the work of the Statistics Commission.

During the consultations respondents expressed support for these objectives as they considered that good statistics should be subject to quality assurance and uniformity while making optimum use of limited resources. Concern was also expressed about STATIN's ability to manage the expanded scope of work envisaged.

iii. Heads of the Statistical Divisions/Units in Ministries, Departments, Agencies(MDAs)

The Professional Heads of Statistical Divisions/Units in MDAs will be required to:

- Liaise with and support the Director-General of STATIN in promoting the coherence and compatibility of National Statistics;
- Prepare the statistical work programmes for their respective Divisions/Units that will fit in with and form part of the National Statistics Work Programme;
- Have a professional responsibility to adhere to the established standards for the compilation, production and dissemination of official statistics.

iv. Ministers

Ministers with portfolio responsibilities for the collection and dissemination of National Statistics will be required to:

- Respond to views expressed by the Commission on departmental elements of the high-level programme for National Statistics, on the scope of National Statistics or on specific issues;
- Produce a coordinated Government response to the Commission's views and make this publicly available. Ministers will co-ordinate on cross-departmental statistical issues where there is no clear departmental responsibility for such co-ordination;
- Decide departmental statistical programmes, and the resources to be allocated to them, in light of the Government's response to the Commission on the National Statistics programme;
- Authorise access to all data within their portfolio responsibility for National Statistics purposes, subject to confidentiality considerations;
- Collaborate on the establishment of data sharing mechanisms across the public sector that will address how and what data are to be shared, the data pricing policy and the issues of confidentiality.

v. The Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ)

The Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) is established under the Planning Institute of Jamaica Act to:

- Advise the Government on major issues relating to economic and social policy;
- Interpret decisions on economic and social policy and integrate them into national development programmes;
- Prepare economic models for the guidance of policy makers, investors and other planners;
- Coordinate national, regional and sector development planning in order to facilitate the consistent and efficient implementation of projects and programmes.

The PIOJ, as the major analyst of government policy, uses the data that are produced within the National Statistics System to direct policy. PIOJ will continue in its present role to guide the data that are collected to support evidence based decision making.

vi. Bank of Jamaica (BOJ)

The Bank of Jamaica, the Central Bank for the country, is established under the Bank of Jamaica Act and as a participant in the National Statistics System, the BOJ will continue in their present role of providing:

- The Balance of Payment statistics;
- Information on the performance of the financial sector;
- Information on those activities that contribute towards price stability in the economy.

The BOJ is also a major user of the economic information that is produced within the National Statistics System.

vii. Parliament

Parliament will:

- Receive the Annual Report prepared by the Statistics Commission covering the performance of the national statistics system and the Commission, itself;
- Scrutinise, as it sees fit, the performance and operations of the Commission and the National Statistics System;
- Speak to the apportionment of resources for the effective implementation of the National Statistics System.

## **Securing the new arrangements**

2.11 It is essential that the proposed new statistical framework, once established, should remain free from political interference. Neither should the arrangements be gradually eroded over time.

2.12 The Statistics Act, Section 3(1)(d) stipulates that one of the functions of STATIN shall be:

*“generally to promote and develop integrated social and economic statistics pertaining to Jamaica and to co-ordinate programmes for the integration of such statistics”*

This has not happened for two main reasons. Firstly, there is the lack of adequate infrastructure and resources, and secondly, STATIN’s inability to have full cooperation from respondents and government agencies. The principal recommendations that were offered in this respect are set out in the reviews of the Act that have been recommended. (**Appendix C**).

2.13 There is now international recognition of the role an advisory body plays in ensuring the public's trust in official information. For the most part, these bodies are grounded in the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (**Appendix E**). There is no uniformity regarding form or functions and importantly, no international standards are in place to govern these issues. The competence of the existing bodies vary from a relatively small number which exercise powers over the professional head of the statistics agency to the overwhelming majority which are advisory to the Government and the professional head of the statistics agency. The Government’s objective is to address the issues of trust and transparency. It was considered, therefore, that only a body which falls into this latter category should be examined for implementation.

2.14 The reviews of the Act by external consultants advised that the language used in Section 3(1)(d) is not sufficiently persuasive and neither does it propose a mechanism. This view was also corroborated in the consultation process. The Government therefore proposes to have the Act amended to include the establishment of a Statistics Commission. The Constitution of the Commission will also be included as part of the proposed amendments to the Statistics Act. (See **Appendix A** - Schedule of the Proposed Amendments to the Statistics Act).

## **Chapter 3: ENSURING INTEGRITY WITHIN THE SYSTEM**

### **Delivering on Quality**

3.1 *The Green Paper* pointed to the fact that the issues of unreliability of the statistics and the lack of coordination in the compilation of statistical information militated against confidence in the system. There are several Ministries, Departments and Agencies involved in the collection and dissemination of statistical information. They act independently of each other and apply their own standards in the process. Under the Statistics Act, STATIN is empowered generally to collaborate and coordinate the collection and compilation of statistical information but this has not happened. The result is that while STATIN was generally regarded as professional, independent and objective, there are some areas within the system where the quality of the data can be improved.

3.2 It is essential to establish the right framework for priority setting and quality assurance. Quality must be at the centre of all that the official statistician does, ensuring that his/her work is

authoritative and respected. Relevance, accuracy, timeliness, clarity, accessibility and consistency must all be achieved. The data quality framework (**Appendix D**) defines the dimensions and elements that are pre-requisites of quality in any statistical system. The Statistics Commission will have the power to comment on the quality assurance processes of National Statistics, carry out spot checks on departmental or other audits of National Statistics and to carry out its own audits in areas of concern. This will help in scrutinising the effectiveness of existing and future statistical operations.

