

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE OBSERVANCE OF THE 18th NATIONAL STATISTICS MONTH

I. Introduction

The Philippine Statistical System (PSS), spearheaded by the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB), celebrated the 18th National Statistics Month (NSM) in October 2007, pursuant to Presidential Proclamation No. 647, "Declaring the Month of October of Each Year as the National Statistics Month". The NSM has been envisioned as a vital step in promoting, enhancing and instilling nationwide awareness and appreciation of the value of statistics to the different sectors of society. Further, the NSM is meant to elicit the support of the general public in upgrading the quality and standards of statistics in the country.

The highlight of the 18th NSM was the holding of the 10th National Convention on Statistics (NCS) on 1-2 October 2007 by the Philippine Statistical System (PSS), spearheaded by the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB). This triennial event provides a forum for exchanging ideas and experiences in the field of statistics and discussing prevailing statistical developments, issues and challenges in the country's statistical system. The Convention aims to cover a wide range of topics that are deemed relevant and critical in the new millennium and in an information-oriented economy.

II. Preparations for the 18th National Statistics Month

A. Steering Committee and Sub-Committees

A Steering Committee for the 18th NSM and the 10th National Convention on Statistics (NCS) was created to provide the overall direction and guidance in the conduct of the NSM and the NCS. It was chaired by the NSCB and co-chaired by the National Statistics Office (NSO) and the Department of Energy (DOE). Three (3) Sub-Committees were created to assist the Steering Committee, as follows: (a) Sub-Committee on Programs and Awards; (b) Sub-Committee on Finance and Arrangements; and (c) Sub-Committee on Publicity and Advocacy. The NSCB Technical Staff served as the secretariat of the Steering Committee and Sub-Committees.

B. Theme of the 18th NSM and Its Explanation

The 18th NSM had the theme, "**Statistics and Action: A Road to a Better Life Through the MDGs**"

18TH NATIONAL STATISTICS MONTH THEME: STATISTICS AND ACTION: A ROAD TO A BETTER LIFE THROUGH MDGs

In the words of former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, "... Success will require sustained action across the entire decade between now and the deadline. It takes time to train the teachers, nurses and engineers; to build the roads, schools and hospitals; to grow the small and large businesses able to create the jobs and income needed. So we must start now. And we must more than double global development assistance over the next few years. Nothing less will help to achieve the Goals."

In the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), statistics play a very crucial and significant role. Statistics provide the basis for monitoring progress achieved on such sustained action since 1990 – how we stood at the beginning of the period, where we were at specific intervals of time, and consequently, determine at what pace these developments took place in order for us to assess and project or estimate if our targets are achievable at this pace. Being well informed of these STATISTICS is important for the national and local governments and our development partners to take proper ACTION and implement targeted strategies leading to the ROAD TO A BETTER LIFE in 2015 and beyond.

Thus, with statistics giving impetus to action, our road to a better life means:

- Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieving universal primary education
- Promoting gender equality and empowering women
- Reducing child mortality
- Improving maternal health
- Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Ensuring environmental sustainability, and
- Developing a global partnership for development

The Philippine Statistical System celebrates the 18th National Statistics Month with the theme: "Statistics and Action: A Road to a Better Life Through the MDGs" as statistical events unfold to promote, enhance and instill nationwide awareness and appreciation of the importance and value of statistics, in measuring our progress in attaining the MDGs.

III. Celebration of the 18th National Statistics Month

1. Host Agencies of the 18th NSM

The NSCB and the PSS hosted the opening ceremony of the 18th NSM simultaneous with 10th NCS and the 2007 International Conference on the Millennium Development Goals Statistics. The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), once again hosted the closing ceremony of the NSM held after the BSP – Department of Education (DepEd) Oratorical Contest.

2. Highlights of the 18th NSM Opening Ceremony

The opening ceremony was held on October 1, 2007 at the EDSA Shangri-La Hotel, Mandaluyong City, simultaneously with that of the 2007 International Conference on the Millennium Development Goals and Statistics and the 8th Student Faculty Conference. The OIC Secretary of Socio-Economic Planning and Development, Augusto B. Santos, delivered the welcome remarks, while Dr. Paul Cheung, Director of the United Nations Statistics Division was the guest of honor and keynote speaker.



