

Operating a Professional Statistical Service under Adverse Conditions

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1. Introduction

National governments take upon themselves the responsibility of providing all means which contribute to the success of the functions of their statistical systems, in recognition of the importance of carrying out these traditional functions in an objective, effective and scientific way. Normally, countries take special measures through laws and other means, to enable the statistical system to carry out its functions of collecting information from the right sources, provide the necessary data needed for planning and measuring development, protect the confidentiality of the data collected about individuals, groups or organizations, and restrict the use of such data to statistical purposes only.¹ But official statistics have often been used by totalitarian regimes or by belligerent occupiers as a tool for maintaining their grip on power, and preserving their authority and control of “their subjects”. Often, as in the case of the Israeli military occupation of West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1967, the regime tended to collect and disseminate “Official Statistics” in fields which facilitated the maintenance of power, the avoidance of international obligations, or the perception of progress in national socioeconomic realities of the indigenous population.

Palestine, as a country in the making, is a typical case for adverse conditions², one example that requires out of box solutions is to overpass the challenge caused from lack of control on the borders, which does not allow to register the population mobility across the borders between Palestine and Israel. This creates tremendous difficulties to estimate migration, tourism activities and many other statistical outcomes.

A statistical service in adverse conditions does not have the option of assuming a typical path in statistical production. It has to tailor the scope and content of its program to realities on the ground, otherwise it becomes irrelevant. For Example, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) tailored its core programme during the last Intifada (uprising)³ to promote human survival, the alleviation of suffering, and an exposition of the needs of vulnerable groups. Thus, an involved and proactive role includes the responsibility of reporting about the humanitarian needs of vulnerable groups such as children and women, monitoring the impact of socioeconomic policies and practices of both belligerent occupiers and indigenous

¹ Abu Libdeh, 2000.

² Adverse conditions are usually caused, among other reasons, in conflict and post conflict situations, they might include poor frame coverage, poor frame content, difficult survey content, sensitive survey content, poor potential response rates, inadequate resources, etc.

³ Intifada is an Arabic word for shaking off, though it is generally translated into English as rebellion. The word "intifada" crystallized in its current Arabic meaning during the first Palestinian uprising in the late 1980s and early '90s. It is seen by many Arabs as a valid term for popular resistance to oppression. The Palestinians were largely unarmed, so the enduring picture of the intifada is one of young men and boys throwing stones and rocks at Israeli troops. The Second Intifada, also known as the al-Aqsa refers to the second Palestinian uprising which began in September 2000.

players, and advocating on the basis of quantitative assessments of the basic needs of a population in conflict for international protection of basic rights, notwithstanding the role of maintaining international visibility of the national struggle.

In the case of Palestine for example, statistical activities during the years of Israeli occupation between 1967 and 1994 were confined mainly to measuring deficiencies in the health care system, and sporadic review of Palestinian living conditions. Repeated efforts to establish a more responsive statistical function were faced with tough measures from the Israeli military occupation forces. The newly established statistical system in Palestine faced an outstanding adverse conditions. In late 2000, the Palestinian Intifada erupted, and the country was exposed to a very strict political, economic and military measures by Israel, and in June 2007, the situation was severely deteriorated when the country was politically and geographically divided between the Palestinian factions⁴.

From statistical point of view, these adverse conditions lead to significant changes at different fronts. On user demand, new user demands arise, and a very well known traditional user demands were weakened and even disappeared. List of priorities for many users and data providers changed. Deterioration in certain fields on the ground accelerated, and users required quick, reliable and detailed statistics.

In adverse conditions, users tend keep their high expectations from the National Statistics Office (NSO). Adverse conditions might also have administrative and financial consequences. In the Palestinian experience for example, most of workforce employed in the production of statistics were unable to reach regularly to their place of work due to strict closure imposed on Palestinian cities and localities during the Intifada. Many obstacles faced the fieldwork team during data collection due to lack of security, and financial resources for traditional activities were not secured any more. The annexation wall⁵ divided the West Bank into two new different zones that has to be taken into consideration in sampling and domain of study for dissemination purposes. The political division in June 2007 created a new sophisticated situation in Gaza and changed all the priorities, and the perception of people regarding all data collection activities⁶.