3.3 The review of the Statistics Act and the consultation process have provided lessons on how further quality improvements can be delivered across the National Statistics System:

- There should be careful project management of the changes to statistical products and adequate technical expertise available at essential times during the process;
- There needs to be more active involvement of statistical methodologists and other specialists, as appropriate, in assessing the quality of current methods and the impact of methodological changes to statistical products. More systematic and regular involvement of outside statistical expertise and the users of statistics need to be engaged at all stages of any programme to improve or change important statistics. The involvement of outside experts in the process of developing or changing statistics should not be perceived as a threat to the independence and integrity of statistics - indeed it is an opportunity to increase the quality and integrity of National Statistics;
- The management of each programme of change should be critically reviewed at each stage;
- Keeping users of statistical series informed throughout any process of change is vitally important and, more generally, formalising relationships with users through written service level agreements should be pursued where there are clear benefits.

3.4 *The Green Paper* proposed that all output designated as part of the National Statistics System should be clearly marked as such. Since some of the statistics produced within the Government Statistical System are not used for any particular purposes and to attempt to "brand" each statistic for every use made of it would raise significant practical difficulties. But the Government does agree that it is essential to inform users of the quality of National Statistics so that they can assess their appropriateness for the intended use and utilize the data within the context of its limitations.

3.5 An early priority, as part of the process for implementing change will be the meeting of Professional Heads of Units and the Director-General of STATIN to plan for the assessment and selection of methodology, the development of quality assurance across National Statistics and to introduce standard quality assurance processes. The Statistics Commission will then be able to advise Ministers on these processes and their application.

## **Ensuring Freedom from Political Interference**

3.6 The other key element to demonstrating integrity is to ensure that official statistics are produced without political interference and that this position is clearly recognised by users. The new framework is designed to ensure that the professional responsibility for National Statistics is clearly separated from the responsibilities of Ministers. STATIN will set professional standards for National Statistics, including standards for release arrangements and quality assessment, and will have the authority to determine whether or not a particular statistical output meets National Statistics requirements.

3.7 STATIN, in conjunction with Professional Heads, will at an early stage develop and maintain a Code of Practice for National Statistics which would incorporate the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (**Appendix E**). Implementation of a sound and consistent policy on the release of data is particularly important. This policy needs to cover both the handling of, and access to, data within Government (beyond those immediately engaged in compiling the statistics) and the release of statistics more widely. It will be designed to ensure timeliness, fairness, openness and efficiency. Any ministerial comment on statistics will always be issued in separate news releases so that they are clearly distinguished from the National Statistics, themselves.

3.8 The Statistics Commission will be able to comment on the Code of Practice and its application, and on other procedures designed to promote statistical integrity.

## **Chapter 4: OTHER ISSUES WITHIN THE NATIONAL STATISTICS SYSTEM**

### **Defining the Scope of National Statistics**

4.1 *The Green Paper* noted that the term “National Statistics” comprises the collective set of output that are produced and released within the statistical system. It encompasses **all** public access databases and publications produced by the Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN), Ministries, government departments and agencies. There are a number of active and well-established statistical units within the public sector. Most notable among these are those within the Ministry of Finance & Planning, the Ministries of Health, Education, Labour & Social Security, National Security and Agriculture and the Bank of Jamaica. Statistics related to their specific activities are produced in Monthly and Annual Reports. It also noted that an important aspect of the National Statistics System is “Official Statistics” and this refers mainly to the singular output and products of the various agencies.

4.2 There are three ways of defining the scope of National Statistics. It may be defined in terms of the people providing the service, the activities or the output themselves. It suggests that trust in the output, the statistics themselves, is the real goal. The great majority of respondents to the consultation agreed with this approach and the Government has decided to proceed on this basis.

4.3 There is a consensus, which the Government shares, that all current publications emanating out of STATIN and public access databases should be within the scope of National Statistics. It



is further agreed that, with the agreement of Ministers, other statistics currently published by Ministries, Departments and Agencies should also be included as appropriate.

4.4 This is not a straightforward issue. A considered expansion could be manageable in terms of the priority-setting and applying the quality assurance processes the Government intends for National Statistics. A word of caution must be expressed however as the implementation of an over ambitious programme could pose considerable practical difficulties.

4.5 The intention, therefore, is to implement the programme on a phased basis over a three year development period. The implementation details will be finalised during the Stakeholder participation process that will determine the Framework for National Statistics.

4.6 The Government will direct the Statistics Commission to keep the scope of National Statistics under review and make periodic recommendations to Ministers.

### **The Need for Standardisation and Harmonisation**

4.7 The recent work that was done by JASPEV and the findings of PIOJ during their data gathering for reporting on the Millennium Development Goals point to the need for standardisation and harmonisation of definitions and concepts used within the Social Sector Agencies. For example, similar terms are applied to administrative geographic areas but they do not necessarily cover the same locations. These concerns have to be addressed if quality is to be assured.

4.8 There is the need for the development of standards, methodology, procedures and guidelines for the compilation of data sets that are to be used for statistical purposes. Where change or uniformity is not possible then there needs to be harmonisation so that the data can be better analysed and comparisons facilitated. Metadata will have to be made available to facilitate the process.

### **Data Sharing Mechanisms**

4.9 The recent audit of the Vital Statistics System highlighted the need for data sharing agreements among agencies. These data sharing agreements must speak to the responsibility of each custodian, the data that are to be shared, and the conditions that are associated with the transfer of the data as well as the costs associated with the data sharing facility.

4.10 Trend analysis can only be achieved with time series data sets. Data storage and archiving of data must also be structured and formalised to form part of the data sharing mechanism. It may become necessary to create a National Statistical data storage and archiving facility as a further step in the process.

4.11 The establishment of formal data sharing agreements will create a structure to facilitate the timely and regular transfer of data among agencies.

## **Dissemination of National Statistics**

4.12 Jamaica, as a member state of the United Nations and a country that relies on access to international loan funds, is required to disseminate National Statistics in accordance with the General Data Dissemination System (GDSS), as a first step. It is expected that the country will move towards the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) once the problems have been resolved within the statistical system. These standards require that release calendars be established and that metadata are provided on the statistical information that is released.

