Informing a Data Revolution

COUNTRY REPORT ON THE PHILIPPINES

Table of Contents

Annexes

1. ToR of the National Consultant
2. People contacted/interviewed
3. Interview Framework
4. Workshop Report
5. Statistical Coordination Mechanisms Put in Place in the PSS by the Former NSCB
6. Participation of the Philippines in the International Statistical System
7. References and related documents

IDR IN-DEPTH COUNTRY STUDY: The Philippines

Introduction[1]

A High Level Panel, set up in 2013 by the UN Secretary General to advise on the international development agenda to follow on from the Millennium Development Goals after 2015, issued a call for a data revolution to ensure that to eliminate poverty and to monitor development progress the ***right data is available to the right people at the right time and in the right format.*** The Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21) is carrying out a project entitled "Informing a Data Revolution" (IDR) to prepare and publish a road map for a data revolution in July 2015 as part of the lead up to the UN General Assembly in September, where it is expected that the new development agenda will be agreed and launched.

The country studies of the IDR Project has three stages. For Stage 1, PARIS21 compiled a comprehensive database including information on the structure, activities and outputs of statistical systems in all developing countries. This database was used to classify national statistical systems (NSS) into a number of groups, with similar characteristics. For Stage 2, a survey of a sample of countries from each of the groups, involving about 30 countries in totalwas conducted to provide an understanding of the situation facing statistics in 2014 in countries at different levels of development, covering the activities and organisation of the NSS as well as priorities and challenges for the future. Stage 3 involves an in-depth investigation and analysis in seven countries, selected from each of the groups identified in Stage 1.

In essence, the country studies will be a stocktaking exercise, including an inventory of the needs of both users and producers of statistics, covering the agencies in the official statistical system and other public and private producers. The goal is to assess the current capacity of NSSs in developing countries to produce and to use statistics as well as the main gaps between supply and demand. It is hoped that the studies will suggest ways of how to close the data gaps and assess, from the point of view of the country, what changes may be needed in the international statistical system to make it more effective.

The country study findings, together with other components of the project including a study of existing and potential innovations that might have an impact on the production and use of statistics, will be used to help identify where and how the data revolution could have most impact and will feed directly into the road map document.

The Philippines is one of the seven countries for the in-depth study taking part in all three stages of the projectthru the Philippines Statistics Authority (PSA),as an important example of a rapidly developing statistical system in a large developing country in the Asia/Pacific region.

The in-depth Philippine study includes a series of interviews with stakeholders of statistics carried out by a National Consultant. The interviews were designed to compile additional informationon top of what has been collected via the IDR Country Study surveyabout the future needs for statistics and for strengthening the capacity of the PhilippinesStatistical System (PSS).The main aim is to identify how the challenges and obstacles facing the PSS can be overcome and what support and assistance might be needed. The ToR of the National Consultant is in Annex 1.

Interviews were carried out with the main producers of statistics within the PSS, including the PSA, the line departments (ministries), the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP, central bank) as well as with data producing institutions from the private sector. Other intervieweescame from the main

[1] This section draws on the references and related documents

data users and other stakeholders of statistics, including representatives of international organisations, nongovernmental organizations, the academe and research institutions, the media, and business.While the respondents were chosen to represent a wide spectrum of stakeholders of statistics in the PSS, they were by no means a random sample. The list of interviewees is in Annex 2.

The interviews used a standardized framework (see Annex 3) structured around the themes from the IDR Country Study questionnaire and designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of what had gone well and the challenges and problems facing statistical systems as they seek to meet data needs over the next five or six years. The recommendations after each theme were formulated based on the interviews and the perspectives of the Consultant.

This report summarizes the outcomes and conclusions of the country study based on the IDR questionnaire filled up by the PSA, the interviews and the reference documents (see Annex 7). It assesses the current capacity of the country to produce and to use statistics, as well as the main gaps between supply and demand. The report demonstrates to what extent the PSS is currently making use of and is planning to use innovations to improve the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of statistical operations. It also sets out priorities for the next five years and how the country could and should respond to the data revolution.

The first draft of the report was presented in a country study workshop held on 23-24 October 2014 for validation. Participants in the workshop were key stakeholders of statistics in the PSS including those who participated in the interviews.

The first day of theworkshop included the following sessions:

- Presentation of the findings and recommendations of the In-depth Country Study report (by the National Consultant).
- Round-table discussion to get country feedback/agreement on the conclusions of the report (with invited Panelists)
- Presentation of the IDR innovations inventory (by PARIS 21)
- Round-table discussion to get country feedback on innovations (with invited Panelists)
- Presentation of the outline of the IDR roadmap including a draft Declaration for review and agreement on the directions of Road Map Document (by PARIS 21)

The second day was a discussion between the PSA and PARIS 21 on the way forward, focusing on how the Philippines would respond/could contribute to the data revolution.The workshop report including the program, the power point presentations, and the list of participants is in Annex 4. The feedback from the workshop is in Chapter 7.

1. The National Statistical System

1.1. The extent to which statistics have been used and recognised as important in national development policy

Almost unanimously, respondents believe that the use of statistics in national development policy formulation has reached a relatively high degree of appreciation under the current governmentboth in principle and in practice. Indeed, its flagship program of good governance and its shift to outcomes-based planning and budgeting, have highlighted the need of government to use statistics.Curiously, a number of respondents recognized the President as an avid user of statistics, sometimes sending shivers to government officials during meetings when the President would cite/ask questions on statistics in particular sectors.

Generally highlighted in the interviews by both producers and users of statistics, is that the government, including the Senate, is now concerned about ensuring that policies are evidence-based and is in fact a heavy user of statistics not only for national but also for local and sectoral development planning, particularly on the allocation of resources.

"Development planners are now really dependent on official statistics". The BSP has been a very active user, producer, and supporter of statistics. The positive list of occupations for the ASEAN integration is based on the BLES[2] Integrated Survey while the identification of the beneficiaries of the major poverty alleviation program of government is based on the official poverty statistics released by the PSA. Local development perspectives have also been partly addressed by the statistical system particularly by the former National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB). However, some respondents are not particularly impressed with the extent of use of statistics by the political leadership (the "dumb politicians") especially in the allocation of resources while another expressed concern about the politicization of statistics, when policymakers are not able to separate the messenger from the message, specifically when the data being released do not support the political agenda. Political leaders and members of the cabinet (ministers) have also quoted investments data which are higher than what official statistics say.

Respondents from the private sector, the media, Non-Government Organizations NGOs, and the international organizations echoed the greater awareness and use of statistics in their respective domains as well as by the public in general, noting that the demand for statistics has risen exponentially and users have become more sophisticated. The members of the media have certainly become much more conscious of the need to use statistics in their reporting, in telling stories. In fact, the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) has been very active in promoting numeracy in the media, conducting seminars for journalists, including student journalists using statisticians as resource persons. It has also been mining government data using student interns from various sources including LGUs. Mining government data has been a challenging task; nonetheless, thru sheer determination, the PCIJ has compiled a vast amount of useful and usable data such as on SALNs (Statement of Assets, Liabilities, and Net Worth) of government officials and election expenditures of candidates for various positions which it now shares with the public http://moneypolitics.pcij.org/ .