⁴ On 15 June 2007 Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) effectively took control of Gaza. Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas then moved to dissolve the Hamas-led government and established an “emergency” government in the West Bank. This effectively created two Palestinian political entities, one in Gaza led by Hamas and one in the West Bank led by Fatah and the PLO. Sanctions against the Hamas-led government in Gaza by Israel, the European Union (EU) and the United States (USA) further reduced an already low standard of living.

⁵ The wall is series of walls, electronic fences, roads and barbed wire barriers Israel is constructing in the West Bank. According to UN information service, the physical wall complex is integrated into a larger system of barriers, including natural topographical features, the road network, fixed checkpoints, ‘flying’ checkpoints, dirt mounds, cement blocks and gates on secondary roads. The Wall annexed some of the most fertile lands in the West Bank. Israeli settlements are expanding on lands isolated behind the Wall. The Wall route were made in individual villages annexing some 47% of the West Bank. It will leave Palestinians in ghettos or semi-ghettos, linked together with tunnels and bridges under Occupation control. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued an Advisory Opinion stating unequivocally that the construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) was unlawful

⁶ Fieldworkers reported some changes in the level of cooperation by the certain categories of respondents in Gaza Strip after June 2007; some respondents became more skeptical regarding the objectives of data collection.

The major challenge in such situation caused by internal and external factors is that the NSO has to seek all options to cope with new situation and maintain relevancy, credibility, integrity of the statistical system, and keeping professional ethics of producing official statistics.

This paper focuses on the lessons learned from the Palestinian experience in operating a statistical service under political instability and division, ignorance of stakeholders, competing priorities, and changing enabling environment. We focus on the administrative, programming, organizational and professional dimensions. We also discuss the major challenges and lessons learned from experience in invoking stakeholders' interest, organizing fieldwork activities, setting up the organizational structure, and utilization of international community to tailor the statistical production to socioeconomic planning and monitoring.

2. Challenges of Adverse Conditions

Running a statistical service in adverse condition is not an easy task, chief statistician face many difficulties and challenges that might require certain compromises and fieldworkers might be faced by irregular questions by the public. The challenges are faced at all stages of production cycle of official statistics. We will try to summarize some of these challenges in the coming subsections.

2-1 User demand and expectations

During adverse conditions, two majors changes take place on user demand as statistics become more relevant to intervening bodies in social and economic development. In the content, politicians start seeking statistics that supports their claims and position, including new statistics that are not usually collected and disseminated by NSO. Priorities of development intervening bodies and donor community change from traditional development to emergency humanitarian intervention, with new statistical demands as well. Changing from development to emergency intervention includes changing statistics demand from long and medium term indicators to short term statistical data.

In Palestine for example, the Intifada erected late 2000 imposed additional tasks to the typical load of the statistical function due to the prevailing political and security conditions. These included the setting up of special databases, which are not typically part of internationally agreed practices, or recommendations. Consequently, PCBS started to collect data on a regular basis in areas such as; household experiences of coping with the current crises, management of household consumption, quality and sufficiency of food intakes, primary health-care availability, human rights violations of occupying forces, efficacy of international aide, and vulnerability statistics. Users started to seek different types of ad hoc statistics such as number of martyrs, number of injuries, distribution of security checkpoints, number of curfews, etc. After June 2007, the demand on annual macroeconomic statistics declined, while the short term statistics such as quarterly national accounts increased. In addition, another changed in the users demands from aggregated output and impact indicators to detailed input indicators statistics. This change is linked to the tendency of users to utilize statistics in the political debate related to what each party did rather than the impact of public policies. For example demand on number of closing economic enterprises, political detention and losses of individual sectors in Gaza increased on the expense of typical output indicators such as GDP and criminal events.

2-2 Relevance of traditional tools

Traditional methods and tools are normally designed to run a statistical service in normal conditions. One challenge, which faces statisticians, is the relevance of traditional tools and their applicability to adverse conditions. This applies to sampling techniques, data collection schemes, organizational procedures and dissemination approach. In particular, sampling frames might not be adequate or might not even exist, in this case statisticians and methodologists tend to bring out of box solutions such as master samples. In addition new statistical needs require new sampling frames to be constructed. For example, in Palestine, the household coping strategies and the impact of Israeli measures surveys required new scheme of area sampling to make sure rational representation of clashing zones. In-out wall zones were introduced as a new sampling domain; more stratification was created to fulfill the dissemination and disaggregation requirements. Some sampling frames were not fixed such as the set of mobile or flying checkpoints, some other frames are not predictable such as curfew days, strike days, raiding days and areas. Telephone interviews became less relevant as people become more skeptical during adverse conditions. Recruitment procedures of temporary fieldworkers and data entry operators become also less relevant, for example during closure days a number of communities become military zones where people from outside the community can not commute, which requires a catchments zone strategy to minimize crossing communities by fieldworkers and data entry operators. Many other different challenges for the traditional tools appear during adverse conditions.

