

UNITED NATIONS

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR LATIN AMERICA
AND THE CARIBBEAN - ECLAC**



Distr.
LIMITED

LC/L.2319(CEA.2005/9)
26 May 2005

ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

Third meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas
of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Santiago, Chile, 1-3 June 2005

**FOLLOW-UP TO THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS:
OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR
NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEMS ***

* This document was prepared by the secretariat on the basis of a report conducted by José L. Cervera, consultant with the Statistics and Economic Projections Division of ECLAC, and the answers to a questionnaire circulated to the national institutes of statistics in the region.

CONTENTS

	<i>Paragraph</i>	<i>Page</i>
A. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES	1-5	1
B. FOLLOW-UP TO THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN	6-9	2
C. CHALLENGES FOR NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEMS.....	10-24	3
D. OPPORTUNITIES FOR STATISTICAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGION	25-34	7
E. GUIDELINES FOR BUILDING ON EXISTING OPPORTUNITIES.....	35-51	9
F. DISSEMINATION OF STATISTICAL INFORMATION AND USER RELATIONS.....	52-54	12

A. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

1. The Millennium Declaration, which was adopted by 189 States members of the United Nations in 2000, established the Millennium Development Goals for the advancement of human development. The eight Goals are structured with 18 targets. The dates of reference established for achieving these were 1990, as the base year, and 2015, as the target year. A list of 48 indicators were prepared in reference to the Goals and targets, to serve as a means of conducting a quantitative assessment of the position of States members committed to the Millennium Declaration and of following up their progress.
2. Governments and international institutions have recognized that follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals represents an additional challenge for their national statistical systems. This recognition has been reflected in the declarations of a number of institutional forums (first Roundtable on Better Measuring, Monitoring, and Managing for Development Results, Washington, D.C., 2002; second Roundtable, Marrakech, 2004; Development Assistance Committee, 2003), which have pointed up the importance of strengthening statistical systems. Global efforts to monitor the Millennium Development Goals have also afforded priority to improving the global statistical system (meaning national statistical systems plus the statistical systems of the international organizations), in order to increase its effectiveness, by means of the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics (MAPS), adopted by the Statistical Commission of the United Nations.¹ The Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas (SCA) underlined the challenges and opportunities involved in following up the Millennium Development Goals and asked at its fourth meeting, held in Dallas, United States from 30 November to 1 December 2004, that this subject should be examined carefully at the third meeting of the Conference.
3. In the light of the these considerations, the purpose of this document is to report on the processes employed by the countries of the region to follow up the Millennium Development Goals, and to present to SCA a number of suggestions as to how this follow-up might be improved. These suggestions should also fuel a reflection on the strategic working guidelines of the Conference. The first part of the report will look at the main challenges facing national statistical systems in the region in monitoring the respective indicators. It will also consider the opportunity that the Goals have created to improve and harmonize methodologies of collection, documentation and dissemination of the data available in the region and to mobilize resources for strengthening national and regional statistical systems.
4. The first stage of preparing the report consisted of reviewing documentation on the status of the Goals and their measurement in every country in which this information was available. Relevant documents from international agencies and conferences were also examined (United Nations Development Programme, Statistical Conference of the Americas, United Nations Statistical Commission, Inter-agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals Indicators, declaration of the heads of the multilateral development banks at Monterrey, Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics, Partnership in Statistics for development in the 21st Century (PARIS21), among others), as well as numerous web pages of national statistical institutes. The second stage was to

¹ World Bank/International Monetary Fund, *Global Monitoring Report 2004. Policies and Actions for Achieving the MDGs and Related Outcomes* (DC2004-0006), Washington, D.C., April 2004.

circulate, at the request of the Executive Committee of SCA, a questionnaire to the national statistical institutes. This was answered by most of the countries of the region.

