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Regional and Global Initiatives in Statistics:

(b) World Forum, Istanbul, June 2007

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Reflection Group (1)



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- Invitation from OECD to participants in the 3rd Arab Forum to attend and actively participate in the World Forum
- Identify and integrate the requirement of the Arab countries in the global initiative on measuring progress, and respond to discussions and deliberations of Istanbul Forum
- Amman meeting, June 2007, and position paper on “*Measuring and Fostering Progress in the Arab Societies*” with support from ESCWA and AITRS, circulated in the World Forum

World Forum (1)



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- Second OECD World Forum on Statistics Knowledge and Progress, Istanbul, 27-30 June 2007
- Cooperation with: UN, EC, World Bank, OIC, and association with: ISI, PARIS21, SESRTCIC, CTMB, DevInfo
- Part of a long-term project aimed at developing more comprehensive measures of progress of societies, those that take into account social, environmental and economic aspects

World Forum (2)



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- Basis prepared at a high level strategic workshop in March 2006 at the Rockefeller Foundation's Centre in Bellagio (Italy):

“The Global Project on Measuring the Progress of Societies exists to foster the development of sets of key economic, social and environmental indicators and their use to inform and promote evidence-based decision-making These indicator sets can be at the sub-national, national and international levels. The project is open to all sectors of society, building both on good practice and innovative research work, organized by the OECD in co-operation with national and international organizations”

World Forum (3)



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- A number of sessions and roundtable discussions on key themes, i.e.:
 - ✓ **PROGRESS** What People Know About Progress; Measuring Progress; Measuring Happiness and Making Policy; What is Progress; etc.
 - ✓ **SOCIAL ISSUES** Sustainable Development; Poverty and Social Exclusion; The Gender Gap; Social Outcomes of Learning
 - ✓ **INDICATORS** Construction and Use of Indicator Sets; Use and Abuse of Indicators; Comprehensive Indicators Systems
 - ✓ **GENERAL STATISTICS AND NSOs** Turning Statistics into Knowledge; Statistical Offices: Information Brokers or Knowledge Builders?; Developing and Emerging Countries: Better Statistics, Better Policy
 - ✓ **POLICY-MAKING** Evidence-Based Policy Making: Just a Myth or a Must?

Istanbul Declaration (1)



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- Consensus on the need to undertake the measurement of societal progress going beyond conventional economic measures and consider the UN system of indicators to measure progress towards the MDGs a step in that direction
- Promotion of a culture of evidence-based decision making
- Availability of statistical indicators of economic, social, and environmental outcomes and their dissemination promote good governance and improvement of democratic processes

Istanbul Declaration (2)



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- Commitment to measuring and fostering the progress of societies in all their dimensions and to supporting initiatives at the country level
- NSOs, public and private organizations, and academic experts to work alongside representatives of their communities to produce high-quality, facts-based information that can be used by all to form a shared view of societal well-being and its evolution over time
- Governments to invest resources to develop reliable data and indicators according to the “Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics”

Istanbul Declaration (3)



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- To take this work forward:
 1. encourage communities to consider for themselves what “progress” means in the 21st century;
 2. share best practices on the measurement of societal progress using sound and reliable methodologies;
 3. stimulate international debate, based on solid statistical data and indicators, on both global issues of societal progress and comparisons of such progress;
 4. produce a broader, shared, public understanding of changing conditions, while highlighting areas of significant change or inadequate knowledge;
 5. advocate appropriate investment in building statistical capacity, especially in developing countries, to improve the availability of data and indicators needed to guide development programs and report on progress toward international goals, such as the MDGs

Reflection Group (2)



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- Arab paper refined during two meetings of the Reflection Group in Istanbul among 26 representatives from 12 Arab countries as well as regional and international institutions
- Participants welcomed the paper and called for further reflection on it, and agree on the following
- 1. Principles and core issues:
 - Welcome the OECD's global initiative, concentrate on multidimensional-based indicators, qualitative and quantitative, possibly localized as these hide critical national dimensions touching the identity and the culture of regions
 - 5 core issues identified: political situation, high economic variation across countries, social variation, environment and natural resources, and human rights-democracy and governance modalities

Reflection Group (3)



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■ Scope:

- Develop a regional bottom-up minimal set of indicators for measuring progress in the Arab region, with MDGs as starting point to take into account the specificities of the region
- Develop a road map to involve decision makers, civil society, media and society at large
- Assessment of data availability and survey quality, development of techniques to collect data in the framework of measuring progress
- Highlighting the capacity building needs for the region; design and implement a technical assistance program including training for statisticians, users, decision makers and journalists
- Setup system to monitor and report about progress in the Arab region, and establish central repository information system as a tool to report and monitor progress in the Arab region
- Advocacy campaigns and awareness-raising efforts to ensure wider participation at the grass root level

Reflection Group (4)



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■ Partners, costs and steps forward

- Statistical work should be cooperative across different players including: Public sector, Private sector, and Civil society
- At the regional level, UN agencies and other regional commissions and IOs involved in measuring progress and capacity building should be identified as partners of the initiative (Arab League, UN-ESCWA, AITRS, GOIC, etc.) Other international initiative have some activities related to measuring progress should be also involved (such as MEDSTAT, PARIS21, METAGORA, etc.)
- Develop needs assessment of the current statistical systems, data availability and methods, and finally technical assistance
- Organizing committee of 3rd Arab Statistical Forum (LAS, ESCWA, Jordan, Yemen, Oman, Palestine, plus Egypt and AITRS) to act as an “*Arab Steering Committee for Measuring Progress*” at the regional level, with mandate that the Arab region is fully integrated in the follow-up activities of Istanbul Forum

Reflection Group (5)



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- Partners, costs and steps forward (follows)
 - Committee to call for a TF to finalize the position paper and propose list of indicators for the Arab region
 - Research activity to take place in the Arab region to identify needs, modalities and concerns in regard of measuring progress
 - Request to LAS, UN-ESCWA and GOIC to help in mobilizing resources to finance activities as a first practical step to follow up on Istanbul's forum, and OECD, GOIC, Arab and Islamic development Banks and funds, UNDP and the World Bank to mobilize resources from the region and the international community to set a long term technical and financial assistance for measuring progress in the Arab region