

Development of National Statistical Systems in Africa by 2012: Lessons Learnt and Prospects

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Abstract

The paper tracks the development of statistics production systems in African countries and their use at different levels of the government echelon. It begins by looking at the historical systems of statistics productions, where only one department or office (central statistical office) was responsible for production of official statistics while the central government was the main user of these statistics. The statistics produced by these offices were at macro levels. With the changes in running the government that has taken place since independence of these countries, the need for statistics has increased beyond central governments, thus calling for producers and other players in the field. It lastly concludes with a recommendation on how a national statistical system can be developed to cater for the new demands.

Key words: National Statistical System, Central Statistical Office, National Strategy for the Development of Statistics, Coordination, National Statistical Council.

1. Introduction

After attaining political independence from the late 1950s many developing countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, have struggled to develop their socio-economies with little success to show for over the past fifty years; despite receiving magnitudes of financial and technical assistance from the west and multinational institutions, like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). As a result of this, among others, the international community held the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development in 2002 (UN 2002). Two major lessons were learnt from this conference: the first one was that, if development programs are to be successful, they must be country-owned and country-specific; and the second had it that when countries have good policies and institutions in place, external assistance in support of good country policies and programs can be highly effective. From this consensus has arisen a new partnership for development that asks developing countries to increase their commitment to policies and actions that stimulate socio-economic growth and reduce poverty, and calls on developed countries to support them through more effective aid and trade policies. In this context of shared responsibility to achieve better development results, global attention has turned to management strategies focused on performance and the achievement of outputs, outcomes, and impacts—in short, managing for development results. (Multilateral Development Banks, 2004).

This calls for developing countries to begin owning the development agenda from within and refrain on dependence for everything from the outside world. They should put in place development plans and policies that are realistic and focus on what their countries aspire to achieve in specific time frames and strive to implement them by internal resources. Among the challenges that face poor countries is the failure to plan, monitor, and evaluate the programs/policies/projects that they put in place. It happens that however good the program/policy/project may be on paper, if it cannot be monitored and evaluated during its implementation, the prospects of achieving the intended outcomes cannot be granted. To be able to plan properly, monitor, and evaluate development programs, there is need to have massive data that are collected continuously and consistently. Many countries have now fallen into the trap of lacking data in various aspects such that for many years they seem not to make any progress in most activities and fail to understand why this is so. (you cannot measure it, you cannot manage it – PARIS21, 2004)

It should be noted that in order to be assured that any program/policy/project meets the desired results within the specified time period, they must have outputs that are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time Bound). The paper attempts to emphasize the importance of having a well-organized statistical system that leads to the production of reliable statistics for use in various aspect by many users.

A country cannot produce reliable statistics in the absence of a good statistical system. Before the 1990s, countries world over depended solely on the national statistical office for the production of official statistics and the major user was the central government. With the socio-economic changes that have taken place overtime and the need for democratic governance in the countries, the need for evidences and accountabilities in many aspects has emerged. These issues call for statistical information to guide in their activities. This has brought in many producers and users of statistics in the countries. There were no systems that guide these many stakeholders in their operations, such as how to collaborate and share information.

This necessitated for initiatives to look at how statistical systems in the countries can be organized. Among these initiatives was the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics of the 2004.

2. Statistical Capacity Building: The Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics (MAPS)

The Second Roundtable on Measuring for Development Results took place in Marrakech, Morocco in February 2004, where nearly 200 participants from aid organizations and developing countries met in a roundtable to assess progress, focus on the challenges countries faced in managing for results, and attempted to increase the political commitment of the international community to support the global results agenda. The Roundtable participants endorsed the core principles and a global action plan on managing for development results.

Additionally, participants agreed on a global plan for statistics (the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics) which consisted of six actions.

2.1 The first set of actions addressed national needs:

- Mainstream strategic planning of statistical systems and prepare National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) for all low-income countries by 2006;
- Begin preparations for the round; and
- Increase financing for statistical capacity building.