Official statistics are used in corporate planning, investment promotion missions by business and in evaluating government performance by the media and NGOs.Because of the efforts of the PSA particularly of the former NSCB to make statistics more understandable thru its Statistically Speaking, Sexy Statistics, and Beyond the Numbers products, the media is now more familiar with and is able to write more about statistics. Heads of statistical agencies/major units writing such articles and explaining methodologies contribute to better statistics, and are being encouraged to continue doing so.And a private think tank acknowledges the increasing use and availability of statistics for its existence. Using government data on the national accounts, it has succeeded in explaining macroeconomic data to non-economists.

Problems, constraints, bottlenecks encountered:

- State of relative unreadiness of the PSS/PSA to respond to emerging data needs that were previously out of the statistical radar and which prevents policymakers

[2] Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics now referred to as PSA Intramuros.

from more appropriate interventions such as in time of disasters and in targeting development goals;
- Need to be more proactive in responding to the data needs of the business community;
- Unavailability of statistics measuring the impact of major programs of government such as sin taxes and fiscal incentives;
- Difficulty in accessing information;
- Limited user understanding of statistical methodologies;
- Interpretability/understandability of products like the Tourism Satellite Accounts and the Leading Economic Indicators; and
- Lack of absorptive capacity of the PSA.

Recommendations:

- Towards a Data Revolution
    - In the next 5-10 years, producers of statistics should focus on generating the right data in the right format, ensuring that they get to the right people at the right time
    - Users of statistics on the other hand, particularly the political leaders should capacitate themselves, as others have, including those in the private sector, on the use of information for evidence-based decision making.

1.2. The status of the NSDS or plan for the development of the national statistical system

The National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) of the Philippines or the Philippine Statistical Development Program (PSDP) was updated in2012. The NSDS processes in the Philippines are highly collaborative and consultativeat generally high levels among the different stakeholders and provide them with an opportunity to work closely with one another. The documentation processes are also of high quality. This is appreciated by the respondents, many of whomwere involved in and therefore knew about the latest updating of the PSDP 2011-2017. Also, the PSDP framework is tied up with the Philippine Development Plan and therefore has identified priorities that support the national development agenda. In addition, the PSDP has been incorporated in other sectoral plans like the Tourism Development Plan.The Philippines is clearly a pioneer in the NSDS formulation having formulated 8 NSDSs already.

However, even within the PSA, there is no full awareness of the current status of the latest PSDP/NSDS.Unlike in previous versions of the PSDP, the latest version was not endorsed by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) as Chair of the PSA Board to the Office of the President. It is in “suspended animation with all talk and no walk”. According to the National Statistician, the PSDP 2011-2017 will be revisited to take into consideration recent developments in the PSA and the updated Philippine Development Planand its results matrix but targeted completion date has not been fixed. And implementation will of course be the main challenge.

Problems, constraints, bottlenecks encountered:

- Obviously, the NSDS processes developed by PARIS21 have not all been followed;
- The PSDP is a “wish list” with no resources, no capacity, no manpower;
- Inadequacy of the implementation monitoring and evaluation system;

- Despite user-producer forums, coordination between the users and producers of data remains weakand feedback mechanisms are slow; sectoral development framework (tourism) and the PSDP chapter on the sector are not fully consistent; and
- Ownership of the PSDP by Heads of sectoral agencies/ministries and by the President himself is lacking.Processes followed after the PSDP was formulated are not very clear.

Recommendations:

- Adhering closely to the NSDS Guidelines in the updating of the PSDP
  - It is imperative that agood communication plan for the PSDP/NSDS be formulated and implemented;
  - Ministries/line agencies should have consistently high level representation/ participation in the PSDP major committees; and
  - The PSDP document should be disseminated widely to all stakeholders.
- Securing resources for the implementation of the updated PSDP/NSDS
  - Identify and designate people with good strategic management background to execute the plan. Interagency committees did well in the preparation of the PSDP but they are not expected to function well in the implementation stage; and
  - The Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) component of the PSDP should be improved upon.

1.3. The legal mandate for statistical activities

The latest statistics law enacted is Republic Act No. 10625 or the Philippine Statistics Act of 2013 which created the PSA out of four major statistical agencies[3] of the old PSS.

While RA 10625 is far from perfect as a Statistics Act, the legal basis for most, if not all of the statistical activities is clear. This is trueeven in the previously existing pieces of legislation, and especially as therearegovernance mechanisms that have been put in place by the former major statistical agencies. In other words, there are no legal impediments to statistics at present.Response rates for both household and establishment surveys are at least 80%.

Efforts of the former National Statistics Office (NSO) to explain the basis for major data collection activities such as the Census of Population and Housing are appreciated.

RA 10625 aimed to address the seeming confusion among stakeholders arising from the seemingly overlapping activities of the four major statistical agencies and the apparently perennial resource constraints faced by the PSS.
The PSS is currently in transition, having been reorganized in September 2013. Exactly one year after the PSA was created, it still has to function as a truly merged institution, beset with human resource and institutional problems, although nothing major. Complete staffing was originally targeted by December 2014; a more realistic target now is by December 2015.

[3] The National Statistical Coordination Board, the National Statistics Office, the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics, and the Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics

Problems, constraints, bottlenecks encountered:

- In practice, there is no full compliance with the law by data providers affecting the timeliness, reliability and accuracy of the statistics generated. Households living in exclusive villages/high rise condominiums/gated communities and some key establishments/enterprises continue to be difficult respondents; and
- Public understanding of the PSA remains low.

Recommendations:

- Fast-tracking the Implementation of RA 10625
    - Having decided on a new statistics law and a new statistical infrastructure, the collective energy of the PSA and the government should focus on making the new system work, on making the new PSA a truly solid and responsive organization. Already, comments have been made about the need to amend the law, if not now, within 5-10 years!
- Formulating a good communication plan for the PSA/PSS
    - The apparent confusion among stakeholders about the old PSS must be addressed
    - The communication plan must be disseminated pronto.

1.4. Organisation, coordination and management of the NSS

The PSS is considered "unstained" especially when compared to other NSSs in the region and is given credit by respondents for its efforts to provide quality products and services given the limited resources. For the past so many years, the PSS has tried to abide by the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (FPOS).

As already mentioned, in the IDR study, the Philippines was identified to represent the rapidly developing national statistical system. In addition, in the 2013 World Bank Statistical Capacity Building scorecard, out of 149 developing countries, the Philippines ranked first in East Asia and Pacific and 21st overall.In fact, the Philippines has done well in the WB scorecard since 2005. Thus, the PSS hasachieved some stature in the international statistical community.