5. Based on the countries' responses to the questionnaire, synoptic tables were prepared as the basis for describing the current situation and preparing recommendations for SCA. These tables are available on the Conference web page.² A fuller version, containing a detailed analysis of the questionnaires, is to be prepared for the third quarter of 2005.

B. FOLLOW-UP TO THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

6. The countries of the region have been found to differ considerably in their capacity to follow up the Millennium Development Goals. Within each country, follow-up capacities also vary from one Goal to another. The national, subregional and regional reports prepared with the leadership and support of UNDP are a valuable instrument for this task.³ Many countries have also created official development policies and programmes such as national poverty reduction strategies, which call for quantitative information to establish base lines and monitor trends. Other programmes, such as the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) debt reduction initiative, require the compilation of many national-level statistical indicators.⁴ A number of countries have set national goals which require the rollout of specific statistical operations (Antigua and Barbuda conducted a survey on the prevalence of drug use with the assistance of the Organization of American States in 1991). Lastly, countries that benefit from cooperation programmes usually have to provide donors with ad hoc statistical information.
7. Some national reports on follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals find that the respective countries have a high capacity to progress towards particular Goals. Overall, however, the regional capacity to follow up the whole array of Goals and criteria is weak. It is important to note that, in general, this weakness refers more to statistical analysis and the use of existing data in policy and programme planning than to the production or quality of data, although the frequency of compilation and population also show some limitations. It is therefore a weakness that calls for both producers and users of statistics to work together to implement mechanisms of continuous follow-up.
8. The annual plans of national statistical institutes often include statistical operations that serve to obtain indicators relating to the Millennium Development Goals, albeit in partial form and not every year.⁵ Given the need for a longer-term perspective in statistical production, multiyear plans should be prepared, encompassing all the activities of both national statistical institutes and other agencies that generate statistics. According to the survey responses received, however, very few of

² See <http://www.cepal.org/deype/ceacepal/index.htm>.

³ Some countries in the region, including Bolivia and Brazil, are now conducting their second national report. Others, such as Colombia, have prepared reports by departments, and the CARICOM countries have undertaken a joint analysis. Almost all the national statistical institutes have been involved in preparing the reports.

⁴ An example is Bolivia, where resources freed up by the HIPC initiative are allocated to municipalities as a function of statistical indicators on population, poverty (measured in non-monetary terms) and education.

⁵ The indicators required to make use of population and housing censuses, which are less frequent than other statistical operations, should be able to be updated by combining with the findings of administrative surveys or registers.

the countries in the region have multiyear strategic plans for statistical activities, and only in a handful of cases do those plans take into account measurements needs relating to the Millennium Development Goals.

9. In relation to statistical follow-up of national poverty reduction strategies, the national statistical institutes in the region have seldom been formally involved in preparing such strategies, although in most cases they have had to supply data to the departments responsible for each of the sectoral aspects. This is another challenge for national statistical institutes: producing ad hoc statistical analyses without having been involved in defining the indicators can represent an additional effort when the indicators required by ministerial departments do not coincide with those that national statistical institutes normally issue.

C. CHALLENGES FOR NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEMS

10. Many challenges were identified in analysing the capacity to follow-up the Millennium Development Goals. They can be summarized as follows:
 - (i) Increasing the availability of data;
 - (ii) Mapping and expanding the use of existing data;
 - (iii) Making data more relevant to national policymaking;
 - (iv) Reducing time lag and ensuring medium- and long term continuity;
 - (v) Improving international comparability;
 - (vi) Securing the human and financial resources needed for the follow-up process.

Since these challenges are interrelated, the coordination of the national statistical systems should be viewed as a strategic priority that arises naturally from the exercise of monitoring the Millennium Development Goals at the national level.