4.13 The GDSS and the SDDS apply mainly to economic statistics. Similar standards have been formally developed for some areas of social statistics but the recommendation is that where there is none; countries should seek to develop their own using similar guidelines to that of the GDSS. The Statistics Commission will be required to work with the MDAs to develop similar standards for data dissemination in the area of social statistics.

4.14 In order to ensure accountability, the standard must include the agency that will be responsible for the release of the information.

## **Human Resource Development**

4.15 STATIN is committed to support the development of national statistics through a programme of in-service training for its staff and the wider community. This method of training, however, will address only specific needs. The sustainability of the system is linked to a continuous supply of adequately trained professionals and para-professionals.

4.16 Currently, the University of Technology (UTech) runs a two year certificate summer programme for para-professionals. The course is fairly well attended each year. The graduates from this programme have been requesting the university to look at establishing a degree programme as many of these graduates do not have the matriculation requirements to enter the Bachelor of Science in Economic and Social Statistics (BESS) programme at the University of the West Indies, (UWI) Mona. UTech has been doing feasibility studies to determine the content and affordability of such a programme.

4.17 UWI, Mona offers a Bachelor of Science in Economic and Social Statistics (BESS) and several other bachelors of science in economics or with majors in economics. Recently, UWI, Mona reintroduced the Masters of Science in Demography. There are no masters or doctoral programmes in pure and applied statistics.

4.18 There is the need for additional formal training programmes in pure and applied statistics. The Statistics Commission in conjunction with STATIN and the PIOJ will be charged with the responsibility to hold discussions with the local universities and the off-shore universities operating in Jamaica to address this need.

## **The Lack of Appropriate and Adequate Technology**

4.19 The data collection systems within the public sector are mainly paper based. Consequently, data storage and retrieval are fraught with problems. Data capture is at best slow and tedious and validation is sometimes difficult.

4.20 There is need within the National Statistics System for improved and standardised technology platform that will facilitate easy communication across networks and reduce the need for re-entering of data sets. The systems do not have to be elaborate but they must be functional.

## **Chapter 5: THE ADMINISTRATION & OPERATIONS OF STATIN**

### **Organization Structure and Governance**

5.1 The Statistics Act established the Statistical Institute of Jamaica, (STATIN), as a body corporate to which the provisions of Section 28 of the Interpretation Act applies.

5.2 The organizational structure under the Act consists of the Minister, the Institute and a Director-General. The Minister is responsible for the general policy directions, and may after consultations with the Director-General, give the Institute such directions of a general character as to the policy to be followed by the Institute in the discharge of its functions as appear to the Minister to be necessary in the public interest.

5.3 The Director-General is appointed by the Minister and is responsible for the day- to-day management and operations of the Institute. Other officers and employees are appointed and employed by the Institute.

5.4 The Act provides that the Institute shall consist of the Director-General and such additional members, not being less than three, or more than nine, as the Minister may specify in writing. The members of the Institute constitute the Board of Directors who discharges the management and financial responsibilities of the Institute. The Minister appoints the Chairman of the Institute from among the additional members. The Constitution of the Institute is scheduled to the Act.

### **Statistical Functions and Powers**

5.5 Under Section 3(1) of the Act, STATIN exercises specified statistical functions. Specifically, STATIN's functions are: -

- a) to collect, compile, analyze, abstract and publish statistical information relating to the commercial, industrial, social, economic and general activities and condition of the people;

- b) to collaborate with public agencies in the collection, compilation and publication of statistical information including statistical information derived from the activities of such agencies;
- c) to take any census in Jamaica; and
- d) generally to promote and develop integrated social and economic statistics pertaining to Jamaica and to co-ordinate programmes for the integration of such statistics.

5.6 This list of functions is further elaborated in Section 7 of the Act, and may be enlarged to include other areas of statistics prescribed by the Minister. The growing concern for the state of the environment, the regional and the international obligations which Jamaica has assumed with respect to the changes taking place within the global economy such as monitoring the Millennium Development Goals or new areas of statistics such as Trade in Services and the Informal Sector require that topics listed at Section 7 be reviewed. The provisions must be drafted in such a manner so as to be sufficiently flexible to embrace new areas of statistics as the needs of the Jamaican society change.

5.7 STATIN is, subject to limitations imposed by the Statistics Act, authorized to do anything and enter into any transaction, which in the opinion of the Institute is necessary to ensure the performance of its functions. Specifically, the Institute may, collect from any public agency, body corporate, partnership, firm, association or any person, information required in any census to be undertaken by the Institute and statistics relating to all or any of the matters specified in Section 7. The Act also provides that the Institute may enter into arrangements with any public agency to provide that agency with services in the collection, compilation, analysis and abstraction of data with respect to any program conducted by that agency.

5.8 Three other provisions are considered to be significant in this respect. Firstly, every person is mandated, to the best of his knowledge and belief, to answer all questions asked by the Institute where the information is required for the purposes of any statistics authorized by the Act.

5.9 Secondly, the Institute or anyone authorized on its behalf may at all reasonable times enter premises for the purpose of making enquiries or observations necessary for obtaining any statistics that are authorized.

5.10 Thirdly, where the Minister has approved the collection of statistics relating to any matter, any person who has custody or charge of any Government, parochial, municipal or other public records or documents, or any records or documents of any person, partnership or corporation shall grant the Institute or any person authorized in that behalf, access to the records or document.

5.11 The Act makes provisions for major and miscellaneous offences and penalties in Sections 18 through 20. Under Section 18, for example, an employee or an agent is prohibited from

revealing information obtained in the performance of his/her duties. Where there is a breach the individual is subject to penalties of imprisonment and or monetary fines.

Section 19 states that where a person obstructs or refuses or neglects to comply with any request for information; or refuses or neglects to complete and /or supply the particulars required in any document lawfully left or sent to him, is guilty of an offence under the Act.