In the IDR Country Study, the top priority of the countries in the management of the NSS is setting up processes for NSS coordination and ensuring the use of statistical standards and classification systems. It should therefore be a source of pride that the old PSS was recognized worldwide for the relative strength of coordination of the NSS. In the past, statistical coordination in the PSS was separated from data collection and several coordination mechanisms (see Annex 5) were put in place by the former NSCB as the coordinator of the PSS to achieve this recognition Among these mechanisms, the Interagency Committees (IACs) was cited as having largely contributed to bringing together stakeholders to address statistical issues (the NSCB website at http://www.nscb.gov.ph has the complete list). Through such mechanisms, relationships have been built. The active leadership in coordination of the former NSCB supported by the other agencies was acknowledged as "*ok talaga*". The former NSCB was however too small to be able to respond effectively to all the needs of the PSS on statistical coordination. Also, the effectiveness of the IACs depends on the Chair and the Secretariat.

However, in the old PSS when the four statistical agencies were separate, there was no integrated appreciation of what needed to be done in the PSS as a whole. With the PSA, this has become possible.There are also advantages to having "only one leader" of the PSA compared to the old set-up when there were two Undersecretary level positions at the helm of the PSS.

But as the PSA is in transition, it is too early to tell where it is now going. The articulated goals of the reorganization have not happened yet; meanwhile things have "deteriorated". Visions and missions have been discussed but actual priority statistical programs, if they are going to differ from the existing version of the PSDP 2011-2017 have yet to be finalized. It is not yet known what will happen to existing mechanisms for coordination and management of the PSS like the System of Designated Statistics. Monitoring the accountability of the National Statistician in the next few years is going to be important.

The transfer of the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics (BAS) from the Department of Agriculture (DA) to the PSA has also set the DA in a "panic mode", given the role that the BAS used to play in the generation of agricultural statistics for the DA. This makes one wonder whether what was already expected by some to happen after the PSA merger would in fact, come sooner than later – the creation of a statistical unit in the DA or the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) to replace the old BAS and the old BLES, respectively, essentially reverting back to the old PSS set-up but with an even bigger bureaucracy.

There are also concerns on how the development of the local/subnational statistical system and the need for greater coordination will be addressed by the PSA.

Indeed, RA10625 has undermined the importance of NSS coordination. For one, a number of existing interagencysectoral committees were omitted in the list enumerated in RA 10625, which could weaken sectoral statistics. Probably realizing the gross mistake, all the committees were re-created thru a PSA Board decision. Still the organizational structure for statistical coordination in the PSS has been weakened and how this will play out in the coming months must be watched.
Thus, respondents expressed concern about losing past gains in statistical coordination under the new PSA.

Problems, constraints, bottlenecks encountered:

- There were perceptions that in the old setup, BAS and BLES may not be independent being under the DA and DOLE, respectively.
- RA 10625 could have been the "best vehicle" to institute statistical reforms but processes were politicized and already "*may problema na kaagad*" (problems are already being encountered);
    - Members of the PSA Board are "representatives" compared to Undersecretary levels in the past
    - Originally, the plan was to have the NS as Chair of the PSA Board; in RA 10625, the NEDA Director General is the Chair
    - The PSA is not represented on the Board of the Philippine Statistical Research and Training Institute
- The PSA is still attached to NEDA;
- Questions have been raised whether the independence of the PSS is now at risk. Some past practices on the release of data in accordance with the FPOSseem to

have been changed, hopefully only temporarily. Why do population projections need to be approved by the President before they are released? Why are data releases not the sole responsibility/domain/decision of the National Statistician?

- The relative strength of the PSS in coordination may have been lost with the abolition of the NSCB;
- The new PSA is a huge organization and filling up its manpower complement is getting difficult because of the pending retirement of many senior staff of the merged statistical agencies to avail of the attractive retirement package offered by the reorganization;
- The reorganization of the PSA taking off from the rationalization plan is not in accordance with the recommendations of the PSA/WB Consultant;
- RA 10625 is almost completely silent about the management and functioning of the statistical units at the regional/provincial levels, not recognizing fully the important role of subnational statistics in the development of the NSS;
- The conduct of a Census of Population and Housing every ten years is not mentioned in the Act;
- While regular PSDP activities are ongoing, attention to sectoral statistics has been generally put on hold; and
- There is confusion in sectoral statistical coordination due to the ongoing reorganization of the PSA.

Recommendations:

- Demonstrating strong leadership in the PSS/PSA
  - RA 10625opens new opportunities for the PSS to reach new heights and embrace a data revolution. The management challenges will be great however, and the National Statistician should be given all the genuine support she needs by the government, particularly the Department of Budget and Management (DBM). She will need to demonstrate strong leadership of the PSA.
- Mobilizing support for the PSS/PSA
  - The PSA will also need to look for more champions and advocates of statistics to add to the existing list
  - For the PSA/National Statisticians to consider entering into a performance contract identifying the deliverables for the resources that will be provided
- Abiding by the FPOS
  - The importance of statistical coordination in the NSS should remain paramount in the prioritization of the PSA activities.A unit devoted solely to coordination should be established within the PSA
  - Given resource constraints, focus should be on an outcome-based management of the PSS that optimizes the use of resources.
  - Data producers should aspire to give data users what they need, not just what is available.

2. Assessment of the main data compiling agencies

2.1. Human resources

As demand for statistics has risen, demand for the services of statisticians has likewise increased. Many opportunities for training and professional growth are available to statisticians working in government. Such opportunities are offered by international

organizations and bilateral donors through local and international training institutions like the Philippine Statistical Research and Training Institute and the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific. They also come from involvement in statistical development activities that offer learning opportunities in various areas of statistics from which the staff derives professional fulfillment. The knowledge gained then translates into more challenging job opportunities.

Compared to other countries in the region, the PSA has a relatively strong, "resilient", and generally professional statistical manpower with a passion for work. In particular, the NSCB staff is cited for being well-qualified and for being consistently very helpful and effectivein responding to stakeholders' requests– just needs a call, no letters needed. At the NSO, staff became more dedicated/creative to make up for their loss in number.However, compared to demand for statistics, the PSA manpower has insufficient capacity.

Problems, constraints, bottlenecks encountered:

- Overall, there is a severe lack of qualified statisticians in government. The universities are not able to supply the statistical manpower needs and trained staff in the statistical offices have transferred to institutions like the Asian Development Bank, the UN System, the Central Bank, NSOs of other countries, etc. or have resigned from their jobs to take on consultancy work.
- Even with the small number of statistics graduates, many of them go to the private sector. The academe partly takes the blame. Many of them serve as consultants in the private sector so the focus of what they teach the statistics majors are on the private sector.
- The existing salary structure for government statisticians is not attractive enough to prevent the staff from looking for higher-paying jobs, including as data scientists. It may also be the reason why statistical agencies get involved in projects where the staff gets honoraria even if the project may not be aligned with the priorities of the organization or why subcontracting of statistical processes is not being considered.
- The DBM has not been very supportive of hiring statisticians in government. In the rationalization plans of government agencies, statistical positions were (forced to be) abolished. In reviewing positions in government, the DBM has asked "why so many statisticians?"
- In addition to the lack of human resources within the organizational structure of the PSA, the availability of experts from outside the PSA like those from the research and academic institutions who have been helping the PSA through the interagency committees has suffered. Examples are in the area of population and housing statistics and sampling,
- Uneven quality of staff within the PSA with the NSCB noted for the quality of its staff. Some statistical agencies lack "thinkers". In-house development of staff has not been strong
- Need for "new blood" in the organization
- Even with the creation of the PSA, manning level remains at just around 50%
- In other agencies of government, there are no *plantilla* positions for statisticians; in fact for others, these *plantilla* positions were abolished during the rationalization plan. And where there are positions, many of them have remained unfilled, partly because of government policies on hiring of personnel. Government hiring procedures take time making it difficult for agencies to hire

initially interested and qualified statisticians but who could not wait through the hiring process