2-3 Relevance of Internationally Accepted Concepts, Standards and Practices

At the technical level new challenges has to be faced as well. For example, the definition of unemployment, and in particular seeking job condition become irrelevant during curfew, closure and raid periods and/or zones. In addition, consumer price index become less relevant to measure inflation for the areas of sanctions such as Gaza since June 2007.⁷ During the Intifada and the closure schemes imposed by Israeli occupation shifted the concentration of market activities to the creation of new markets in the rural; areas instead of depending on the central markets in the major cities. This situation made the CPI less sensitive to the changes as new markets in rural areas are not covered by the sample of the CPI. The compilation of national accounts was also challenged during the period in which the government was unable to pay salaries for public sector employees. The challenge come from the basis of compiling the accounts namely accrual versus cash. Of course, the international recommendations support accrual basis, but in adverse conditions, this might not be relevant. In the developed world a number of issues related to the compilation of national account on accrual basis has been discussed. In the UK for example, discussions took place about the effects on the UK national accounts of the payments to the government for allowing access to the electromagnetic spectrum by mobile phone companies. These have often been reported in the media as the auction of licenses, although this is a simplification of the reality for public consumption. The payments will have no direct effect on GDP within the UK accounts the government's receipts from the auction will be treated as rent. This is because the office for National Statistics (ONS) considers that the electromagnetic spectrum should be classified in a category known as "tangible non-produced assets". International guidance states that receipts from allowing use of such assets should be recorded as rents. The classification of the receipts is still under international discussion, although the asset classification is universally.

⁷ Since June 2007, Gaza Strip was exposed to strict siege by Israel and international community, where the changes in the prices do not necessarily reflect demand supply relationship, but also monopolies, smuggling and accessibility to resources.

This issue has also been discussed from fiscal policy point of view. The Australian director⁸ of fiscal framework examined the implications of the government's adoption of accrual budgeting for assessing the impact of fiscal policy on the economy. He concluded that attention should be made to determining which accrual measures are most relevant to government it is important to consider the economic focus that is unique to government. Accrual measures provides a good indication of both the economic impact and the sustainability of fiscal policy. The standard accrual measures operating balance, change in net assets and net assets can assist in assessing the sustainability of fiscal policy. In addition, the national accounts net lending measure is particularly suited to assessing economic impact. The adoption of accrual budgeting will introduce a suite of new fiscal measures and we need to understand the features of these measures and to take particular care to ensure the different features of government compared to business are taken into account when interpreting the results.

OECD electronic discussion group (EDG) devoted to discussions on the measurement of non-life insurance services, with a special focus on the treatment of catastrophic losses. The output of insurance services as calculated using the SNA 93 algorithm depends on the balance of premiums to claims (on an accrual basis) and can therefore appear extremely volatile (even negative) following major catastrophes. The massive claims generated by the 11 September attack, is a recent example. It had impacts on GDP and balance of payments (reinsurance)⁹. But in Palestine, using accrual basis is a controversial issue particularly when considering domestic circumstances. In fact the compilation of accrual basis does not lead to telling the actual situation of economic performance as the government is dependant in paying the salaries on the donor share which is not certain to be paid at a certain point in time. In addition using cash basis will also lead to tell different story about the economic performance as the employees are working and producing but not getting salaries regularly. Henceforth, while the discussion in the well developed countries are of the form on how to better present the statistics, the situation in the countries under adverse conditions is totally different and textbook approach seems to be less relevant.

An other challenge facing the compilation of national accounts' short term indicators, foreign trade, migration and accommodations statistics is the fact that there is no control on the Palestinian borders with Israel. Once the tourist arrives Israel can reach the Palestinian territory without crossing any boarder checkpoints, which undermines the data sources for registering population mobility. Another example is the estimation of growth rate in construction sector for the sake of compiling the quarterly national accounts, where two indicators are usually used; the imported quantities of cement or the change in the number of building licenses. Both indicators are irrelevant in Palestine; because substantial proportion of people build without license particularly in the refugee camps, and active smuggling of cement to the Israeli market.