5.12 The monetary fines for breaches incurred under Sections 18 through 20, as provided in the Act, are “nominal” and inadequate. Consequently, these provisions are not a deterrent for non-compliance, specifically in the response to requests for data. The monetary fines need to be revised to reflect the serious nature of the offence. In addition, it is necessary to have these fines reviewed from time to time in keeping with inflation and fines for similar breaches under other legislation. These objectives can be more readily achieved if the reviews of the fines are the subject of Ministerial Order.

5.13 Underpinning the importance of the Act, and the necessity to ensure the Institute’s integrity, are the provisions relating to confidentiality of information. It is provided generally that no report, summary or statistics or other publication under the Act, shall without the previous consent in writing of the person or owner of the undertaking to which the information relates, contain any of the particulars so arranged as to enable any person to identify any particulars so published as being particulars relating to any individual person or business. Compliance with these provisions is assured by providing severe penalties for anyone who breaches them. The provisions reflect international experience that suggests that a clear and strict confidentiality provision allays the fears of respondents and helps to build confidence in the system.

### **Administrative Responsibilities**

5.14 Section 3 of the Act, in addition to defining the statistical functions of the Institute, also specifies some administrative guidelines. Some of these guidelines were applicable at the time of STATIN’s transition from being a Department within a Ministry to a Statutory Corporation.

5.15 In some instances, the current prevailing practices are different from those prescribed in the Act. For example, section 3C(5) defines the “prescribed rate” for the payment of salaries as “*fifteen thousand dollars per annum or other such higher rate as the Minister, may by order prescribe.*” No Order has been prescribed for periodic review of salaries. By extension, some actions of the Institute may be considered to be *ultra vires*, and therefore need to be addressed.

### **Review of the Statistics Act in Relation to the Operations of the Institute**

5.16 The Government has also decided on the following additional measures for strengthening the legal framework to enhance confidence and trust in national statistics:

- a. Although the list of STATIN’s functions is non-exhaustive, the express mention of an area signifies the importance that the Government attaches to it. In this regard, the growing concern for the state of the environment, and the international obligations which Jamaica has assumed with respect to the environment, demands that the subject

receives express mention in the legislation as an area for STATIN's focus. In fact, STATIN has already begun to compile statistics in this area. The Government has therefore decided that the Act should be amended to reflect this policy imperative.

- b. The Statistics (Amendment) Act 1984 provides STATIN with the powers to collect information under a large number of specified topics. However, penalties for persons who refuse to supply information are totally inadequate. There was consensus during the consultations that sanctions should be at a sufficient level to act as a deterrent for non-cooperation. The Government has therefore decided that the legislation should be amended to allow for substantially increased maximum penalties. Additionally, the legislation should provide that monetary penalties will be the subject of Ministerial approval. This provision will allow for flexibility to increase the penalties to take into account the effect of inflation.
- c. In practice, effective access to information is limited with regard to some official agencies. The Government has therefore decided that the Act should specifically provide for access to information from official agencies. The Act should provide that public agencies have a duty to provide information requested by STATIN. The Act should also incorporate a wide definition of “public agencies” so that more public bodies come within the scope of STATIN’s jurisdiction.
- d. In order to access information obtained by some Public agencies which do not expressly refer to STATIN, any existing definition which excludes STATIN, such as the definition of “Competent Authority”, should be amended to include “the Statistical Institute of Jamaica”.
- e. STATIN has the status of being the National Statistical Office of Jamaica; the legislation should protect that status by ensuring that notwithstanding any provision in any other legislation, STATIN shall have access to records in the possession of any public agency for statistical purposes.
- f. It is important to the collection of accurate data that the public be assured that the information collected will be disclosed for statistical purposes only and in the form prescribed by the Statistics Act. In this regard, the public trust would not be eroded by any perception that STATIN falls within the scope of the Access to Information Act. This was one of the issues which were identified as troubling throughout the consultations. Respondents were concerned about the confidentiality of data submitted to Government agencies. Consequently, there has been reluctance to respond to requests for information for statistical purposes. At the same time, it was recognized that the gathering of statistics was ultimately in the citizen’s interest. The Government has therefore decided that the Statistics Act should be amended to expressly provide that the information collected will be used for statistical purposes only and that individual data records shall not be released without the express written consent of the individual.

- g. The Act will also include a provision expressly specifying that the information provided may not be used for purposes of taxation, investigation or regulation.
- h. The Government has decided that those administrative functions that are no longer applicable or relevant will be deleted and/or amended.
- i. The Government has also decided that the Minister will make an Order pursuant to Section 6 of the Access to Information Act to provide that STATIN is an exempt body to which the provisions of the Act do not apply.

## **Chapter 6: NEXT STEPS**

6.1 The changes proposed in this White Paper, represent a major reform of the National Statistics System in Jamaica. The preparations for the implementation of the new processes have already begun at STATIN with the restructuring and re-engineering of the organisation aimed at strengthening the statistical core and the implementation of a quality management system. The implementation processes will be extended to Ministries, Departments and Agencies during fiscal year 2006/07.

6.2 The next steps will include:

- a. Passing of legislation to amend the Statistics Act;
- b. Establishing the policy framework for National Statistics by the appointment of the Statistics Commission, prior to the Statistics Act being amended and which Commission would then be recognised as the Commission in the amended legislation;
- c. Stakeholders' participation in determining the framework for National Statistics and publishing work plans;
- d. Establishing the code of ethics for National Statistics; and
- e. Documenting and publishing standards and guidelines for establishing administrative data sets which are to be used for statistical purposes.

## **SCHEDULE of APPENDICES**

Appendix A - Schedule of Proposed Amendments to the Statistics Act

Appendix B - Summary of Findings from the Consultation Process

Appendix C - Reviews of the Statistics Act

Appendix D - Data Quality Assessment Framework

Appendix E - UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics



## **SCHEDULE OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE STATISTICS ACT**

A1. The amendments suggested in this section are regarded as necessary to implement the recommendations and proposals that have been made to strengthen the legal framework to enhance and support National Statistics.