Recommendations:

- Enhancing the overall quality of human resources in the PSS/PSA
  - A comprehensive human resource development plan must be developed to cover management and technical as well as administrative personnel
  - Choose people not just for competence but also for their attitudes and traits for public service
  - Serious consideration should be given to exempting the PSA from the salary standardization law
  - Partnerships with the academic institutions for collaborative work should be developed. This should include mentoring of government statisticians by members of the academe.
  - Mentoring from within the PSA should also be developed and promoted
  - Ways must be found to be able to avail of the expertise of some experienced but retired professionals.
  - Give international exposure to more staff
  - Establish competency standards
- Increasing the supply of trained statisticians in the country
  - Consider establishing an academy to train statisticians (similar to what they already have in Indonesia and Malaysia)
  - Provide support for staff pursuing their PhD/Masteral studies.
  - Encourage students to pursue a career in statistics. In the past, there were very few takers of scholarship slots in statistics.
- Improving the effectiveness/service of the PSA staff
  - A point person/office should be designated to respond to data inquiries. Data users should not be told to talk to a series of persons/offices before they get the data they need.

2.2. Equipment and infrastructure

Some agencies have adequate equipment and infrastructure but others do not. Computer-staff ratio has been maintained at 1:1 but the specifications are not state-of-the-art. In this aspect, the DBM has been fairly supportive in providing resources.At the BAS, a limitation in equipment is the result of the limitations in people's skills such as on remote sensing. At the NSO, its Public-Private Partnership on civil registration helped in providing the necessary equipment and infrastructure. As a result, what used to take 2-5 km long queues to get civil registration records nowtakes two hours.

Problems, constraints, bottlenecks encountered:

- Not all the staff have access to the internet
- Problems with OCR machines

Recommendations:

- Need to upgrade to state-of-the-art equipment

2.3. Financial resources

Statistical offices all over the world complain about budget constraints. Over the period 2011-2015, the two-year moving average total budget for the four agencies increased by 58 % in 2011-2013, 16 % in 2012-2014, and 18 % in 2013-2015[4].So whilestatistics is not yet being given enough money, physical and financial resources including from development partners, promise to be better, especially with the creation of the PSA.The DBM now appears to be more supportive of statistics. In fact, with the focus on evidence-based decision making, according to one respondent, the government has no choice but to give bigger budgets for statistics. In other words, the PSA budget is not the main problem; we have resources and if at all, it is a conscious decision not to allocate the necessary resources to statistics. According to one respondent, there are now good leaders at the DBM/NEDA who are very supportive of statistics.

Even the budget of other agencies for statistics like the Department of Tourism has been increased. They now have resources for electronic submission of data and for tablet-based surveys.

Problems, constraints, bottlenecks encountered:

- The PSA budget has limitations on its use to hire the much-needed statistical personnel
- The PS budget for the PSA for 2015 actually decreased.
- Budget for statistical developmental activities not consistently being provided

Recommendation:

- Put the highest priority on increasing the PS budget for the PSA

2.4. The commitment to quality

The leadership and staff of the PSA are genuinely committed to maintaining the quality of their products and services and are quite receptive to suggested improvements such as processing of survey data at more detailed levels of disaggregation and responding to clarificatory questions. The PSA is very much aware of the FPOS and tries to abide by them. There are also mechanisms in place that promote quality: the IACs/TCs that review methodologies, consultation forums, MOAs/MOUs with researchers/ academicians on the use of PSA data, etc.

Internal processes at the BAS follow the best methodologies available using international guidelines. Data review and validation processes are thorough like the deliberation processes followed in the compilation of the National Accounts by the NSCB. BLES, on the other hand is ISO-certified and has adopted a Data Quality Assurance Framework (DQAF). At the NSO, the survey operations processes followed have been triedand tested thru time. In other data producing agencies like the Department of Education (DepED), data validation processes and practices are also in place.

As one respondent from the private sector said “we are in a country where government data are reliable” while another said “if the data are reliable according to the PSS, we accept”, some indication of the public trust and confidence on official statistics. But resource constraints are a big stumbling block and the required skills are not there at present.

[4] The 2015 budget is still being deliberated in Congress.

The overarching concern of respondents is to improve timeliness. Actually, improvements have been achieved in different areas. For example, for the first time, the 2013 accommodation data from LGUs and tourism establishments were released within 6 monthsfrom 1-2 years in the past. The time lag in the release of the Family Income and Expenditures Survey (FIES) survey results by the NSO has been significantly cut. But there is a need to deepen the commitment to continue to improve timeliness and the other quality dimensions.

Problems, constraints, bottlenecks encountered:

- Quality suffers because of resource constraints, including skilled manpower
- Priority surveys are not given the priority they should get. The System of Designated Statistics is not being followed
- Estimates of aggregates are hampered by incomplete/ inappropriately disaggregated LGU data in some sectors;
- Poverty statistics under the current administration are not comparable;
- The quality of national accounts estimates suffers when data sources do not provide data on time;
- Changes in classification systems/methodologies in the national accounts have resulted in incomparable time series data by industry;
- The focus on the Business Process Outsourcing sector is not supported by more accurate measurements of its contribution in the national accounts;
- The Input Output Tables are published too infrequently;
- The latest data available for Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR), one of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) indicators, is 2011, which does not allow for an accurate assessment of our MDG progress;
- Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT)[5] variables not included in the Public Use Files (PUFs) of the 2012 FIES;
- Delay of 2 years in the processing of civil registration data;
- Population projections have remained unavailable for a long time;
- Cases of households being stamped with stickers (to indicate successful interviews) but no actual interview was conducted;
- Release of results of latest Labor Turnover Survey delayed due to questions on data quality;
- Some agricultural statistics are based on ten-year old structures;
- Some statistical agencies do not think out of the box;
- Perception that government data are tainted, specifically BAS data, being formerly under the DA
- Quality in non-statistical agencies admittedly has not reached the level one can "be proud of";
- There is incoherence in the foreign investments data released by different agencies; and
- Inconsistent estimates disseminated by international organizations and the NSS.