2.2 The second set addressed international responsibilities:

- Set up an International Household Survey Network;
- Undertake urgent improvements needed for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals; and
- Increase accountability of the international statistical system.

The paper dwells mainly on the issue of mainstreaming strategic planning of statistical systems and the preparation of National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) in Africa by 2006. Four countries; Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda and South Africa were among the first countries to develop and implement their NSDSs. Their strategic documents are part of the references to the paper.

3. Designing of NSDS in the Countries

In November 2004, Nine months after the Marrakech declaration on Statistics, PARIS21 issued a document to guide countries on designing National Strategy for the Development of Statistics. The document has highlighted a number of issues to countries embarking on the designing of the strategy. Among these is the importance of developing the National Statistical Systems (NSS) and not only strengthening the central statistical offices.

“At an early stage of the NSDS process, an institutional coverage issue needs to be addressed. Many early strategic plans focused mainly on the central statistical agency and were concerned with improving the quality coverage and dissemination of statistics for which the agency had direct responsibility. Other data sets, which were important for national development, but which were not part of the central agency’s work-load, were not covered. More recently though, many countries have been moving to develop strategic plans that cover the national statistical system more broadly. These strategies bring in other data agencies as well as the central statistical office and hence have a broader coverage in terms of data and their use”.

This is because statistics are collected, compiled and disseminated by government departments and agencies as part of the information system of a society that serve the government, the economy, and the public with data on the socio-economic condition of the country. They also support policymaking, decision making and are the basis for debate within and outside the government on various issues concerning the country.

After developing the NSDS, the next step is to decide on agencies, data sets, and activities that are to be covered by the NSDS. Advantages in having an NSDS process with as a broad coverage as possible are listed as follows;

- A broad NSDS process can promote greater coordination and cooperation in statistics, thus helping to reduce duplication of effort and increase efficiency as well as address cross-sectoral demands;
- It will help to bring the supply of statistics more in line with demand. In areas such as the monitoring of the Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS), for example the indicators, these are likely to be derived from more than one agency. The same is true for the indicators used to monitor progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). By bringing these indicators within the scope of the NSDS, specific plans can then be prepared to improve data coverage, frequency, timeliness and other measures of quality;
- Broadening the coverage to include the main data sets of interest to users, bringing in other agencies (e.g. sectoral line ministries), will help to build interest in statistics and should result in a larger constituency with an interest in implementing the strategy; and
- Developing the level of interest and support for the development of the concept of National Statistics, and building on experience gained so far in coordinating and improving the quality of National Statistics, for example through participation in the General Data Dissemination System (GDDS).

The guide also states that, in order to be effective, the concept of the national statistical system as well as the strategic plan should be demand-focused and user-friendly to maximize the value-added of statistics outputs. The statistical managers need to have an understanding of who the customers for their data are so as to effectively serve their users, and to develop mechanisms for getting regular feedback. Bringing users into the NSDS process is therefore essential. Users are the consumers of statistics, and no statistical system can be sustained unless the products and services it generates meet the needs of users. It further points out that, strategic planning for national statistical systems should take into consideration use at different levels; that is, the national, international, and domestic regional levels. While the primary focus is at the national level, countries have obligations to report national data to international and regional agencies.

When the guideline points out that the primary focus is at the national level, it is believed that it does not imply producing only national aggregate figures; but rather, it should be translated to mean the production and use of statistics at any government level in and outside the government.

The guide document clearly stipulated the composition of the NSDS design team; that it should consist, apart from political leadership, representatives of all stakeholders in the National Statistical System. It cautions that at times there may be difficult and painful decisions to be made like changing the emphasis of the statistical program and possible restructuring and downsizing of institutions, therefore there needs to be a clear signal on objectivity, which could be provided by engaging a broad membership including one or more independent people to help the team to address these issues objectively. There would also need to be an overview process involving all key agencies plus users from outside government; for instance, possibly having two separate steering groups to advise on technical aspects and to oversee management of the process. It is deemed important that all involved are allowed sufficient time by their institutions to play the role expected of them on the team.