2-4 Dealing with unstable conditions

Political instability has serious influence on any course of action in the taking. For example, this factor has influenced the two censuses conducted in Palestine in 1997 and 2007, where census planning has to take into consideration a unique political map of the country. During the implementation of the first population census, Israel had the upper hand as an occupying

⁸ Michael Clark-Lewis, 1997

⁹ OECD, 2008. National Accounts-Electronic Discussion Groups (EDGs)

power over much of the country. This meant Israeli control over the movement of persons within the country as well as overall security responsibility. At any time, Israel could disturb life in these areas for security reasons, including imposing curfews, preventing movement of persons, confiscating material from the public, raid homes and conduct searches. In fact, many of the census teams in these areas were stopped for questioning, and census questionnaires were confiscated for short periods ranging from hours to days. Using its powers, Israel went as far as outlawing the census¹⁰ in some parts of the country, especially in Jerusalem. The remaining parts of the country were at the time under full authority of the Palestinian government, where census teams were able to work with full freedom. Internally, however, a different set of challenges had to be overcome. These challenges are concerned mainly with the planned coverage of the census. While census was planned to cover the *de facto* population of OPT with some exceptions, political parties in the country expected the census to cover all Palestinians including refugees living abroad in refugee camps.

All these adverse conditions applied to the second census with additional internal political division between West Bank and Gaza. Therefore PCBS had to deal with the external problems caused by the Israeli occupation and the internal problems caused by the Palestinian political and military factions ruled Gaza. These political conditions reflect themselves on the statistical activities in the form of technical and organizational problems. For example in the Palestinian case, the political division led to population division with different perceptions regarding data collection activities in general, and PCBS in particular. In addition geographic division and lack of geographic accessibility to Gaza due to the sanctions and political instability assumed remote management of data collection activities. The sanctions on Gaza assumed additional difficulties; where a number of items disappeared from the market such as paper, wax pencils, fuel, spare parts for the cars, etc which challenged the census team to complete the work according to time schedule

2-5 Maintaining integrity and professional independence

The national statistical function in a war-torn or occupied country has to be sensitive to potential misuses of its output. Political parties involved in an internal conflict as well as occupying powers may misuse the statistics to promote their own agendas or causes. In these situations, a delicate balance has to be found between working for a national government whose legitimacy is in question, for professional independence of the statistical system, and for maintaining national identity in the case of military occupation. The statistical function should strive to maintain confidence in its output during crises. It will have to be innovative in defining stakeholders, meeting users' expectations with sometimes conflicting agendas, and synthesizing users' needs to avoid political bias while maintaining ties with governing bodies.

National Statistical Systems (NSS) in nations emerging from adverse conditions look up to the global family for recognition, political support, sustainable capacity-building, protection, access to the international experience and expertise, coordination and use of own outputs, and moral responsibility for preserving an enabling environment for integrating the NSS into the global family. Efforts should be made and resources should be committed, to encourage and support statistics and the NSS to be among the leaders of change, and to assume a progressive

¹⁰ On the eve of census day, the Israeli Parliament has passed a law which is called "census law", indicating that census taking in Jerusalem is unlawful exercise, asking the Palestinian public not to cooperate with census teams, and indicating that persons cooperating with census teams will be fined or jailed, and will lose their residency rights in Jerusalem. This law was passed in a record time in the history of Israel, where the draft law and three readings of the law were passed in one session.

and groundbreaking role in situations of conflict and post-conflict. The framework of this role, may require the profession to move from a mere static recording of measurements, to active monitoring. Key steps in turning a NSS into a progressive system may include sets of measure to be taken in specific areas, including measures of inclusiveness of inputs and diversity of statistical coverage, to move beyond the classical contents of national programming. This may include extension of coverage to "hot" areas, and linking development indicators to those of human rights and governance. This includes also measures of achieving true independence from government influence in the substance of programs and functions. The measures include also to move the statistical function from being mainly driven by the collective needs of governments, to collective rights of various stakeholders to relevant information, and measures for projecting the statistical function as a reflection of national aspirations, and as a vital necessity for maintaining true nationhood.