Recommendations:

- Improving overall quality

[5] A Poverty Alleviation Program of government

- A Methodological Unit should be established and strengthened in the PSA
- Data transmission protocols/systems (such as from national accounts data sources to the compiler) should be improved
- Consistency and convergence of estimates across sectors (e.g. tourism and national accounts/ infrastructure/ social welfare and development; remittances and deployment; survey health data and Field Health Service Information System[6]) should continue to be improved
- PSS statisticians should develop capabilities and engage more proactively in data analysis
- Documentation of methodologies and statistical processes should be improved
- Consider adoption of a DQAF for the PSA
- Metadata should include information about the "shortcomings" of the data

- Improving Timeliness
  - As more resources have become available and in response to the overarching concern of data users, top priority attention should be given to enhancing the timeliness of statistical products and services.The PSS should strictly follow its ARC.
  - In particular, poverty data should be made much more timely to be useful in providing guidance to voters during elections
- Commitment to Relevance
  - The PSA should consider relevance as a key quality dimension. The untimely MMR and the absence of the CCT variable in the 2012 FIES PUFs are a reflection of the lack of importance attached to relevance by the PSA.

2.5. Relations with data users

The former major statistical agencies are acknowledged for their generally good relationships with data users including international organizations, with exceptions here and there for their "bureaucratic insecurities" and being "*mukhangpera*" (fee-conscious).The respondents appreciate the PSS practice of inviting data users to workshops and data dissemination forumsestablishing a connection between government data producers and data users including those from the private sector.Data users are also invited to sit in IACs that discuss statistical issues on various sectors. Aside from providing inputs to discussion of statistical issues, this allows the data users easier access to government data than otherwise would have been possible.

Also recognized is the service provided by the National Statistical Information Center (NSIC) where one does not have to know who to ask to be able to get the service needed. BLES, on the other hand gets good feedback on its Customer Satisfaction Monitoring (CSM) survey.

The former NSO has been teaching LGUs to crunch their own data out of the PUFs of the Census of Population and Housing. They use these data for development planning and as it removes the burden on the NSO to produce PUFs for the LGUs it becomes a win-win

[6] Maintained by the Department of Health

situation for both parties. The dissemination forums that NSO conducts have also increased the appreciation of business on why data are collected from them.

Regional offices of the major statistical agencies as well as of the line agencies have been very useful in establishing good relations with users and providers of statistics.

Problems, constraints, bottlenecks encountered:

- Some agencies selectively provide data to users/media practitioners
- Lack of transparency in some government agencies.
- Service in some agencies of the PSA better than in others
- PUFs users of the NSO have become more sophisticated in their data demands
- Users find it difficult to understand some methodologies such as for deriving estimates like the MMR
- Data dissemination forums not as effective as could be because there are no presentors from the users side, only discussants/reactors.
- Some PSA agencies cannot commit to release dates for products needed by other government agencies
- With some agencies, it is very difficult to ask for data, with data users needing to talk from one person/unit to another, sometimes eventually getting nothing.

Recommendation:

- Recognizing the important role of data users in statistical development
    - The PSS must continue to deepen engagements with data users, through user-producer forums and partnerships.
    - Efforts must be exerted to explain statistical methodologies to users
- Improving services to users
    - Protocols/systems should be developed on how data inquiries will be managed by the PSA. Designating a focal point/focal unit will be a good start
    - Workshops for PSA staff on the subject of public service

2.6. Providing access to statistics and data

Although not all are happy, generally, there is reasonable access by users to basic economic and social data produced by the PSS. Access to NSCB data is generally easy, using different modes. There are also very good data series available at the Philippine Institute of Development Studies and the BSP. Some agencies provide access for a fee, including discounted rates.
Improvements in the accessibility of information from some government agencies and the LGUs were noted. Example is the Department of Public Works and Highways which used to be perceived as one of the most corrupt agencies but is now quite transparent with information related to its procurement bidding processes. At the DepED, some databases/information systems are being developed and making them accessible thru the website is definitely part of the plan.

Data access is facilitated when data producers and researchers strike a partnership in methodologicalresearches, some of which contribute to enhancing the quality of official statistics.

Problems, constraints, bottlenecks encountered:

- The Office of the President issued guidelines on government websites which are inconsistent with guidelines previously issued by the NSCB;
- Generally, there is no ready access to information needed by researchers and academicians who want a deeper analysis of various phenomena but which will require cross-tabulations not usually generated by the PSS; but some demands are too much;
- Only selected data series are easily accessible. Some problems in accessing governance- and/or election-related data, crime-related PNP data, financial data from the Department of Finance/Bureau of Internal Revenue/ Securities and Exchange Commission, "sensitive" data from offices like the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Department of National Defense.Also, some data which used to be accessible on the website are no longer accessible. Example is the 2015 Budget.
- Some LGUs simply refuse access to the information they collect;
- Access to data in the House of Representatives is not as open as in the Senate;
- Data accessible in some government agencies are not in the right format (how budget is spent; not enough details on the Disbursements Acceleration Program[7]);
- One agency provides access only five years after data collection!
- Accessible time series dataon the NSCB/NSO websites not long enough compared to what is available on the BSP website
- With some statistical agencies, "*napakahirap"* (very difficult) to get data, requiring a data user to talk only to specific persons;some time series data are made available only upon request.
- Concerns of agencies when members of the media "pretend" to be researchers to be given access to data.

Recommendations:

- Improving overall access to government data
    - The PSS should, through the Interagency Committee on Information and Communications Technology Statisticsrevisit its dissemination and accessibilitypolicies (the Government Statistics Accessibility Program (GSAP) under the former NSCB) and make them more relevant to the needs of data users. A policy on open data should be encouraged. These policies should be communicated properly to all concerned to ensure consistency of government policies on the subject.
    - The PSA should routinely generate PUFs/micro data sets for at least the major surveys and censuses and disseminate them widely to the public. The ongoing efforts of the BAS to produce PUFs for its surveys should be intensified.
    - Fees charged for statistical products and services should be rationalized. Users find rates charged for PUFs high. Consider minimal charges especially for government, researchers and students, if not totally free
    - Longer time series should be made available on the websites
    - Files uploaded on the websites should be in excel (not just pdf) format

[7] A program of the government where savings of government agencies are pooled in a fund under the management of the DBM, which was later on declared to be unconstitutional by the Supreme Court

- Bureaucratic requirements on accessing government data including those from LGUs should be minimized/ simplified. Open data is the way to go.

- Better management of user expectations
  - The communication strategy of the PSA should address this.

2.7. Developing partnerships

Experience has been good so far on partnerships among the PSS agencies, between the PSS and the international organizations and the academe, and between the PSS and the Philippine Statistical Association Incorporated. The NSO has been exerting best efforts to respond to requests for adhoc surveys from other government agencies. Even in the old setup, the BAS had good partnerships with other units within the DA.

The IACs provide a useful forum for promoting such partnerships.

Formal and informal agreements exist between users of statistics and the major data producers. These are in the form of MOAs/MOUs or thru exchange of products and services.

Industry associations have started helping the former NSO to advocate for the accomplishment of its survey questionnaires.

Problems, constraints, bottlenecks encountered:

- There is still limited partnership between the PSA and the private sector and between the PSA and LGUs.

Recommendations:

- The PSA should continue to collaborate with both local and international partners;
- The creation of a unit within the PSA to manage such partnerships should be considered; and
- Partnerships on data availability/accessibility between the PSA and particular media groups should not be entertained. Access to statistics should be uniformly provided to all in the media. But partnerships on statistical advocacy should be pursued.