The other issue that the guideline document highlighted was the legal and organizational assessment in countries on the National Statistical Systems. That, it is hoped that there should be efforts to identify and evaluate the economic, social, political, legal and technological environment which may be supportive of or a hindrance to effectiveness of the system.

The African Development Bank issued another guideline document in 2007. The guideline hinged on how to mainstream sectoral statistical systems in Africa in order to achieve coordinated statistical systems. It also explains in detail, the importance of mainstreaming sectoral statistical systems in the designing, implementing and monitoring development strategies.

4. Implementation of the NSDS in Selected Countries

The main areas of interest in this part of the paper are on the development and management of the envisaged National Statistical Systems (NSS) of the countries. From the preceding sections, NSS is supposed to be inclusive of all stakeholders of the system in a country. This means that any strategy concerning NSS should involve all stakeholders' right from the development, implementation, and management.

The choice of the mechanism of involving or alienating stakeholders in the system has direct impact in the quality, ownership, and trust to the data that are produced. The experiences of the four countries (Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda and South Africa) that were among the first in Africa to develop and implement their NSDSs are elucidated in the following sub-sections:

4.1 NSDS implementation in Kenya

Kenya implemented its statistical strategy in 2003, even before the MAPS. The 2003/2004 – 2007/08 Strategic Plan for National Statistics System in Kenya in its introduction stated that “The plan contains proposals towards NSS institutional strengthening with regard to organizational development in terms of human resource, staffing and development, investments in building statistical and physical infrastructure, and adoption of better management practices”. It also contained the proposed sequencing of activities in line with the vision, mission and values of the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics and the entire NSS. The proposals included the following:

- Creation, development and maintenance of a National Statistical System (NSS) to ensure collection, analysis, publication and dissemination of integrated, relevant, reliable and timely statistical information;
- Establishment of a semi-autonomous Bureau for coordination, monitoring and supervision of the NSS; and
- Capacity building in line ministries, departments and parastatals.

The organizational structure of the KNBS and mechanism for effective planning, coordination and supervision of the entire National Statistical System, include management and setting procedures. This in turn would meet the national objective of establishing rationalised structure. It would also imply building up supporting organization mechanism and guidelines on sustainability in terms of demand from users and supply in the form of availability of resources and capacity”

The plan document had just a little mention of other producers and users of statistics. Almost all of it was on KNBS. The details on how these other producers and users were incorporated or participated in the design and implementation of the plan are not revealed. It is further noted that the NSS was to be coordinated by the KNBS, though itself is among the statistical producers. In summary, the plan document concentrated on the improvement of the KNBS in almost all aspects and left out other NSS stakeholders. Moreover it was prepared internally by KNBS staff.

The country was implementing the second strategic plan, the KNBS Strategic Plan 2008 – 2012. Just as the preceding one, the plan was developed by KNBS itself as there is nowhere in the plan document that shows how other stakeholders were involved. The Bureau is currently a semi-autonomous organization and still maintains the mandate of coordinating the NSS. The plan is *inclined* to the production of statistics and by KNBS in particular. Among the mandates of the KNBS mentioned in the document is to establish and promote the use of best practices and methods in the production and dissemination of statistical information. The document does not, however, explained explicitly how KNBS, as a major producer of official statistics, is going to manage all these activities across the whole NSS, since statistical production takes place at different levels of the government as well as by the private sector and the users and other stakeholders in their diverse way.

KNBS organization structure shows that NSS coordination unit or department is under the directorate of strategy and development which deals with standards and methods. It is not clear how the unit coordinates all stakeholders when it is under the directorate of one of them. It as if NSS is a section of KNBS. With this arrangement of coordination of the NSS, a number of questions may be raised such as; if KNBS is part of NSS how can it be coordinated from within by its own unit which reports to a Department Director not even the Director General? How can the staff in the unit discharge their duties freely to non-KNBS stakeholders without being interfered by their senior officials and especially the Director General?