### **Section 2**

**Provide a new definition of “public agency” to enable access to more public bodies and expand the definitions to include the “National Statistics System” and the “Statistics Commission”**

A2. The definition of “public agency” in section 2 should be amended to expressly allow the Institute to collect information from executive agencies and from the Kingston and St. Andrew Corporation and Parish Councils. Section 3(2)(a).

We suggest that the definition of “public authority” in the Access to Information Act offers a useful precedent.

Define the “National Statistics System” as the collective set of outputs that are produced and released in within the statistical system

Define “Official Statistics” as the singular output and products of the various “public agencies”

Define the “Commission” as the Statistics Commission established under the new “section 3K”

### **Section 3 (1)(a)**

**Include a specific reference to environment as an area in which the Institute has a function to collect, compile analyze abstract and publish statistical information.**

A3. Insert after “economic”, the word “environment”.

### **Section 3(1)(d)**

**Broaden the Statistics Act to encompass a national statistics system to embrace statistical services being performed in all Ministries, Departments and Agencies by inserting an additional function.**

A4. Insert a new Section 3 (1)(d):

“ to develop and maintain a coordinated national statistics program for the adoption by official [public] agencies for any statistical work which they undertake or engage in. In the performance of its functions under this section, the Institute shall educate and train

all relevant agencies in the nature and application of national statistic standards. For the purposes of this section, national statistic standards shall as far as possible be consistent with the corresponding international statistical standard.

### **Section 3(1)(e)**

**The existing Section 3(1)(d) will now become 3(1)(e). This section must also be amended to include the “environment”.**

A5. After the word “integrated” delete the words “social and economic statistics” and replace them with “social, economic and environment statistics”.

### **Section 3(2)(b)**

A6. Delete the words appearing after “paragraph (a)” in order to bring respondents within the scope of Section 19. That is, additional information requested by the Minister will no longer be furnished on a voluntary basis.

### **Section 3C (3)**

**Delete the provisos at “(a)” and “(b)”**

A7. Insert the following proviso:

“Provided that the appointments be made in accordance with the guidelines prescribed by the Ministry with portfolio responsibility for the Public Service.”

### **Section 3C (5)**

**Delete this Section**

### **Section 3F**

**Delete this Section**

### **Section 3 K**

**Include in the Statistics Act the framework for the formation of a national coordinating body with the responsibility for the governance of national statistics services to deal with matters pertaining, but not limited to standards, quality assurance and ethics.**

A8. Insert as section 3K provisions relating to the Statistics Commission:

1. There shall be established for the purposes of the Act a body to be called the Statistics Commission.

2. The provisions of the Third Schedule shall have effect as to the Constitution of the Commission.
3. The duties of the Commission shall be as follows:
  - a) To advise the Minister and the Institute on the standards to be applied to ensure that statistics collected and disseminated pursuant to the provisions of this Act comply with international standards;
  - b) To advise the Minister about the areas of concern about official statistics;
  - c) To advise the Minister on the steps, which should be taken to ensure that all Ministries, Departments and Agencies of Government apply appropriate standards, classifications and procedures to improve quality, enhance comparability and minimize overlap;
  - d) Promote the coordination of statistical activities;
  - e) Promote an environment, which is supportive of the collection, production, dissemination and use of official statistics; and
  - f) Perform any function it considers necessary or expedient for the effective carrying out of the provisions of this Act.

## Third Schedule

### Constitution and Procedure of the Statistics Commission

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>1. The Commission shall consist of x members appointed by the Minister from among well qualified individuals, whether in the public or private sector in the fields of, economics, finance, commerce and any other disciplines he considers relevant.</p> | <p>Constitution of the Commission</p>                  |
| <p>2. The members of the Commission shall, subject to the provisions of this Schedule shall hold office for such period not exceeding two years as the Minister may determine, and shall be eligible for reappointment.</p>                                  | <p>Tenure of office</p>                                |
| <p>3. The Minister will appoint a Chairman of the Commission and any person to act in the place of the Chairman or any other member of the Commission in the case of the absence of the chairman or other member.</p>  | <p>Appointment of Chairman and acting appointments</p> |
| <p>4. Any member of the Commission may at anytime resign his office by instrument in writing, addressed to the Minister and such resignation shall take effect as from the date of receipt by the Minister of that instrument.</p>                           | <p>Resignations</p>                                    |
| <p>5. The Minister may at any time revoke the appointment of any member of the Commission if such member-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Becomes of unsound mind or becomes permanently unable to</li> </ol>                                  | <p>Revocation of appointment</p>                       |

- perform his functions by reason of ill health;
  - b) Is convicted and sentenced to a term imprisonment;
  - c) Fails without reasonable excuse to carry out any of the functions conferred or imposed on him under this Act; or
  - d) Engages in such activities as are reasonably considered prejudicial to the interest of the Commission
6. The names of members of the Commission as first constituted and every change in membership shall be published in the Gazette. Publication of Membership
  7. There shall be paid to the Chairman and other members of the Commission in respect of each appeal, such remuneration and such allowances as the Minister may decide. Remuneration of members
  8. The decisions of the Commission shall be by a majority of votes of the members. Voting
  9. Subject to the provisions of this Schedule the Commission shall regulate its own proceedings. Rules of procedure adopted by the Commission shall be published in the Gazette. Power to regulate proceedings
  10. The office of Chairman or Member of the Commission shall not be a public office for the purpose of Chapter V of the Constitution of Jamaica. Office not public office

### Section 7

**The statistics collected and compiled under this section should be expanded to include information on the environment and the factors relating to sustainable development.**

A9. Insert the following subsection “(v) environment and sustainable development”  
 Subsection (v) will become (w)

### Section 8

**The legislation should expressly provide that information is collected and used for statistical purposes only and that individual data records must not be released without the express written consent of the individual.**

A10. Insert the following as a third provision.  
 “The statistics and other particulars collected pursuant to this Act shall be collected for statistical purposes only and subject to the provisions of section 3 (2) (c)(ii) individual data shall not be disclosed to any other public agency without the previous consent in writing of the person to whom the data relates.”