11. Indicators on the Millennium Development Goals are obtained mainly from the following sources: population and housing censuses, household surveys, and health and education records.⁶ Another study⁷ found that more than half of the 48 indicators could be derived from household surveys (indeed, 10 of them could not be obtained in any other way). Some, such as those related to Goal 7, are obtained from special systems of measurement. Others, such as those referring to official development assistance, in Goal 8, come from statistics compiled by international agencies. The main technical and financial challenge for national systems of statistics is to increase the availability and quality of data from those sources.
12. Surprisingly, the survey responses indicated that practically none of the countries had undertaken implement statistical operations to produce or improve the most problematic indicators, except in the case of kilocalorie intake (indicator 5).
13. The analysis of comparability between the national and regional or international levels showed that the indicators needed to follow up the Millennium Development Goals had few points in common

⁶ Six case studies conducted in the framework of PARIS21 in 2003 and 2004 (Bolivia, Moldavia, Malawi, Burkina Faso, Cambodia and Yemen) confirmed the predominance of these data sources.

⁷ J. Muñoz and K. Scott, "Household Surveys and the Millennium Development Goals", PARIS21, 2004.

with national poverty reduction strategies: the survey responses showed that the indicators for the Millennium Development Goals for monitoring poverty, education, living conditions and access to information and communications technologies are generally simpler than those required at the national level, while the Millennium Development Goals indicator referring to HIV/AIDS and other diseases, access to essential medicines and sustainable development coincide little with those requested at the national level.

14. National policies naturally require a greater disaggregation of statistical data by geographical area and by population group (breakdowns by sex, area of residence, ethnic minorities, and so on). National statistical systems therefore need to design data collection operations to yield the required data, by increasing the size or the geographical coverage of the sample —as Bolivia, Brazil, El Salvador and Nicaragua indicate in their responses— and this requires greater resources.
15. A paradox thus arises, since the region lacks information on the indicators for the Millennium Development Goals, yet national policies need still more information. Better use of statistics through more comprehensive data analysis and more thorough dissemination could increase the availability of data both for national policies and for international follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals.
16. It is also necessary to bear in mind the time frame of the indicators available for monitoring progress, since the classification of countries used in global reports on the Millennium Development Goals (countries which are “on-track” or “off-track”) refers to changes over time, in particular to forecasts made for 2005, 2010 and 2015. An ideal information framework would provide sufficient, properly spaced data for the period 1990-2005. Analysis of the data available for all the indicators in the countries of the region reveals a substantial time lag between the dates of reference and availability of the indicators from income and expenditure surveys and demographic and health surveys. The lag is smaller for data based on education and health records.
17. Follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals therefore requires medium- and long-term planning of regular production of data from different sources: population censuses, household survey systems, demographic and health surveys and education and health records. The countries must therefore rise to the challenge of ensuring ongoing technical and financial resources.
18. The improvement of international comparability is another of the major challenges identified. The data used in United Nations reports for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals come from specialized international agencies and exhibit the following traits: (i) Aggregated regional figures are based on the availability of data at the national level, and their quality is therefore a function of the quality of national data; (ii) The dates of reference of national data can vary from one country to another, which means that estimates based on modelling hypotheses have to be made between samples; (iii) The adjustments made are meant to bring the results closer to a common methodology; (iv) The variety of definitions and methodologies of data collection makes this task more difficult, especially in relation to estimating the accuracy of the aggregate figures; and (v) Data from records reflect the administrative procedures of each country, and are less harmonized than data from surveys and censuses.
19. Autonomous human and financial resources must be secured for following up the Millennium Development Goals. Surveys of household consumption and living conditions in the region have often been financed by the Programme for the Improvement of Surveys and the Measurement of Living Conditions in Latin America and the Caribbean (MECOVI) with financial assistance from

the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), while population, health and fertility surveys have received partial funding from bilateral agencies and the United Nations system. Population censuses have also been partly funded with external resources in some countries.