When reading between the lines in the recent strategic plan document, and the Statistical Act of 2006, the terms KNBS and NSS seem to mean the same thing with different names. For example, the Act (of 2006) established the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics and not the Kenya National Statistical System. The introduction to the Act states that;

“An Act of parliament to provide for the establishment of the Kenya Bureau of Statistics for the collection, compilation, analysis, publication and dissemination of statistical information, and the coordination of the national statistical system, and for connected purposes”.

Even the strategic plan (2008 -2012) is for the KNBS and not NSS. In this case KNBS owns NSS. However, a paragraph from Section 1.5 of the strategic plan document reads;

“The National Statistical System (NSS) refers to individual units engaged in the production and use of official statistics in the country. It comprises of producers, users, and suppliers of statistical information.

Other key players in the NSS include research and training institutions”.

In this case KNBS is part of the NSS and so it becomes arbitrary for the KNBS to coordinate NSS as per the Act.

4.2 NSDS implementation in Nigeria

The country started implementing its Statistical Master Plan named “The Nigeria National Statistical System (2004/5-2008/9)” in 2005. There was no direct mention of what comprised the NSS in the country. However, it is pointed out that during the design of this plan there was an extensive consultation with other producers, users and suppliers of data. Some of the descriptions of this are stated in Section 4.5.4 of the plan document, that, “The development of an efficient National Statistical System requires that the general policy of government with regard to the key statistical activities - collection, compilation, dissemination, interpretation of statistical information - for all statistics- producing agencies should be embodied in a statistical legislation. In order to strengthen the institutional and regulatory framework and to enhance the effectiveness of the NSS, the 1957 Statistics Act, which is clearly obsolete, has been reviewed and a new Draft Statistics Act proposed. The proposed Statistics Act will underpin and support statistical operations by providing for:

- (i) the definition of the National Statistical System,
- (ii) more effective coordination of the NSS,
- (iii) transforming the Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) into an autonomous government agency to be called the Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics (NNBS) (the Bureau) and defining its functions, including coordination of the NSS,
- (iv) establishing a Board of Directors (the Board) with a Chairperson and seven other members as the governing body of the Bureau, and
- (v) establishing the posts of Statistician General to be appointed by the President on the advice of the Board and the Deputy Statistician General to be appointed by the Board.

The proposed Act also provides for:

- (i) establishment of a National Consultative Committee on Statistics (NCCS) to coordinate data users and producers,
- (ii) powers to collect data,
- (iii) promoting professional independence and probity of official statistics with regard to “*the way facts are assembled and combined into statistics, or in the method and timing of their release to the public*”
- (iv) rules for compliance and statistical confidentiality to ensure that individual records are not accessed by unauthorized individuals and in particular, that they cannot be shared with political authorities or regulatory and tax agencies,
- (v) data dissemination
- (vi) funding of the Bureau, and
- (vii) transition arrangements from FOS to NNBS.

On 11th June 2007, The Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette No. 60 Vol. 94 Government Notice No. 39, Act No 9 on The Statistics Act 2007, among other things stated that; The National Statistics System shall comprise four main elements;

- (a) The producers of statistics, including the National Bureau of Statistics as the Coordinating Agency of the System, Line Ministries, Public Agencies, State Statistical Agencies, and Local Government Statistical units.
- (b) Data users including key users such as policy and decision makers
- (c) Data suppliers including establishments and households
- (d) Research and Training Institutions, including higher education institutions.

The same Act established the National Bureau of Statistics, the Board of Directors as the governing body for the Bureau with its members representing a range of stakeholders. Additionally the Bureau was given the role of coordinating the NSS.

Three issues can be noted here: first, that the Statistics Act established both the National Statistics System and the National Bureau of Statistics.

The second issue is that the Act established the Board of Directors for the Bureau but nothing was done for the NSS. Thirdly, the NBS was given the mandate to coordinate the NSS, yet itself is part of it.