## **Section 16**

**Ensure the supremacy of the Statistics Act over all subsequent and pertinent statutes.**

A11. This section raises two issues touching on the primacy/ supremacy of STATIN in terms of its access to information held by other public agencies for statistical purposes. Firstly, the meaning of “public records or documents” should be enlarged to give STATIN powers of access to certain records and documents. In this regard, the definition of “official document” in the Access to Information Act is instructive in its scope. The wide scope is appreciated even more when the definition is coupled with the definition of “public authority”.

Secondly, the provision should be amended to provide that unless provided for in any other enactment to the contrary, the Institute shall have access to any public document held by a public agency for the purposes of carrying out its functions under the Act. In addition, the legislation will provide that the person who has custody or charge of the relevant documents shall be under a duty to provide the information lawfully requested by STATIN.

## **Sections 18 - 20**

**The fines under the Act are to become the subject of Ministerial Order.**

A12. All references to the monetary value of fines in sections 18 through 20 of the Act are to be deleted and replaced by reference to the pertinent Order and Regulations.

## **Section 21**

**The Act is to be amended to include the provision for fines for breaches under the Act to be subject of Ministerial Order.**

A13. Insert after (d) a new (e) with the following words:

“(e) prescribing the tariff of fines to be paid in respect of breaches under section 18 through 20 of this Act”

Note that the existing section 21(e) will become 21(f).

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM THE CONSULTATION PROCESS**  
**September 1 to December 6, 2005**

B1. The Green Paper, *Quality Statistics – An Imperative for Jamaica*, posed a number of specific questions which were used as guides during the consultation process. In addition, the participants were encouraged to comment on any matter relating to the delivery of national statistics. The responses and comments emanating from the consultation process are summarised herein:

1. Coordinating Mechanism

There was strong support for the establishment of a coordinating mechanism. The recommendations were as follows:

- The body should be at the highest level and report to Parliament.
- Operate independent of the Minister thus providing transparency in its deliberations and there should be access to its Reports by the general public.
- Membership is to be taken from broad cross-section of the public so as to obtain the necessary support.

2. Penalties /Compliance /Awareness

There was overall consensus that the penalties for non-compliance were too low. It was proposed that a two-pronged approach be used:

- a. Firstly in considering the level of increase of the penalties – The penalty should act as a deterrent/ punishment and
- b. Secondly there should be public education awareness programmes emphasizing the national importance of supplying information, promoting and encouraging compliance.

It was also agreed that there should be:

- The use of technology to facilitate the easy response to requests for information from householders/business enterprises so as to accommodate easier compliance;
- The necessary resources that will facilitate the release of data in digital format so as to satisfy data users' requests more efficiently.

3. Supremacy of the Statistics Act

There was general acceptance of the need for the Statistics Act to be amended to give STATIN supremacy in statistical matters to include and not limited to:

- All government Ministries, Departments and Agencies regarding information in their possession
- Ensuring compliance and maintaining professional standards.

#### 4. Partnership between Public and Private Sector on Statistical Matters

During the discussions it was strongly suggested that some modifications be made to instruments being used for data collection. Some of the suggestions were:

- The survey instruments used should be more in a format that is more 'respondent-friendly'
- STATIN should provide on a regular basis, free of cost, some feed back to the data providers some of the information that had been collected

#### 5. Resource Constraints of STATIN

During the consultation process, the participants expressed their concerns about STATIN's ability to deliver on the proposals that are included in *The Green Paper*, given the present state of their resources.

## REVIEWS OF THE STATISTICS ACT

C.1 The Statistics Act has been the subject to several reviews recently. Most notably are the reviews conducted by the Foreign Investment Advisory Service, "FIAS" Strengthening the Collection of Foreign Investment Statistics in Jamaica, 1997, and the International Monetary Fund Report on the Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Statistical Institute of Jamaica 2002, "the Allen Report". STATIN also undertook its own internal review of the Act.

### Summary of Main Comments:

C.2. The main comments on the Statistics Act may be summarized as follows:

1. The provision that information other than that specifically set out in the Act can be collected with the approval of the Minister should not be exempt from the enforcement provisions of the Act.
2. The lack of a provision expressly specifying that the information provided may be used for statistical and analytical purposes only and may not be used for purposes of taxation, investigation or regulation.
3. The Statistics (Amendment) Act 1984 provides STATIN with the powers to collect information under a large number of specified topics. However penalties for persons who refuse to supply information are totally inadequate and the mission recommended that STATIN attempt to have the legislation amended to allow for substantially increased maximum penalties and to provide that maximum penalties be the subject of Ministerial approval, to allow for flexibility over time, taking into account inflation.
4. The Act should specifically provide for access to information from official agencies. In practice, effective access to information is limited with regard to some official agencies. It would be desirable for the legislation to emphasize that information is collected for statistical purposes only and that individual data records must not be released to other official agencies.
5. More specific coordination responsibilities are required in the legislation, in order to provide more compatible datasets and reduced duplication of effort. STATIN should be given responsibility for promoting national standards and developing and maintaining a coordinated national statistical program. The following should be the features of the program:



- a. STATIN would actively promote national statistical standards throughout all official agencies, and those agencies would be required to adopt the standards in any statistical work in which they are, or become, engaged:
  - b. STATIN would also have a role of educating other agencies in the nature and application of national statistical standards:
  - c. All new statistical surveys planned by other agencies would require the specific endorsement of STATIN to ensure that they comply with national statistics standards, plan to use statistical valid approaches and would not result in any unnecessary duplication of effort for respondents or government.
6. A Statistics Advisory Council with broadly based membership, capable of providing advice to STATIN and to the Minister on the improvement and coordination of statistical services and on statistical needs, priorities and work programs should be established in the legislation.
7. The need for legislation to provide for the supremacy of STATIN in the area of statistics. The view was expressed in all the consultations that STATIN's work was being undermined by the refusal and reluctance of agencies and Ministries to furnish STATIN with information in their possession. It was reported that the main reason given for withholding the information was the assertion by the agencies that they were under no legal obligation to provide STATIN with the information.
8. The provisions of the Act should be brought in line with the current trends in similar legislation in other countries, by setting out the responsibilities of the Director General.
9. That the Minister in consultation with the Advisory Council set the statistical priorities for the nation.
11. That provisions dealing with administrative matters be amended to reflect current operations.