The 10th NCS, the 2007 International Conference on the Millennium Development Goals and Statistics and the 8th Student Faculty Conference, highlighted the opening of the 18th NSM.



Mr. Rommel Matthew N. Reyes, the first prize winner of the 10th BSP – Department of Education (DepEd) Oratorical Contest delivered his winning piece during the program. The Department of Energy Chorale then rendered an intermission number.

During the closing ceremony of the 10th NCS, the following winners of the 17th NSM Best Statistical Activity by Category and Best Region were announced:

1. Best Radio/TV Plug - Development of the Consumer e-desk, DOE
2. Best Statistical Forum - Users-Producers' Forum on Energy Statistics, DOE
3. 17th NSM Best Region - Ilocos Region (Region I)

The awards were given by Undersecretary Mariano S. Salazar of the DOE, assisted by NSCB Secretary General Romulo A. Virola and NEDA Director Benjamin Turiano, the Chair of the 17th NSM Awards Committee.

3. 18th NSM Activities

As in the past NSMs, the proposed statistical activities by the agencies/institutions nationwide were consolidated to come up with a Calendar of Activities, which were distributed nationwide through the Regional Statistical Coordination Committees. A total of 570 participating agencies/institutions from the government, private sector and academic institutions at the national and subnational levels, joined the celebrations.

A total of 968 activities were programmed by the participating agencies nationwide.

The distribution of statistical activities were as follows: information and education campaigns (IECs) at 423 (44%), fora at 324 (33%), contests at 119 (12%), and exhibits at 102 (11%).

Compared with the 17th NSM, the number of activities during the 18th NSM increased by 14 activities despite the continuous implementation of austerity measures in government.

Statistical Fora

A total of 324 various statistical fora were conducted nationwide, consisting of conventions, conferences, symposia, lectures, workshops and seminars.

The following were the major fora conducted:

➤ 10th National Convention on Statistics (NCS)

The highlight of the 18th NSM was the holding of the 10th National Convention on Statistics (NCS) at the EDSA Shangri-la Hotel in Mandaluyong City on 1-2 October 2007 by the Philippine Statistical System (PSS), spearheaded by the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB). This triennial event provides a forum for exchanging ideas and experiences in the field of statistics and discussing prevailing statistical developments, issues and challenges in the country's statistical system. The Convention aims to cover a wide range of topics that are deemed relevant and critical in the new millennium and in an information-oriented economy.

The 10th NCS coincides with the opening of the 18th National Statistics Month (NSM) celebration in October 1-2, the conduct of the International Conference on the Millennium Development Goals Statistics (ICMDGS) on October 1-3, 2007, and the Statistical Information Management Exhibition or SIMEX 2007 also in the same venue.

The NCS, which is conducted every three years, aimed to (a) provide a forum for exchanging ideas and experiences in the field of statistics and for discussing recent statistical developments and prevailing issues and problems of the Philippine Statistical System and (b) elicit the cooperation and support of statisticians and professionals in related fields from the government, academe and private sector towards a more responsive statistical system.

The 10th NCS was attended by 1,043 participants from the different regions of the country. Compared to the 9th NCS in 2004, last year's convention marked a 40.9% increase over the 740 participants registered in the 2004 NCS. A total of 116 papers were presented in the convention, an 11 percent increase compared to 104 papers presented in the 9th NCS. The convention featured the following:

- two plenary sessions
- 28 sessions on invited papers
- 13 sessions for contributed papers
- two panel discussions
- lecture on sampling design by Dr. Dalisay Maligalig of the Philippine Statistical Association (PSA).

➤ International Conference on Millennium Development Goals Statistics (ICMDGS)

The ICMDGS, organized by the NSCB: (a) provided a midterm evaluation since the Millennium Declaration, of the status of the countries with respect to the MDG goals and targets; (b) served as a forum for sharing good practices and methodologies adopted at the national and international levels; (c) provided venue for discussing organizational issues between the countries and international organizations in the provision of MDG indicators; and (d) served as initial take-off point for the periodic conduct of future MDG data fora, thus providing for a common reference for discussion, and monitoring and evaluation of developments. A total of 75 country representatives and observers participated in the ICMDGS.