2-6 Maintaining cooperation from respondents

Generally speaking, respondents are more cooperative in the less developed countries, but they usually provide less precise information. Furthermore, people become more skeptical during adverse conditions particularly in the case where statistics are misused. In addition, people have long and strong memory when it comes to misuse of statistical activities. For example, the Palestinian people are still keeping in mind the misuse of the first census conducted by Israeli occupation in 1967, where the individual data was provided to the military administration, and according to the place of counting on the census reference night, people were given the right where to reside in the country.¹¹ In adverse conditions people become more conservative in giving personal opinions and perceptions and in providing more details on their livelihood. In this case, the statistical office is challenged to keep up acceptable levels of response rates, and to get the best possible accurate information. Of course during civil wars and internal national and political conflict, situation become more difficult in comparison with foreign occupation where the national aspirations could not be employed in the second case.

2-7 Working under pressure

NSO has to cope with the new needs under different levels of pressure. In addition to financial difficulties and resources available, time limits to produce needed statistics arise as an important factor. Users need statistics immediately; they believe that NSO has statistics about every thing. The second level is related to professional ethics, including accuracy and making statistics a public good. On this particular issue, NSO faces a situation where too many institutions start producing numbers (in most of the cases, these numbers lack documented methodology). These numbers vary by occasion, source, and way of calculating and contradict each other¹². If the NSO gets into this stock of numbers, it will decrease its professional value by comparing incomparable statistics and methodology, and if the NSO does not get into this stock, it will loose relevancy. It should be mentioned also that user needs are changing very fast during political and security crisis. In fact a significant proportion of users change their needs, and the NSO has to comply with these changes.

¹¹ In 1967 census, people who were counted in Jerusalem were given blue ID, and those were counted in the rest of Palestinian territory were given orange ID and accordingly were not allowed to get into Jerusalem.

¹² For example, PCBS estimated the losses in the Palestinian GDP after one year of Intifada to 1.5 billion US\$, while ministry of finance estimated the same indicator by 4.5 against 6.0 billion by ministry of planning. Unemployment rate varied from 23% to 70% by source of data.

Adverse conditions impose additional pressure; where chief statistician has to take many decisions under uncertainty. In particular, the decision to continue or terminate certain plans for conducting some statistical activities, particularly those sensitive to the situation on the ground. On one hand chief statistician is hardly able to mobilize resources for statistical activities from the government and donors, mandated to wisely use these resources, and challenged not to break the time series and to provide accurate statistical information. But adverse conditions might affect the quality of the outcomes and in some cases the possibility to conduct them. For example, Palestine faced this situation in conducting the 2007 census, where the country was politically and geographically divided and the NSO couldn't predict the behavior of the Israeli occupation who had the upper hand on Jerusalem and the areas behind the separation wall. Sudan is another example where the census activities were terminated by the authorities in the southern part of the country at the last moment. Under such situation chief statistician has to make risk analysis, particularly when the funding of such activities is not in hand and donors are skeptical to support activities under risk¹³.

3. Lessons learned

Political protection and support from the Global Statistical System for preserving at least a minimal statistical capacity at the national level, may come directly through actions of material or professional support, as well as through solidarity and association with existing capacities through networking, communication, and moral support. Our own experiences of setting up and maintaining such a minimal statistical capacity in Palestine during the last two decades suggest that the proactive role of the international community is fundamental in maintaining visibility of national efforts for socioeconomic and political survival. The collective obligations of the international community towards conflict resolution and protection of basic rights of populations in conflict or under occupation cover a broad set of dimensions, which affect the well-being of these populations. This represents a good basis for the extension of this collective responsibility to statistics, being a primary tool for measuring the extent of well-being. Nations under occupation or conflict have every right to preserve numerical reflections of themselves, as well as to maintain monitoring capacities of the socioeconomic and political impact of prevailing conditions on the survival and well-being of their populations. In fulfillment of this basic right, the international statistical community should take upon itself the responsibility of providing international protection for national efforts to measure, report, and monitor the different facets of survival and well being, as well as, commitment to use the nationally produced statistics for monitoring observance of social and economic rights, and impact of various policies on vulnerable groups.

The Global Statistical System (GSS) may influence the process of setting up national capacities in data collection, tabulation, and dissemination of a core set of statistics, which may represent an effective framework for monitoring the status and change of well being in such nations.

It is quite clear that political and security crisis put the NSO, and the NSS at large, in a very difficult situation with minimum options to survive and maintain professional ethics. This

¹³ A risk analysis in the case of Palestine identified three major potential difficulties to face the 2007 census; problems (regular difficulties that could face any country), challenges (Israeli-made difficulties related to occupation including separation wall, closures, curfews, and counting in Jerusalem) and risks (Palestinian-made difficulties such as political division , internal conflict and their consequences).

pressure should be met with a collection of procedures and modifications in the structure of the NSO to absorb it.