## DATA QUALITY ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK—GENERIC FRAMEWORK

Quality Dimensions	Elements	Indicators
<p><b>0. Prerequisites of quality</b></p>	<p><b>0.1 Legal and institutional environment</b> — <i>The environment is supportive of statistics</i></p> <p><b>0.2 Resources</b> — <i>Resources are commensurate with needs of statistical programs.</i></p> <p><b>0.3 Relevance</b> — <i>Statistics cover relevant information on the subject field.</i></p> <p><b>0.4 Other quality management</b> — <i>Quality is a cornerstone of statistical work.</i></p>	<p>0.1.1 The responsibility for collecting, processing, and disseminating the statistics is clearly specified.</p> <p>0.1.2 Data sharing and coordination among data-producing agencies are adequate.</p> <p>0.1.3 Individual reporters' data are to be kept confidential and used for statistical purposes only.</p> <p>0.1.4 Statistical reporting is ensured through legal mandate and/or measures to encourage response.</p> <p>0.2.1 Staff, facilities, computing resources, and financing are commensurate with statistical programs.</p> <p>0.2.2 Measures to ensure efficient use of resources are implemented.</p> <p>0.3.1 The relevance and practical utility of existing statistics in meeting users' needs are monitored.</p> <p>0.4.1 Processes are in place to focus on quality.</p> <p>0.4.2 Processes are in place to monitor the quality of the statistical program.</p> <p>0.4.3 Processes are in place to deal with quality considerations in planning the statistical program.</p>
<p><b>1. Assurances of integrity</b></p> <p><i>The principle of objectivity in the collection, processing, and dissemination of statistics is firmly adhered to.</i></p>	<p><b>1.1 Professionalism</b> — <i>Statistical policies and practices are guided by professional principles.</i></p> <p><b>1.2 Transparency</b> — <i>Statistical policies and practices are transparent.</i></p>	<p>1.1.1 Statistics are produced on an impartial basis.</p> <p>1.1.2 Choices of sources and statistical techniques as well as decisions about dissemination are informed solely by statistical considerations.</p> <p>1.1.3 The appropriate statistical entity is entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics.</p> <p>1.2.1 The terms and conditions under which statistics are collected, processed, and disseminated are available to the public.</p> <p>1.2.2 Internal governmental access to statistics prior to their release is publicly identified.</p> <p>1.2.3 Products of statistical agencies/units are clearly identified as such.</p> <p>1.2.4 Advanced notice is given of major changes in methodology, source data, and statistical</p>

Quality Dimensions	Elements	Indicators
	<p><b>1.3 Ethical standards</b> — <i>Policies and practices are guided by ethical standards.</i></p>	<p>techniques.</p> <p>1.3.1 Guidelines for staff behaviour are in place and are well known to the staff.</p>
<p><b>2. Methodological soundness</b></p> <p><i>The methodological basis for the statistics follows internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.</i></p>	<p><b>2.1 Concepts and definitions</b> — <i>Concepts and definitions used are in accord with internationally accepted statistical frameworks.</i></p> <p><b>2.2 Scope</b> — <i>The scope is in accord with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.</i></p> <p><b>2.3 Classification/ Sectorization</b> — <i>Classification and sectorization systems are in accord with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.</i></p> <p><b>2.4 Basis for recording</b> — <i>Flows and stocks are valued and recorded according to internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices</i></p>	<p>2.1.1 The overall structure in terms of concepts and definitions follows internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.</p> <p>2.2.1 The scope is broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.</p> <p>2.3.1 Classification/sectorization systems used are broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.</p> <p>2.4.1 Market prices are used to value flows and stocks.</p> <p>2.4.2 Recording is done on an accrual basis.</p> <p>2.4.3 Grossing/netting procedures are broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.</p>
<p><b>3. Accuracy and reliability</b></p> <p><i>Source data and statistical techniques are sound and statistical outputs sufficiently portray reality</i></p>	<p><b>3.1 Source data</b> – <i>Source data available provide an adequate basis to compile statistics.</i></p> <p><b>3.2 Assessment of source Data</b> — <i>Source data are regularly assessed.</i></p>	<p>3.1.1 Source data are obtained from comprehensive data collection programs that take into account country-specific conditions.</p> <p>3.1.2 Source data reasonably approximate the definitions, scope, classifications, valuation, and time of recording required.</p> <p>3.1.3 Source data are timely.</p> <p>3.2.1 Source data—including censuses, sample surveys, and administrative records—are routinely assessed, e.g., for coverage, sample error, response error, and non-sampling error; the results of the assessments are monitored and made available to</p>