4.3 NSDS implementation in South Africa

The 2005/06 – 2009/10 Strategic Plan for Statistics South Africa dwelt more on the office itself rather than covering other stakeholders in statistics. The issue of National Statistics System was indicated in the Statistics South Africa Organization Chart, where it appears as a unit/section within the directorate of the Quality and Integration. It is only in the last chapter (Chapter 10) where a mention of the National Statistics System came out vividly, though without much details.

Section 10.1 of the Plan states that, “Stats SA has the legal mandate in terms of the Statistics Act (6 of 1999) to produce and coordinate official statistics in the country. The National Statistics System (NSS) is the coordinating framework within which information in the form of indicators is generated. The NSS consists of a grouping of suppliers, producers and users of official statistics with the objective of ensuring that the set of national statistics produced is relevant, consistent and comparable over time. Outputs of the NSS will be indicators and databases within the context of a management system for statistical information. In order for government to become more effective, it will be necessary for implementing agencies to monitor and measure process inputs, progress, outputs and outcomes”. Section 10.4 states that; As the national statistical coordinator, Statistics South Africa has to

- develop national statistical standards;
- standardize definitions, classifications and procedures for use in statistical activities;
- enhance statistical competence of producers of official statistics;
- implement filters and triangulation facilities for quality assessment of statistics;
- promote statistical advocacy and partnerships; and
- designate statistics as official.

It is, again, noted that the Strategic Plan for Statistics in South Africa was generally for Statistics South Africa, within which the aspect of the National Statistics System was mentioned and on top of that gives Statistics South Africa the role of coordinating the NSS as was for Kenya and Nigeria.

4.4 NSDS implementation in Uganda

The Plan for National Statistical Development (2006/7 – 2010/11) document Section 3.1, Section 2 of the UBOS Act 1998 defines the NSS as including all agencies in Uganda, whether government or not, responsible, whether under any enactment or otherwise, for gathering statistical data directly through surveys or through administrative action. This statement does not mention specifically the users, suppliers and statistical training institutions as part of the NSS. However, the Act defines an “Agency” as including a Ministry, Department or any other organ of government, a local authority or an agency of a local authority and generally, any other user or provider of statistics. It is in this section that a mention is made, that UBOS was a coordinating agency for the NSS.

The Plan document itself listed what it called ‘players of’ in the NSS as; all producers of statistics in the country, both public and private including research and training institutions; all users of statistics; all data suppliers/providers; and statistical training institutions/centres.

In Section 3.3, it is mentioned that despite the Uganda Bureau of Statistics that was established by an Act of Parliament in 1998 as a semi-autonomous body, the Act does not appropriately empower UBOS to perform the supervisory role. This is largely due to the following reasons:

- Other players in the NSS have regulations from which they derive their mandate. The current UBOS Act does not state in explicit terms which Act prevails over the other with respect to statistical production. This is especially the case for Local Governments and Line Ministries.
- The current Statistical Act is essentially a UBOS Act and not for the entire NSS. Although the NSS is alluded to in the Act, it is not sufficiently articulated in its current form. In particular, it does not mention the users of statistics – instead it emphasizes those involved in gathering statistical data directly through surveys or administrative action.

Section 3.5 on current coordination arrangements it is stated that, the NSS brings together all key stakeholders and institutions in the field of producing, supplying and using statistics. UBOS is the agency responsible for coordinating, monitoring and supervising the NSS in Uganda, and ensuring that international and national standards are adhered to.

However, it was acknowledged in the same section that, the linkages within the NSS were inconsistent, informal and relatively weak. There was no comprehensive common understanding of the actual implications of the activities of one sector with respect to others. Nevertheless, there is consensus that coordination and collaboration among data producers and users is needed to

- (i) prevent duplication of effort and generation of inconsistent data,
- (ii) achieve cost-effectiveness in utilization of scarce resources,
- (iii) avoid working at cross-purposes, and
- (iv) produce higher quality data.