3. The Management of statistical processes

3.1. Relations with data providers

The PSA has good relations with data providers, generating response rates of at least 80% for the major surveys. The BLES gets good feedback on its CSM survey. The NSO establishes relations with accountants of establishments and with barangay officials to get their cooperation in responding to the surveys and generally gets very good results. In the case of data providers from government, the former NSCB would send letters to data sources for the quarterly compilation of the national accounts and for the Philippine National Health Accounts

and StatDev[8]. These letters would include information relevant to the data source aimed at enhancing the appreciation of the data sources on the importance of the data they provide.

Problems, constraints, bottlenecks encountered:

- Fears of hacking by data providers if data are submitted online
- Some elements in the private sector still have a mindset of "this is what I want from you, but do not ask from me".
- Issue of whether to provide tokens to respondents
- Need to have very clear policies/practices related to the confidentiality issue that is communicated well to the public

Recommendations:

- Improving the quality of inputs from the data providers
  - The communication plan of the PSA should impress on the private sector that it benefits from the data it provides to the data producers
  - Information campaigns should be conducted during censuses to promote cooperation by data providers
  - Partnerships should be cultivated/ nurtured with the data providers/industry associations based on a positive approach rather than invoking penalty provisions of the law
  - Respondents' burden should continue to bereduced.
  - Major establishment- and household surveys should be reviewed

3.2. Managing data processes

The Statistical Survey Review and Clearance System put up by the former NSCB is a mechanism that promotes efficiency in the data processes. There are also in place validation and crosschecking processes, spot-checking, audit surveys and parallel runs to enhance data quality.Methodologies are based on international guidelines and the former NSCB created study teams to develop expertise in new statistical fields. BLES is ISO-certified. Data gathering itself is considered relatively fast.

Problems, constraints, bottlenecks encountered:

- Some offices are allergic to criticisms;
- Delays are sometimes caused by commitments that stretch the limits of the statistical agencies resulting in the untimely delivery of products and services.
- There is no business register to use as frame for establishment surveys. A listing of establishments is used but the quality of updating is a question.

Recommendations:

- Improving efficiency/ effectiveness of statistical operations
  - Subcontracting of somestatistical processes should be considered to lighten the burden on the PSA so that it can focus on the delivery of priority products and services demanded by users.
- Reforming the institutional culture

[8] A publication of the former NSCB which monitors the achievement of the targets of the Philippine Development Plan

- Undergo change management workshops
- Undergo values orientation workshops

3.3. Dissemination

The PSS in general has been exerting best efforts to reach out to data users to make data available to them using various modes of dissemination.Agencies now have recognized and appreciated the role of the media in data dissemination.

The NSIC was established primarily to improve data dissemination. Forums are regularly conducted to which key stakeholders are invited. Electronic modes of dissemination are now common. And the PSA website is generally good with attractive visualization tools, and laymanized statistical products. The BAS website is well-recognized for its Countrystat[9].

Ministries/ line agencies have also become more transparent in the release of their data.The monthly availability of investment approvals from the Board of Investments was commended. In fact data producers are now concerned that there is already an overload of information available to the public.

The government itself has embarked on an open data initiative althoughno substantive results have come out.

Respondents consider the press conferences conducted by the former NSCB as useful and effective modes of disseminating statistics.

Problems, constraints, bottlenecks encountered:

- Some statistical agencies do not have clear policies on release of data: who decides and how decisions are made; when and what data should/could be released;
- No clear policies on who gets access to data: data not shared with ordinary users are shared with international organizations;
- There seems to be a feeling of "territoriality" over data. The former NSO appears to be "threatened" when data are shared. Even in the use of the census of agriculture results, BAS needs to sign a MOA with the NSO. The NSO also does not sign MOAs with institutions wanting to use its data, insisting on MOAs with each individual data user within the same institution;
- Users do not know that there are government data they can use;
- Some agencies/ministries are not fully conscious of their responsibility to disseminate the data they collect such as the DepED inventory of school facilities;
- Some websites have become less user-friendly;
- The NSO website does not always conform to scheduled uploading of statistics. The NSCB website conforms, but it is difficult to search the website. In searching the Tourism Satellite Accounts, oneneeds to go layer by layer; also only Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per quarter is provided, not per year. With the BAS website, not all the data can be seen; one needs to log in.With the BLES website, there are many tables without explanations;

[9] A web-based compilation of agriculture-related indicators which is the country version of the FAO stat of the Food and Agriculture Organization

- Dissemination forums are generally held in 'imperialistic" Manila contributing to a geographic imbalance in appreciation for statistics. But holding them outside Manila is generally considered more expensive. Even if held in Manila, not all invited participants have the resources/can find the time to attend.
- Statistics are not "attractively presented"

Recommendations:

- Optimizing the use of already available data
  - A data repository should be put up including a MicroData Center/Data Enclave. We must develop the culture within the PSS that the data we have need to be shared;
  - Producers and users of statistics should engage in triangulation/ partnerships in the management of information resources to strike a better balance of the possible information overload.
  - The communication plan of the PSA should include advocacy on the use of government data by the private sector, and not just for development planning;
  - Government should consider donating data to big data; and
  - The concept of open data should be internalized in the PSA, regardless of the progress of the open data project of the government

- Enhancing the understandability by the public of official statistics
  - Sectoral statistics such as aggregates of the Tourism Satellite Accounts should be laymanized to widen appreciation for these products.

- Adopting best practices in data dissemination and communication
  - The role of the media should be acknowledged and appreciated
  - The PSS agencies should all have an ARC and disseminate them
  - Press conferences/briefings should continue to be conducted by the PSS agencies, especially the PSA
  - User-friendliness of disseminated data should always be a consideration
  - Alternative forms of data dissemination should be considered to make it more convenient for some stakeholders who could not go to the usual dissemination forums.

3.4. Archiving and providing access to micro-data

Many years back, the then NSCB Board issued a resolution enjoining the PSS agencies to do data archiving.

The archiving and storage of PSS data is acknowledged to be good. It benefited from the Accelerated Data Program (ADP) project of PARIS 21. BLES has already institutionalized the process and BAS is in the finalization stage. Civil registration data of the NSO andthe Learners Information System of the DepED have archives outside of the NCR.

Problems, constraints, bottlenecks encountered:

- The NSCB Board Resolution on archiving has not really been implemented
- Archiving and knowledge management have not been sufficiently prioritized

- More resources should be devoted to archiving
- Archiving of data under the ADP project has not been uniformly pursued across all participating agencies
- The Countrystat of BAS is supported by an offsite backup, although still within the National Capital Region (NCR). BLES has no offsite backup for its data archived thru the ADP project.
- Some series such as on wages were cut during rebasing/reclassification

Recommendations:

- Optimizing the use of already available data
    - A MicroData Center should be put up.
    - The data warehousing project should be fast-tracked
    - The NSCB Board Resolution on archiving should be revisited

4. Interaction with the international statistical community

4.1. Managing assistance from donors

The international community is now very supportive of statistics. The PSA/PSS should take advantage and manage the assistance well. The NSCB has done well in this aspect, guided by a policy that it would be involved in projects funded by the donor community only if it can institutionalize and sustain the project activities. Likewise, BAS does not entertain donor-driven initiatives. In general, the PSS has done relatively well in this area.