20. As well as the insufficiency of autonomous financing, in some countries it is a challenge for national statistical institutes to recruit and retain professionals to carry out the additional tasks involved in following up the Millennium Development Goals. Projects funded by international agencies often recruit consultants on a temporary basis, which does not help to create long-term statistical capacity as the hiring of permanent staff in national statistical institutes would. In some countries, other projects include surveys in similar areas (mainly health, education and the labour market), but do not directly involve national statistical institutes. Since these require highly qualified staff and offer more attractive salary packages, the statistical system is plagued by a sort of cannibalism, which is worsened by the fact that these surveys are not regular nor do they form part of the national statistical programme. In a number of cases, the officers in charge of these surveys do not appear to be aware of the country's needs with regard to indicators for measuring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.
21. The interrelationship of the problems set out above calls for an emphasis on coordination, in the interests of the efficient operation of national statistical systems in general as well as follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals. The following aspects of coordination warrant particular mention: identification of actors and division of responsibilities, leadership among the institutions that produce information, establishment of common technical standards, and best use of existing technical and human resources.
22. The indicators for the Millennium Development Goals come from a variety of sources (see paragraph 11) and are generated by different national institutions. The administrative departments responsible for producing different statistics must therefore be identified in order to undertake activities to follow up the Millennium Development Goals at the national level. Collaboration among such departments could take the form of thematic cooperation agreements⁸ or inter-agency groups with responsibilities clearly allocated for establishing technical standards on data collection and analysis, field work and the verification and dissemination of findings.
23. The multiplicity of actors involved in national statistical systems, particularly in relation to indicators for the Millennium Development Goals, requires institutional leadership. Given their area of expertise, national institutes of statistics are best placed to exercise this technical leadership. National statistical systems must also be structured by a legal framework, which must endow national institutes of statistics with certain powers to establish technical procedures, including at least: (i) the establishment of technical standards, definition, nomenclatures and survey frameworks; (ii) the obligation to consult the institute before altering administrative records that

⁸ For example, the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INDEC) of Argentina has established, together with the Department of the Environment, a new system of indicators of sustainable development, the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC) of Nicaragua is working with the National Health Council on the establishment of indicators of Goals 7 and 8; and the National Statistical Institute of Guatemala collaborates with the Military Geographical Institute for mapping purposes.

could be used for statistical purposes; (iii) the conferral of official status on statistical results; and (iv) the preparation of national plans of statistical activities.⁹

24. In coordinating statistical activities for follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals, national statistical institutes must consider the following matters, in the framework of the national statistical system and in coordination with the other institutions involved:

(i) Technical coordination:

- Establishment of frameworks for the preparation of household surveys, whether conducted by the national statistical institute or by other institutions.
- Establishment, in agreement with the institutions responsible for education records, of definitions of levels of schooling, enrolment and completion of schooling, which are adapted to the real situation in the country and can be used to generate internationally harmonized data.
- Establishment of methods of data collection on maternal health, immunization, HIV/AIDS and other diseases that ensure the statistical representation of the population groups studied.
- Allocation to the national statistical system of responsibility for conducting very specific statistical operations (for example, with regard to adult literacy, nutrition, health status, use of contraceptives, household fuel use, and endowment and use of information technologies).
- Establishment of procedures for documenting findings to be followed by all the agencies in the national statistical system, through the dissemination of standardized metadata.

(ii) Legal coordination:

- Establishment of an adequate institutional framework to represent the bodies that produce information, including (at least) the national authorities in the areas of health, education, employment, environment and housing. Such a framework could serve, among other purposes, to assess the national capacity to follow up the Millennium Development Goals.
- Legal provisions that national statistical institutes can use (following appropriate analysis and consensus) to establish technical standards that are obligatory for other producers of data.
- Legal provisions to confer official status upon data from statistical operations conducted by institutions that are members of the national statistical system. This is particularly important in the case of statistical operations financed entirely by external agents without prior integration into national programmes of statistical activities (there are cases in the region of surveys on gender, health, literacy, and so forth, conducted by government institutions in collaboration with foreign bilateral development agencies in the context of cooperation projects, whose results are not subsequently recognized as official).
- A legal framework to ensure sustainable funding from the national budget (or from donor cooperation, where relevant) for the operation of national statistical systems and for the implementation of programmes of statistical work. In particular, the implementation of population and housing surveys, household survey programmes and the maintenance of administrative health and education records should be included in the funding priorities for follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals.