5. Lessons Learn from the Four Countries in Implementing NSDS

The following are taken as key issues that were noted from the four countries' attempt to implement the NSDS with a view of establishing a National Statistical System

1. National Statistical Offices are major statistical producers in these countries. All of them have been established by relevant statistical acts.
2. There are other statistical producers in these countries, ranging from line ministries, local governments, government departments, parastatals, NGOs and research/academic institutions, etc. These are established by different legislations or acts in their areas of jurisdictions.
3. NSOs are developers of concepts, definitions, standards and methods that have to be used by all statistical producers in the countries' concerned
4. There are different statistical users in the countries ranging from the government itself (as a major user), civil societies, business community, political parties, research institutions, international organizations and the general public.
5. There are statistical training institutions at different levels
6. There is no country that has come up with the Act that established a National Statistical System (NSS). NSS appeared in different parts of National Statistical Strategic Plans that were essentially developed by National Statistical Offices, and so it is conceived as part and parcel of the NSOs.
7. The NSOs (as a major statistical producer) assumed the role of coordinating the so called NSS without clear guidelines on how other stakeholders were brought into the system thus bringing some operational difficulties on how NSOs would coordinate them
8. Most parts of the statistical strategic plans dwelt on the restructuring and strengthening the NSOs with little attention on the improvement of other statistical producers and nothing to other players in the statistical arena.
9. The NSOs in these countries have attained semi-autonomous status

Despite all the shortcomings that have been noted so far, NSOs should be commended for a job well done for pioneering in the development of statistics in the countries so far as without them nothing could have been done. They stand as important pivots for future statistical developments in the continent.

It appears that these countries did not establish National Statistical Systems directly as it should have been due to a number of things. First, there has not been any country that had done so to act as a model to others. Secondly, most NSOs were struggling to attain higher status within the government's structure, then, with this opportunity coming in, they thought that was the chance to strengthen themselves by getting the higher status of their wish. Thirdly, almost all other statistical stakeholders in the countries were not fully aware of what was happening on statistics in their countries; thus NSOs, by default, acted as hosts (coordinators) for **NSDS the development**. To do that, they called on others to participate as invitees to the process.

This goes with the historical background of these offices. Initially, they either started as units or departments within Ministries of Finance or Economic Planning or any other Ministry, depending on the government structure.

They were formed to serve only the government. With the advent of development, demand for statistics increased requiring more robust statistical production systems in the countries. It was thus thought that NSOs could produce statistics that could serve not only the government but other users as well. This meant that NSOs could no longer operate as a unit or department within a single Ministry but rather operate as a semi-autonomous or fully autonomous organization responsible for the production of national statistics.

A number of countries have their NSOs operating in this status while others are either still in the old system (as departments of the Ministries) or do not exist at all in some sectors.

Further demand for statistics, especially within the countries, found that NSOs could not meet all needs, as it is understood that NSOs produce national statistics (at macro levels) and very rarely are they capable of producing meso and micro statistics. Meso and micro statistics are essential for planning at lower levels of the government structures like the local governments. Thus, there was a need for the expanded scope of statistical producers (and suppliers of data) and users in the country. The fourth component in this arena came as a complement to the former three ones and this was the training component. Producers and users, to some extent even suppliers, need to know what kind of methods and theories to employ in their day to day activities.

However, given the low level of statistical awareness and appreciation in Africa, more efforts and strategies need to be devised to address the situation for countries to develop effective National Statistical Systems.

6. Conclusion

To ensure that the four components of a national statistics system work amicably, there is a need for establishing a coordinating body in the name of a National Statistical Council or Board. This entity should be regulating the activities of the National Statistical System as a whole, that is, impartially overseeing the activities, responsibilities, and rights of all statistical stakeholders in the country.

7. Recommendations

1. Each country needs to enact a national statistical Act that formerly establishes the NSS and makes sure that all MDAs establish statistical departments and empower them by providing the necessary resources.
2. Resulting from the first recommendation it is proposed that national governments have to be committed both politically and financially in order to develop robust national statistical systems.