Changes in the structure and approach of the NSO to meet new statistical demand should be fast enough to absorb and needs avoid irrelevancy of the NSO in terms of updated statistics on hot issues.

At programming level, it is wise make strategic decisions concerning the existence and content of the statistical programme. Maintain the core traditional statistical programme without omissions, because at the end of the day, the NSO is obliged to produce and disseminate its traditional programme. Dropping any component of this programme is not defensible even during the crisis. When crisis is over, users usually get back to their normal data requests, including backward data. It is vital to introduce new activities to meet the new needs. In the Palestinian case, a monitoring system was an effective tool to meet the new needs. This system included monthly establishment survey to monitor changes in the core economic indicators, and quarterly household survey to monitor poverty and socioeconomic deterioration at the household level.

Utilization of running programme to collect additional data assist in managing the process. It would be wise to keep core household survey and core establishment survey, to serve as carriers to other modules in the areas of social and economic concerns.

Administratively, certain measures could be made to keep the institution operating even during the most difficult situation. This step is vital to keep relevancy of the NSO. Technology could be employed to make effective communication horizontally and vertically within the institution, and to keep in touch with main clients at the regional and international dimensions. Decentralized data collection and processing (coding, data entry, and editing) system is more capable to absorb negative effects resulted from political and security measures than centralized system. It was learned from the Palestinian experience during the strict siege and closure imposed by Israel on mobility of goods and passengers between districts and within each single district, that transferring printed questionnaires to the central office is a major cause of delaying the production of official statistics.

To manage the process of production in time, choose core staff to take care of producing “quick” estimates on the hot issues. Traditional statistical programmes are usually biased to their traditional way of working, and might not be able to meet the accelerating deadline during the crisis. Special crosscutting unit “monitoring unit” could serve, as is a pragmatic solution to take care of the new needs in new approach of collection and dissemination of statistics.

Utilize available databases to produce estimates on different social and economic issues based on certain models and/or assumption on the structural changes took place on the ground. Developing the models could be supported by limited data collection in the field.

As far as professional ethics are concerned, do not make compromises at quality of production. But invest in creating an effective communication system with users, including dissemination and public relations. This is badly needed to explain capabilities of the NSO of undertaking the job of meeting new statistical needs, and to convince other intervening bodies, when the central authority and power of law are weakened, that accumulation on available resources is faster, cost effective and reliable. User-producer dialogue in the form

of workshops could be employed as an essential tool of communication with users, taking into consideration that users should get feedback on their suggestions and input. It is also important to introduce new dissemination tools. Fast, short term, and direct publications (press releases, fact sheets, etc) are more relevant than annual account of statistical situation in the field. Timeliness is crucial in providing users with statistical update. Annual publications do not serve as a good tool in changeable situation.

Finally, the formal adoption of the ten Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, 10FP, represented an important milestone in the process of empowering official statistics, and a turning point in the perception of the role of official statistics in the ultimate service of an informed citizenry. The proactive role assumed by official statistics since then has led to evolving the statistical function from a mere government-owned function, concerned mainly with satisfying the needs of governments, to a tool for measuring government performance and impact of policies on development, as well as the use of resources in a framework for the empowerment of citizens. The proactive role has contributed to strengthening its “democratic” function, and given an impetus to having statistics considered as a very important state function. Systematic data collection and dissemination of relevant indicators of performance will eventually determine the degree of involvement of donor countries, regional commissions, and international agencies in official development assistance. This may leave developing countries no choice but to pay more attention to the role of official statistics in these countries, and to the investments required to maintain a statistical function, capable of a minimum data flow, for monitoring impact of various interventions and progress in achieving goals of various global summits. The challenge of maintaining a statistical function with minimum relevance is much greater, however, in situations of internal conflicts, wars, and military occupations, and in the immediate aftermath of these situations. While statistical development in normal situations is influenced mainly by the dynamics of national development planning and international striving for various goals, statistical development in situations of conflict or post-conflict is influenced mainly by strivings for national survival and preservation, empowerment and nationhood, and for qualification for membership in the international community of nations, including the meeting of various obligations to report on the status of the emerging nation relative to various international goals and declarations.

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