⁹ In completing the questionnaire, Paraguay emphasized the need to establish a legal framework that would give the Department of Statistics and Censuses a leading role in the national statistical system, which it lacks at present.

(iii) Coordination in resource allocation:

- Development of synergies among the different institutions' financial resources for the implementation of large-scale statistical operations (for example, collaboration with registry offices for the taking of samples, and with schools, health centres and local administration).
- Good use throughout the national statistical system of the technical capacities of the best qualified staff, by having them participate in inter-agency task forces and in training programmes. Many national statistical institutes in the region already lend technical assistance to the other producers, at least sporadically.
- Efficient use of the information and communications technology available within the different agencies in the national statistical system and other administrative departments (including local ones) for data collection, processing and dissemination.
- Coordination of funds from external sources of funding, to avoid costly statistical operations that are not integrated into programmes of national activities.

D. OPPORTUNITIES FOR STATISTICAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGION

25. With regard to opportunities, in many countries follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals has helped to generate discussion of the importance of statistical information in the development process. The opportunities for the production of comparable, good-quality indicators can be grouped in the following categories:

- (i) Promotion of statistical activity;
- (ii) Financial support for statistical systems;
- (iii) Improvement of technical quality of statistical products; and
- (iv) Regional harmonization of statistics.

Follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals represents an opportunity to promote statistical institutions, in particular national statistical institutes, within national administrations. It is also a chance to facilitate contact between producers and users of statistics, and to increase political awareness of the importance of statistical information in the planning of development programmes. The promotion of the role of statistics as a function of universal targets also ties in with the countries' efforts to follow up international summits (World Summit for Children, International Conference on Population and Development, Fourth World Conference on Women, Second World Assembly on Ageing, and the World Summit on the Information Society).

26. From the point of view of subject areas, follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals can help to strengthen systems of statistics in social areas (poverty, education, health and gender matters) and environmental fields, relative to the more traditional approach dominated by economic statistics. This will allow national statistical institutes to bring to the attention of their reporting authorities and their users the need to implement, maintain and improve systems for producing social and environmental information within the national statistical system (basically through household survey operations and the statistical use of quality administrative records).
27. There are a number of initiatives in the region to prepare materials for promoting statistical systems. PARIS21, with the support of the World Bank, IDB and ECLAC, has conducted subregional seminars in Central America, the Andean countries and the Caribbean, bringing

together producers and users of statistics for development. These seminars transmit to policy decision makers the message that “if development cannot be measured, it cannot be managed”. It is essential that governments lend formal support to national statistical systems in the form of budgetary, technical and human resources, and by promoting cooperation between producers and users.

28. The declaration signed by the heads of the multilateral development banks in Monterrey, Mexico in March 2002 explicitly refers to the need to support statistical systems as institutional tools for following up the Millennium Development Goals and national poverty reduction strategies. Within each country, the national statistical institute can also take advantage of the rallying of producers, users and financiers around the issue of follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals (with inter-agency task forces and the preparation of national reports, for example) to mobilize resources to improve the operation of the national statistical system.
29. At the international level, financial support programmes have been created in the form of loans and subsidies, such as the statistical capacity building project (STATCAP) and the Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building (TFSCB). In the region, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and the CARICOM member States have benefited from TFSCB to conduct social surveys. Other forms of financial support are available from UNDP and bilateral development cooperation agencies.
30. A number of private foundations, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which supports the Health Metrics Network, also provide funds for improving follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals.
31. Follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals can also help to improve the quality of statistical output as a result of the activities involved in disseminating methodologies and international recommendations on data production and dissemination, and of increasing contact with other producers and users of statistics. National statistical institutes in the region have reviewed certain methodological difficulties as part of the process of following up the Millennium Development Goals. The specialized agencies are also working to systematize and disseminate methodological documents on the different indicators that can be useful for technical staff in national statistical systems.
32. The closing of the distance between producers and users thanks to the preparation of national poverty reduction strategies or reports on the Millennium Development Goals can encourage national statistical institutes to assess the quality of statistical sources and seek to improve it. An interesting example is the use in different thematic areas of the Data Quality Framework Assessment (DQAF) system, which was instituted by IMF.¹⁰
33. Follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals offers an opportunity to coordinate the dissemination of indicators and metadata for the regional and international harmonization of statistics. A common set of development indicators permits forms of dissemination that are convenient for all the countries, and the efforts of national statistical systems to produce indicators