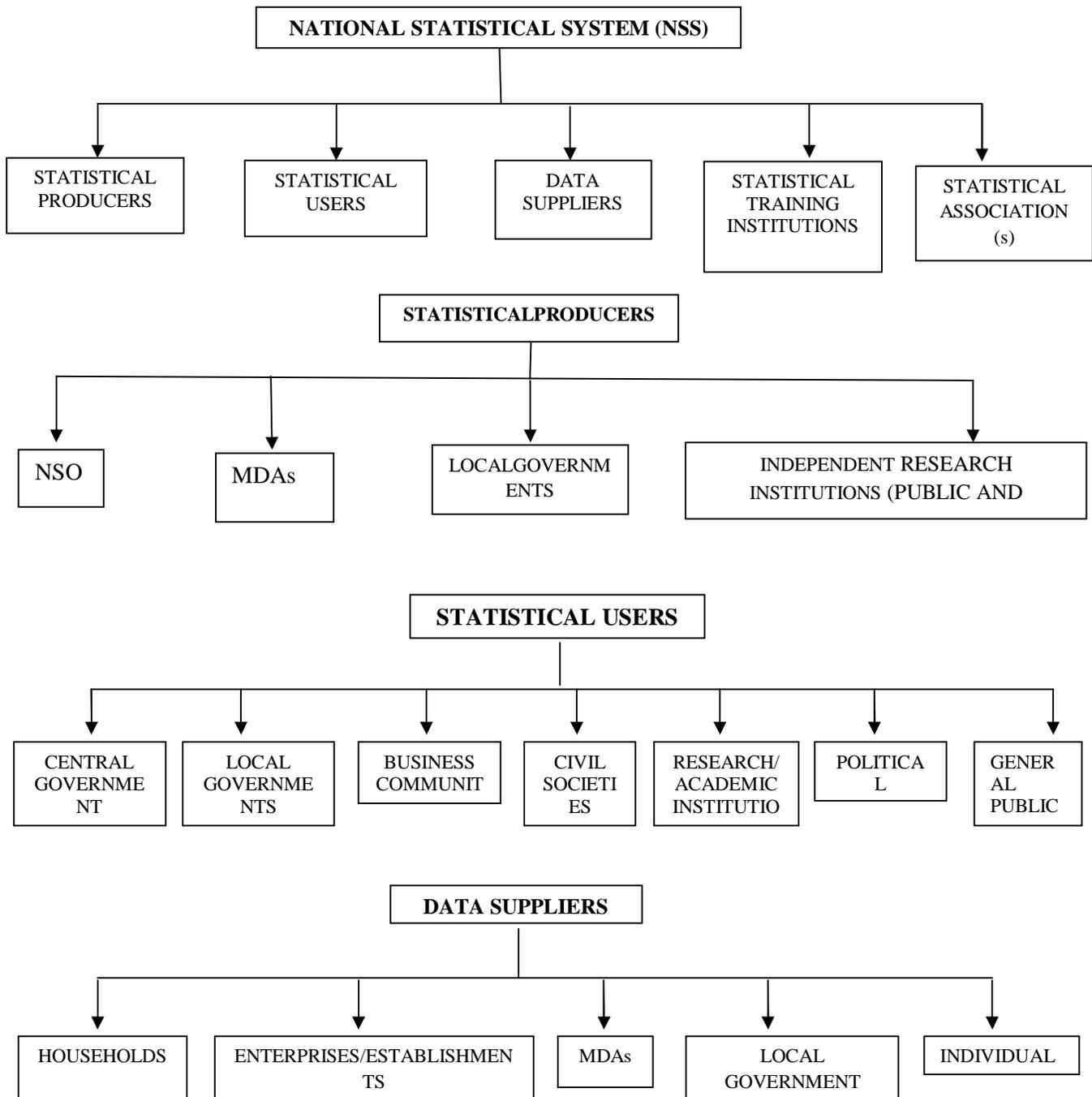
The development or establishment of a National Statistical System should not be taken as a program to be handled by one institution in a country. It should be nationwide enduring activity involving both the government and non-government institutions.