Problems, constraints, bottlenecks encountered:

- At the height of typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan), the donor community wanted so much to help. But they found no available data to guide the allocation of resources.Nobody foresaw and invested on the data that was going to be needed;
- A number of statistical activities funded by donors in the past were donor-driven rather than demand-driven;
- Some agencies appear to give higher priorities to project outputs than the regular workload;
- Some statistical initiatives funded by donors stopped after the project was completed (not institutionalized);
- Donors generally hire consultants to lead a project. In some instances, no serious effort is exerted to transfer knowledge from the consultant to the organization that is expected to institutionalize the process; and
- As the absorptive capacity of the PSA is limited, prioritization of donor assistance needs to be managed well.

Recommendations:

- The PSA should optimize the use of donor funds. Only those that respond to priority data demands should be accepted.
- Transfer of knowledge from the project/consultant to the recipient organization should always take place.
- Institutionalization of donor-funded statistical initiatives should be pursued.

4.2. Participating in the International statistical system

The Philippines is a very active participant in the international statistical system. In addition to attending various international and regional statistical conferences/ workshops/ seminars/ training programs, the Philippines currently sits in a number of committees at the global/ regional level (Annex 6). However, questions have been raised whether such active involvements are good for the PSS as they may mean less time spent on addressing problems internal to the PSS.

Moreover, the Philippines has served as pilot area for many statistical development global initiatives such as on environmental accounting, gender statistics, disability statistics, decent work, agricultural statistics, and wealth accounting and valuation of ecosystems, among others. Participation in these pilot initiatives has gained skills for the PSS and led to many pioneering work by the PSS in the international statistical community.

The PSA is generally compliant with international statistical frameworks. As a result, the Philippines is well-respected among the developing countries for its statistical system.

Problems, constraints, bottlenecks encountered:

- Due to resource constraints, only a few could participate in international events. Sometimes, this is dependent on the sponsoring organization which identifies the participants it is willing to fund.
- Involvement in the international statistical system has resulted in delays in the regular activities of the PSS.

Recommendations:

- Despite the cost, support should be given for participation in the international statistical system because it builds knowledge, builds institutions, and honors the commitments of and creates goodwill for the country.
- But such participation should be managed well in order not to sacrifice the delivery of mandated statistical products and services.

5. Development of the NSS over the Next Five Years

5.1. Priorities for new statistics

5.1.1. Creativity in the development of statistical indicators to monitor performance should be enhanced.

Maternal mortality rate is one of the MDG indicators for which the probability of achieving the target in the Philippines is rated as LOW. One interesting insight from a respondent is that this is due to the invisibility of women in important statistical fields, specifically in the measurement of the contribution of women to the economy. While the Philippines thru the NSCBhas exerted efforts in the past to compile this indicator in the context of the Philippine System of National Accounts, it has not been mainstreamed in the PSS. Likewise, while the PSS has pursued many initiatives to genderize statistics[10], many gender concerns remain hidden in the system of official statistics. Statistics on women and children are considered a priority and should go beyond disaggregating statistics by sex to more accurately assess progress on gender and development issues.

[10] One mechanism for statistical coordination present in the PSS is the Interagency Committee on Gender Statistics.

Statistics that more accurately, more meaningfully and more frequentlymeasurethe impact of poverty alleviation should be generated. Examples are on farmers'/fishermen's welfare, child welfare and social protection indicators. Because fishermen and farmers are the two poorest basic sectors of Philippine society withpoverty incidence of 41.4% and 36.7%, respectively compared to 26.5% overall in 2009(basic sectors) , instead of focusing on rice productivity measured in terms of yield per hectare, focus should be on income of farmers which captures not only yield per hectare but also expenses on inputs. Toward this end, the FIES should be reviewed and the possibility of a new survey devoted solely to measuring the impact of the poverty alleviation programs of government should be considered. The FIES is deemed to be biased towards the poor because of nonresponse from the rich.Poverty should be measured more frequently than every three years (the government has decided to do the FIES annually). Measures of inequality should also be generated more frequently.

The debate on whether economic growth is trickling down to the different sectors of society has been going on for years. It is time to develop convincing statistical indicators on who and how they benefit from economic growth.

5.1.2. Local level data - Regional domains have become inadequate and statistics at least down to the provincial level, ideally down to the municipal level, and other small areas must be generated[11]. They are needed to monitor accountability of public officials down to the lowest levels of administrative governance. This should include disaggregation in various dimensions: basic sectors, various classification systems, etc.

5.1.3. Time series information is needed to allow more meaningful trend analysis particularly of emerging concerns like governance and accountability, political dynasties. Currently, the PSA is unable to address the data requirements of these emerging concerns. Because the PSA resources are not unlimited, as indicated by the PCIJ experience, this is where big data can come in.

5.1.4. Corporate sector data (processing and dissemination of data collected by the Securities and Exchange Commission)

Other priorities are:

5.1.5. Sectoral statistics

- Impact of Climate Change and Disaster statistics
- Governance
- Statistics on the disadvantaged groups: Informal settlers, PWDs, IPs
- Processed civil registration data
- Much more timely population projections by single age group
- Short term (high frequency) indicators
- Women's contribution to the economy
- More meaningful and timely education statistics
- More timely MMR
- ICT-related statistics
- Technological innovation statistics (expenditures)
- Local Tourism Satellite Accounts

[11] As of June 30, 2014, the Philippines had 17 regions, 81 provinces, 144 cities, 1490 municipalities, and 42,028 barangays.

- Culture statistics
- Traffic data

5.2. Priorities for strengthening statistical capacity

Identified by the respondents as areas for capacity building include the following:

- Formulation of more creative and relevant indicators
- Management skills/streamlining business processes
- Innovative statistical approaches such as the value chain approach
- Data analysis (shifting from elevator-type to "roller coaster"-type statistical analyses)
- Report writing skills of statisticians to make statistical products more understandable to users including writing press releases.
- Alternative methodologies for data collection
- Compilation practices in compliance with international frameworks
- Statistical Capacity building of LGUs, both on production and use of statistics
- Statistical Capacity building of the private sector, including journalists
- National Accounts
- Sampling Surveys
- Index construction techniques
- Data mining/ warehousing
- Estimation and modelling
- Climate change tracking
- Nontraditional areas in statistics
- Scholarships for PSA staff to do PhD/Masteral studies

5.3. Making use of innovation

It appears that innovation is one of the relative weaknesses of the PSS. The rapidly changing data/official statistics landscape definitely calls for innovation in various aspects of statistical work. One respondent however wondered if "innovation" was just a fad, preferring to stick to "basics", building on "what works" and staying relevant.