¹⁰ IMF has posted DQAF for national accounts, consumer and producer price indexes, government finance statistics and monetary and balance of payments statistics at <http://dsbb.imf.org/Applications/web/dqrs/dqrsdqaf/>. The World Bank and UNESCO have been working on the application of DQAF to the assessment and documentation of statistics on monetary poverty and education.

using international methodologies automatically generate a set of statistical data that are more comparable —notwithstanding the difficulties inherent to the process— than data produced for national indicators.

34. Discussion of common technical difficulties, such as the production of the more problematic indicators, and the study of the methodological issues mentioned, can pave the way to cooperation among national statistical institutes and the sharing of best practices. SCA should promote these objectives, since they are inherent to its mission, and should issue recommendations to:
- (i) Plan and coordinate national statistical systems to improve capacity for follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals;
 - (ii) Increase the availability of indicators for the Millennium Development Goals;
 - (iii) Improve access to and increase the use of statistics for monitoring development; and
 - (iv) Improve international follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals based on national statistical systems.

E. GUIDELINES FOR BUILDING ON EXISTING OPPORTUNITIES

35. If the potential of the Millennium Development Goals to propel statistical development is to be realized, it is necessary to prepare multiyear strategic plans that engage all the statistics-generating agencies in each country. Statistical development plans should include at least the following issues:
- (i) Analysis of the present situation of the national statistical institute and the other statistical services;
 - (ii) Mission and vision of the national statistical institute, particularly its role with respect to development;
 - (iii) Strategic objectives for long-term development;
 - (iv) A multiyear plan of activities; and
 - (v) The human, physical and financial resources required.
36. A national statistical development strategy may serve as a tool for raising funds, either from national governments or from external donors. Such a strategy forms part of the requirements for gaining access to financial mechanisms such as STATCAP, while TFSCB can fund its preparation, all of which adds further incentive for the countries of the region to embark on such a planning exercise. SCA could consider examining how useful the material prepared by international task forces, such as PARIS21,¹¹ would be in preparing national statistical development strategies in the Latin American and Caribbean countries.
37. Coordination of the national statistical system is essential for follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals. National statistical institutes do not provide all the statistical sources for this follow-up. In most of the countries, the ministries of education, health and the environment, which play a key role in the upkeep of administrative records, are also involved. Other institutions may also produce information on the Millennium Development Goals.

¹¹ Available at <http://www.paris21.org/pages/designing-nsds/NSDS-documents-knowledge-base/index.asp?tab=KnowledgeBase>.