Before embarking on this endeavor, there should be a consensus on definitions of a national statistical system among its stakeholders. After agreeing on this there should be a second agreement on how the system has to be managed and all its associated activities. Clear obligations and responsibilities of each stakeholder of the system have to be stipulated and known to everyone. The working relationships among the stakeholders have to be clearly stated as well.

The following schema is recommended for countries working towards the development of such a system.

Schema of the National Statistical System

The National Statistical System (NSS) is comprised mainly of five components (stakeholders) as presented below;



The establishment/formation of a National Statistical Council/Board

The National Statistical Council (NSC) should be a supreme body in all statistical aspects in a country. It should coordinate and regulated the production, use, training, and oversee the professional associations.

The Council should consist of a Chairperson or any other title, like National Statistician. The person has to be of high integrity in the areas of statistics. He should be both knowledgeable and possess a vast experience and expertise in all statistical areas. There shall be at least five and at most ten other members of the Council, who are appointed from respective statistical stakeholders. The appointing authorities may vary from country to country, depending on administrative and political set ups.

There should be sections within the National Statistical Council that deal with different issues of the system. These are;

- Producers' section
- User' section
- Training section
- Suppliers' Section
- Professional bodies (associations)

Producers Section

This should consist of at least five and at most ten permanent officials dealing with technical matters regarding the production of statistics in the country. The section should be responsible in setting/developing and/or adopting/adapting of definitions, concepts, standards, and methodologies, which have to be employed by all statistical producers in the country. The section should be leading in advising the Council/Board on the adherence of rules/regulations by all producers in the country at all levels.

Given that there are a lot of statistics that are produced in the country. The section shall advice the Council on who among the producers should produce what kind of statistics at Micro, Messo, and Macro levels in order to avoid duplication and conflict of interests in these aspects. There shall be established ways on the collaborations among producers in respect of expertise and other resources.

Users Section

The composition of the users section should consist of about five officials who shall be advising different users on the available statistics and how to use them in their day to day activities. The composition of this contingent has to be of highly experience and expertise in both the production of various statistics in and outside the country as well as being knowledgeable on how these statistics are produced. They should understand usefulness as well as limits of produced statistics. Apart from advising users on the use of statistics, the section is also to receive demands for new statistics on emerging issues form current and prospective users.

Training Section

The section shall be responsible statistical training needs to both producers and users of statistics in a country. It should be manned by five officials. This shall be looking at users' needs both current and future, train them on how best to use the available statistics on their day to day activities. For the producers, the section shall advise statistical training institutions on the kind of curricula to be used. The section shall collaborate with statistical training institutions in undertaking research in improving standards on both production and uses of statistics.

Professional bodies (associations)

These are associations that are formed in various areas of statistics to foster their interest in respective areas. Among the functions of these bodies should be to safeguard professional ethics and offer advice to the Council on the same from time to time.

Data Suppliers' Section

This section shall have three officials. They should be people who are statistically knowledgeable but inclined to public relations. They shall liaise with various data suppliers in the country and make sure they that they motivate and persuade them to supply required data whenever they are requested. On top of that they shall inform them of the importance and use of the data they supply after they are processed, analyzed and used in making various plans and taking decisions. Issues of the rights of data suppliers like confidentiality for the supplied information shall be communicated to suppliers by this section.

Establishment of a statistical cadre in the country

In order to make the smooth running of the NSS, a country has to establish statistical cadres that shall ensure the production of official statistics in the country are undertaken by people of a required training in this area. These people should have the same recognition and progression in the cadre irrespective of where they work in the government. One of the issues to be worked on shall be to develop means of recognizing such statisticians in a country. One of the options shall be to collaborate with professional statistical associations.

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