In the last three years, the innovations considered most important are :

- Introducing statistics in the K-12 program
- Use of social media by statistical agencies
- Policy to review the poverty methodology every 10 years;
- ARCs for other (non-statistical) agencies
- Bubble charts for data dissemination
- Countrystats of BAS
- MTEF for the PSDP

In the next five years, the needs for innovation cover the following:

- The PSA should be more innovative in disseminating data, finding ways to make statistics more fun for data users thru the use of visualization tools, infographics, data analytics, etc.
- Technology-driven data collection, transmission, dissemination, storage (crowd sourcing, cloud technology) and improved connectivity to empower people with information

- Developing Statistical Apps containing the latest data for download, particularly by the media
- Web-based random sampling data collection techniques
- In the generation of statistics, the PSA should consider the value chain approach versus the current production approach, particularly in the agriculture sector where it is relevant to look at the value chain from production to consumption, from farm to table.
- Branding
- Partnerships with academes abroad
- Generation of good governance indicators
- Geo-focused/ geo-referenced multidimensional data on the LGUs
- Generation of ecosystem-based data in response to ecosystem approach to governance.
- Readily available data on areas to be visited by the President

5.4. Priorities for financial aid for statistics

One respondent expressed the hope that ten years from now, budget for statistical activities will come only from the government, with the donor community providing support only for "new ideas".

The following were identified as priority areas:

- Capacity building in general
- Human resource development - Government should invest first on people; on the manpower of the PSA/PSS needed to deliver statistical products and services needed by users
- Training of users of statistics
- Technology driven data collection, processing, dissemination, and storage
- Improved connectivity among government agencies
- Improved internet access by the public
- Improved security for government websites
- Construction of business registers and sampling frames
- Increased internet speed of statistical offices
- Branding
- Construction of state-of-the-art PSA building

5.5. Priorities for technical assistance

- Advocacy for PSA. Help in putting pressure on policymakers to invest more on statistics
- Facilities for data sharing among the data producers/agencies of government
- Producing GIS-based products and services
- Replicating Countrystats for other sectors
- Developing and compiling innovation indicators
- Compilation of sectoral balance sheets
- Research on estimation methodologies for local level statistics
- Research on web-based random sampling data collection techniques
- Framework for big data

6. Participating in the data revolution

6.1. Big Data

The PSA Executive Committee is open to big data but in the absence of guidelines, calls for caution, particularly in entering into partnerships like those on civil registration.

Some respondents are enthusiastic about big data which have been found useful in business decisions, and the data revolution, but others consider it not to be a priority at present. Others are also not familiar with big data.

However, the hunger for data has intensified and big data does not really threaten the private sector unlike possibly the government sector.There is nothing really wrong with government getting into big data, but the PSA may need to find a way to filter through the noise and issue warning signals.The PSA should probably also focus first on its "mandate" before going into big data which,in the meantime, can be left for the private sector to go into.

6.2. How can the country contribute to the Data Revolution

Giving the right data to the right people at the right time and in the right format is a wonderful slogan. The main question is how can we achieve this goal? Do statisticians and users of statistics have the same interpretation of the right data, the right people, the right time, and the right format?

Towards a data revolution the country can do the following:

- Express a commitment to support the Data Revolution agenda/declaration in international forums including the UN General Assembly
- Express willingness to participate/serve in committees to be created
- Express willingness to serve as pilot area
- Conduct national and local advocacy forums on the Data Revolution
- Create an interagency TF on the Data Revolution
- Develop a Big Data Framework for the Philippines

6.3. What does it need

Obviously, developing countries would need many things to be able to participate meaningfully in a data revolution. For the Philippines, the following will be needed:

- A deep commitment to actively and meaningfully participate in the international initiatives on the DR
- A greater appreciation of the need for innovation
- Financial assistance for some of the priority statistical programs for the PSS/PSA to be able to give the right data to the right people at the right time and in the right format
- Technical assistance for the generation of priority statistics on which it has no/limited capacity/capability
- Technical assistance in the development of the Big Data Framework for the Philippines

- Technical assistance on the innovations needed for and how such innovations can drive a DR in the Philippines

6.4. Inputs from the Philippine Country Study to the DR Roadmap

The Philippine IDR Country Study can contribute to the DR Roadmap by way of the following:

- Lessons from the strengths/good practices from the Philippines that can be shared with other countries
- Identified weaknesses that need to be addressed in the future
- Future data needs that must be responded to
- Observed relative weakness in innovation and other areas that call for assistance from the international community, and
- On the basis of practical considerations, addressing the need for reflection on
    - What are the "right" data?
    - Who are the "right" people?
    - When is the "right" time? and
    - Which is the "right" format?

7. Feedback from the Workshop

The workshop was held on 23-24 October 2014. It was graced by the Secretary (Minister) of Socio-Economic Planning and the National Statistician of the Philippine Statistics Authority. The workshop report including the agenda, the list of participants, and the presentations is in Annex 5.

During the first day, there was very active discussion among the participants many of whom came from the user community. Basically, the workshop was in agreement with the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the Country Study Report. More importantly, the workshop decided to endorse/adopt in principle the draft Declaration on the Roadmap to a Data Revolution.

The second day was a meeting of the PSA Executive Committee, PARIS21, and the National Consultant. During the meeting, the National Statistician of the Philippines reiterated the full support and commitment of the PSA to the Data Revolution. The meeting also discussed the many challenges being faced by the PSA as well as by other national statistical systems and possible approaches to manage them. In addition, the following ideas came up by way of moving the DR agenda forward:

- The DR should be presented in regional meetings such as the UN ESCAP Committee on Statistics of which the Philippines is currently Chair, and the ASEAN Community Statistical System Committee composed of Heads of statistical offices of the ASEAN Member States with the hope that regional bodies can also endorse the Declaration on the Roadmap to a DR; and
- A global/regional/country level communication plan on the DR should be formulated, including possibly the identification of eminent individuals who can champion the DR

ACRONYMS

ADP	Accelerated Data Program
ARC	Advance Release Calendar
BAS	Bureau of Agricultural Statistics
BLES	Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics
BSP	Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (Central Bank)
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CSM	Customer Satisfaction Monitoring
DA	Department of Agriculture
DBM	Department of Budget and Management
DepED	Department of Education
DOLE	Department of Labor and Employment
DQAF	Data Quality Assurance Framework
FIES	Family Income and Expenditures Survey
FNRI	Food and Nutrition Research Institute
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GSAP	Government Statistics Accessibility Program
IAC	Inter-Agency Committee
IDR	Informing a Data Revolution
LGU	Local Government Unit
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
MOA/MOU	Memorandum of Agreement/ Memorandum of Understanding
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NCR	National Capital Region
NEDA	National Economic and Development Authority
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NNS	National Nutrition Survey
NSCB	National Statistical Coordination Board
NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
NSIC	National Statistical Information Center
NSO	National Statistics Office
NSS	National Statistical System
PARIS 21	Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century
PCIJ	Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism
PSA	Philippine Statistics Authority
PSDP	Philippine Statistical Development Program
PSS	Philippine Statistical System
PUF	Public-Use File
RA	Republic Act
TC	Technical Committee
UN	United Nations