Quality Dimensions	Elements	Indicators
	<p><b>3.3 Statistical techniques</b> — <i>Statistical techniques employed conform to sound statistical procedures</i></p> <p><b>3.4 Assessment and validation of intermediate data and statistical outputs</b> — <i>Intermediate results and statistical outputs are regularly assessed and validated.</i></p> <p><b>3.5 Revision studies</b> — <i>Revisions, as a gauge of reliability, are tracked and mined for the information they may provide.</i></p>	<p>guide statistical processes.</p> <p>3.3.1 Data compilation employs sound statistical techniques to deal with data sources.</p> <p>3.3.2 Other statistical procedures (e.g., data adjustments and transformations, and statistical analysis) employ sound statistical techniques.</p> <p>3.4.1 Intermediate results are validated against other information where applicable.</p> <p>3.4.2 Statistical discrepancies in intermediate data are assessed and investigated.</p> <p>3.4.3 Statistical discrepancies and other potential indicators or problems in statistical outputs are investigated.</p> <p>3.5.1 Studies and analyses of revisions are carried out routinely and used internally to inform statistical processes (see also 4.3.3).</p>
<p><b>4. Serviceability</b></p> <p><i>Statistics, with adequate periodicity and timeliness, are consistent and follow a predictable revisions policy.</i></p>	<p><b>4.1 Periodicity and timeliness</b> — <i>Periodicity and timeliness follow internationally accepted dissemination standards.</i></p> <p><b>4.2 Consistency</b> — <i>Statistics are consistent within the dataset, over time, and with major datasets.</i></p> <p><b>4.3 Revision policy and practice</b> — <i>Data revisions follow a regular and publicized procedure.</i></p>	<p>4.1.1 Periodicity follows dissemination standards.</p> <p>4.1.2 Timeliness follows dissemination standards.</p> <p>4.2.1 Statistics are consistent within the dataset.</p> <p>4.2.2 Statistics are consistent or reconcilable over a reasonable period of time.</p> <p>4.2.3 Statistics are consistent or reconcilable with those obtained through other data sources and/or statistical frameworks.</p> <p>4.3.1 Revisions follow a regular and transparent schedule.</p> <p>4.3.2 Preliminary and/or revised data are clearly identified.</p> <p>4.3.3 Studies and analyses of revisions are made public (see also 3.5.1).</p>
<p><b>5. Accessibility</b></p> <p><i>Data and metadata are easily available</i></p>	<p><b>5.1 Data accessibility</b> — <i>Statistics are presented in a clear and understandable manner, forms of dissemination are adequate,</i></p>	<p>5.1.1 Statistics are presented in a way that facilitates proper interpretation and meaningful comparisons (layout and clarity of text, tables, and charts).</p> <p>5.1.2 Dissemination media and format are</p>

Quality Dimensions	Elements	Indicators
<p><i>and assistance to users is adequate.</i></p>	<p><i>and statistics are made available on an impartial basis.</i></p> <p><b>5.2 Metadata accessibility</b> — <i>Up-to-date and pertinent metadata are made available.</i></p> <p><b>5.3 Assistance to users</b> — <i>Prompt and knowledgeable support service is available.</i></p>	<p>adequate.</p> <p>5.1.3 Statistics are released on a pre-announced schedule.</p> <p>5.1.4 Statistics are made available to all users at the same time.</p> <p>5.1.5 Statistics not routinely disseminated are made available upon request.</p> <p>5.2.1 Documentation on concepts, scope, classifications, basis of recording, data sources, and statistical techniques is available, and differences from internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices are annotated.</p> <p>5.2.2 Levels of detail are adapted to the needs of the intended audience.</p> <p>5.3.1 Contact points for each subject field are publicized.</p> <p>5.3.2 Catalogues of publications, documents, and other services, including information on any changes, are widely available.</p>

## UN FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS

### Preamble

The Statistical Commission,

- Bearing in mind that official statistical information is an essential basis for development in the economic, demographic, social and environmental fields and for mutual knowledge and trade among the States and peoples of the world.
  - Bearing in mind that the essential trust of the public in official statistical information depends to a large extent on respect for the fundamental values and principles which are the basis of any society which seeks to understand itself and to respect the rights of its members.
  - Bearing in mind that the quality of official statistics, and thus the quality of the information available to the Government, the economy and the public depends largely on the cooperation of citizens, enterprises, and other respondents in providing appropriate and reliable data needed for necessary statistical compilations and on the cooperation between users and producers of statistics in order to meet users' needs.
  - Recalling the efforts of governmental and non-governmental organizations active in statistics to establish standards and concepts to allow comparisons among countries,
  - Recalling also the International Statistical Institute Declaration of Professional Ethics,
  - Having expressed the opinion that resolution C (47), adopted by the Economic Commission for Europe on 15 April 1992, is of universal significance,
  - Noting that, at its eighth session, held in Bangkok in November 1993, the Working Group of Statistical Experts, assigned by the Committee on Statistics of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to examine the Fundamental Principles, had agreed in principle to the ECE version and had emphasized that those principles were applicable to all nations,
  - Noting also that, at its eighth session, held at Addis Ababa in March 1994, the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers, considered that the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics are of universal significance,
- Adopts the present principles of official statistics:

**Principle 1.** *Official statistics provide an indispensable element in the information system of a democratic society, serving the Government, the economy and the public with data about the economic, demographic, social and environmental situation. To this end, official statistics that meet the test of practical utility are to be compiled and made available on an impartial basis by official statistical agencies to honor citizens' entitlement to public information.*

**Principle 2.** *To retain trust in official statistics, the statistical agencies need to decide according to strictly professional considerations, including scientific principles and professional ethics, on the methods and procedures for the collection, processing, storage and presentation of statistical data.*

**Principle 3.** *To facilitate a correct interpretation of the data, the statistical agencies are to present information according to scientific standards on the sources, methods and procedures of the statistics.*

**Principle 4.** *The statistical agencies are entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics.*

**Principle 5.** *Data for statistical purposes may be drawn from all types of sources, be they statistical surveys or administrative records. Statistical agencies are to choose the source with regard to quality, timeliness, costs and the burden on respondents.*

**Principle 6.** *Individual data collected by statistical agencies for statistical compilation, whether they refer to natural or legal persons, are to be strictly confidential and used exclusively for statistical purposes.*

**Principle 7.** *The laws, regulations and measures under which the statistical systems operate are to be made public.*

**Principle 8.** *Coordination among statistical agencies within countries is essential to achieve consistency and efficiency in the statistical system.*

**Principle 9.** *The use by statistical agencies in each country of international concepts, classifications and methods promotes the consistency and efficiency of statistical systems at all official levels.*

**Principle 10.** *Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in statistics contributes to the improvement of systems of official statistics in all countries.*

**Comments and feedback on this White Paper, *Assuring Integrity in National Statistics*, maybe forwarded to:**

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