38. The legal and institutional framework for the planning of statistical activities should enable the national statistical institute to coordinate its activities with the ministries responsible for maintaining administrative records likely to be used for statistics, in particular those mentioned in paragraph 37. Coordination should be based on mutual collaboration, with the national statistical institute contributing its experience in producing, analysing and disseminating statistics, and the respective ministry contributing its knowledge of the use of statistics for decision making and its structure for data collection and processing.
39. The countries of the region might consider the following points of coordination:
- (i) The creation of inter-agency task forces on education and health, involving both the national statistical institute and the ministries or relevant national authorities, to analyse the indicators found to be most problematic (kilocalorie intake, schooling completion rate, school attendance by orphaned children, prevalence of HIV/AIDS and contraceptive use, incidence and treatment of malaria, and so forth).
 - (ii) A study of the consistency of data from household surveys and administrative records, essentially in the areas of education (level of schooling and school attendance) and health status (perinatal check-ups and maternal health, notifiable diseases, child immunization, maternal and infant mortality), and of the possibilities of combining findings.
 - (iii) Training by the national statistical institute for technical staff in the ministries that produce administrative statistics. As well as strengthening data collection and analysis, this would avoid the use of classifications and definitions that differ from those used in the national institute or even the incorrect use of the data it generates. Broader training is also needed in areas that make intensive use of data and data analysis, such as censuses and household surveys (see paragraph 7).
40. The Millennium Development Goals and follow-up to them are an opportunity to promote the function of statistics in the countries of the region. Promotion campaigns should be a strategic priority in this connection. Since promotion campaigns are expensive to produce and the situation is similar in many countries (including the language spoken), economies of scale could be used at the regional level to prepare material. In this regard, the PARIS21 initiative of preparing videos and national and regional seminars can be extended to the national level.
41. Population and housing censuses are enormous operations in terms of human, technical and financial resources, and they require planning over the medium term. In MAPS these censuses are considered fundamental for following up the Millennium Development Goals. The region's programme of international statistical work includes the organization of censuses (with the very active engagement of the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) - Population Division of ECLAC). There are also regional experiences of international cooperation in this regard (including training, the dissemination of software such as REDATAM and the harmonization of definitions, among others). The MERCOSUR countries, Bolivia and Chile are working on the subregional harmonization of variables and pilot experiences.
42. Among its technical recommendations, SCA could look specifically at the use of census data for producing indicators for the Millennium Development Goals and, with regard to geographical monitoring of the socio-economic situation, for the local breakdown of indicators using small area estimates (disaggregation by urban/rural residence and for slum-dwellers, among others).

43. All the countries of the region conduct periodic household surveys. But a survey system is much more than this: it requires at least a fixed regularity, harmonized definitions and modalities of population coverage that enable data to be integrated.¹² In the case of the Millennium Development Goals, the sources of information need to be stable throughout the follow-up period.
44. The MECOVI programme provides a valuable experience of cooperation in the region that is worthwhile preserving. Synergies with other initiatives, such as STATCAP, in the framework of regional coordination of cooperation programmes, could improve the use of economic resources for the household survey system.
45. The creation of networks of household survey experts (as proposed in MAPS) could help to strengthen survey systems through the sharing of technical experiences. In the region, the Network of Institutions and Experts on Social and Environmental Statistics (REDESA), an ECLAC initiative, aims to promote the production of such statistics, improve coordination among the production, dissemination and use of the data, and provide a forum for dialogue on related issues. REDESA also provides statistics on social and environmental issues. SCA could assess the value of building on the dynamic generated by this network and examine the possibility of broadening it in the framework of MAPS.
46. Many of the Latin American and Caribbean countries have experience in conducting demographic and health surveys and other similar tasks. This experience could be advantageous for the rest of the countries in the region and could be included in the bilateral cooperation activities promoted by SCA. The Conference might also consider the possibility of adapting multiple indicators cluster surveys, with which the region has less experience, to the needs of the countries regarding indicators for the Millennium Development Goals.
47. The countries' experience with household time use surveys is more recent, although there are many examples in the region. Consideration could be given to the use of such surveys for the following issues: distribution of expenditures and consumption within the household (particularly by sex), unpaid work (especially by women), boys' and girls' attendance at school and, in general, any analysis that can afford a gender perspective to follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals.
48. One of the weaknesses observed in the indicators for the Millennium Development Goals is a shortfall in their capacity to analyse the causes of maternal and infant mortality. As a by-product of administrative activity, these indicators are less costly to obtain than survey data, but their usefulness is limited by the fact that the primary data collected under vital statistics are often of poor quality. In the case of maternal mortality, the situation is worsened by shortcomings in declarations of cause of death and by apprehension on the part of the medical profession with regard to assuming the responsibility for maternal deaths. Analysis of consistency with demographic and health surveys would help to identify the population groups or geographical areas in which the coverage of records is poorest.

¹² On the establishment of an integrated household survey system, see the methodological document prepared by J.C. Feres, and F. Medina, entitled "Hacia un sistema integrado de encuestas de hogares en los países de América Latina", *Estudios estadísticos y prospectivos series*, No. 1 (LC/L.1476-P/E), Santiago, Chile, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2001, which systematizes the technical elements required (core surveys, elements of the design of statistical operations, quality control and implementation of operations).

49. There are few indicators on HIV/AIDS in the region and in general the countries have not reviewed the methodology specifically for follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals. These indicators are usually obtained from sentinel surveys. Methods of data collection and estimation vary, making it difficult to monitor the target and impairing international comparability. SCA could consider recommending the creation of an expert group to propose strategies to obtain systematic and regular data on the prevalence and incidence of HIV/AIDS and to suggest harmonized methods for collecting these indicators.
50. Similarly, educational records can provide valuable, low-cost information if they are well designed and properly kept. Household surveys should define level of schooling and literacy in such a way that information can be crossed and different analyses of consistency with education records in the primary school age population can be conducted. SCA could consider the possibility of issuing recommendations on the preparation of definitions to be used in the region's education systems and harmonizing national practices.
51. The ECLAC databases on social and environmental statistics (BADEINSO and BADEIMA) can be used to improve the availability of indicators on Goals 1 to 7. They can also serve to drive the regional effort to create a coherent framework for environmental indicators (target 9).

F. DISSEMINATION OF STATISTICAL INFORMATION AND USER RELATIONS

52. The demand for indicators on the Millennium Development Goals is not confined to international institutions and national governments. Civil society organizations also have an interest in them. Unless these groups of users have the necessary training, then the statistics produced will be underused. National statistical institutes could organize seminars on household surveys and their possibilities and limitations for advanced statistical analysis, aimed at more specialized users, such as academic researchers.
53. Some national statistical institutes have experimented with the dissemination of anonymized microdata in "secure centres"¹³ to which authorized researchers are granted access. ECLAC has worked actively with the countries of the region on the democratization of information with the creation of REDATAM census databases for broad use by local and national instances and also for open access by the general public. ECLAC has also developed, for more restricted use, a system of dissemination of indicators from household surveys known as Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG). Some organizations, such as ORC Macro (which conducts demographic and health surveys), have a policy of facilitating access to data files over the Internet for more detailed analysis. SCA could look at modalities of disseminating individual or household data (microdata) in the region, bearing in mind legal constraints (security of access and anonymity of informers) and the techniques in each country, as a first step to identifying experiences that could be applied to the dissemination of the household surveys and population censuses available, and later to preparing recommendations for the national statistical systems of the region.

¹³ For example, Peru has made surveys on living conditions and poverty and on health and fertility available to registered users at <http://www.inei.gob.pe/srienaho/index.htm>.

54. For sources of information relevant to the Millennium Development Goals, SCA could consider the use of a standard presentation such as that proposed in the Special Data Dissemination Standards (SDDS), the DQAF system, or the General Data Dissemination System (GDDS) for population, education, health and poverty (which most of the countries of the region have adopted). SCA could also consider the possibility of defining an initial minimum set of metadata on the indicators for the Millennium Development Goals and the differences between national and international definitions. The international agencies should clearly document discrepancies with national data, to enable national authorities and users alike to gain a detailed understanding of the methodology used.