➤ 8th Student-Faculty Conference on Statistical Science;

The SFC is a collaborative statistical activity of the University of the Philippines Institute of Statistics (UPINSTAT) in Los Baños and the University of the Philippines School of Statistics (UPSS) in Diliman. The activity is conducted annually with the two schools alternating as host. The 8th SFC was hosted by the UPINSTAT. The SFC was held simultaneously with the 10th NCS for the first time in order to allow the student participants the chance to attend the opening ceremony and first plenary session.

The conference was participated in by 195 students and faculty from the UPINSTAT, UPSS and other invited schools. Papers were presented simultaneously in 3 conference rooms. Winners of best papers were given cash prizes and plaques.

➤ 7th Statistical Congress in Western Visayas.

Spearheaded by the NSCB and the Regional Statistical Coordination Council, the most notable forum held outside the NCR was the 7th Statistical Congress in Western Visayas (WV) held on October 25-26, 2007 at the Four-Season Hotel, Iloilo City. The Statistical Congress is a formal gathering of producers and users of statistics aimed to address the felt need for timely information, and the prevailing statistical issues and problems in the local statistical system in Western Visayas.



The 7th WV Statistical Congress was attended by 132 participants, exceeding its registration target by 65 percent. The government sector, the academe, nongovernment organizations, and private institutions. Were represented in the Congress.

Statistical Contests

A total of 119 statistical contests, such as oratorical, slogan, poster making, quiz bees, and essay writing, were conducted nationwide.

A major contest was the 2007 BSP-DepEd Oratorical Contest held on November 5, 2007 at the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. The contestants in the oratorical contest came from the NCR and the following emerged as the winners:

Name	Region /School	Prize
1. Andrew Mark M. Asuncion	Gregorio Perfecto High School	First Prize
2. Karen Leslie D. Dematera	Marikina Science High School	Second Prize
3. Leandro Glen G. Lorenzo	Makati High School	Third Prize



Statistical Exhibits

A total of 102 statistical exhibits were displayed nationwide.

Information and Education Campaign (IEC) Activities

To facilitate the advocacy and publicity activities for the NSM, the 18th NSM homepage (www.nscb.gov.ph/nsm) served as the medium for faster dissemination of information for the NSM. The website contains all the relevant information such as the historical information about the NSM, objectives, schedule of activities as well as other relevant NSM documents such as the NSM Memorandum Circular, streamer format, format in the submission of NSM activities, etc.

An NSM email account (nsm@nscb.gov.ph) was also maintained to facilitate the exchange of information and for queries about NSM.

Radio/TV plugs/broadcasts, radio and press releases, radio/tv interview/guestings on various topics, dissemination of publications/information sheets, film/slide showing, establishment of information corner, open house, motorcades and hanging of streamers were the most common IEC activities nationwide. NSM posters were displayed in the different agencies, schools and other public and strategic places. A total of 423 IEC activities were implemented for the 18th NSM.

NSM Inter-Agency Activities

➤ 3rd PSS Tree Planting Activity

The third PSS Tree Planting, an inter-agency activity was held at Sitio Kaysakat, Barangay San Jose, Antipolo City on 24 October 2007 as part of the observance of the NSM. This marked the third year that the NSM featured a tree planting activity to help promote social relevance and environmental awareness as well as foster cooperative spirit and camaraderie among members of the PSS and other stakeholders of statistics. This was the first time that the activity was done outside Metro Manila. The activity was in keeping with the theme of the NSM for the year with MDG Goal No. 7 aimed at ensuring environmental sustainability. It also supports the Trees for Life Project, a key activity of the DENR, which aims to mobilize various sectors in tree planting initiatives.



Key officials who delivered messages on the significance of the event include: Assistant Secretary General Estrella V. Domingo of NSCB and Rizal Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer (PENRO) Paterno B. Olivera. Around 172 participants consisting of representatives of the BAS, BLES, BSP, DAR, DENR, DepEd, DILG, DOE, DPWH, NSCB, NSO, and SRTC were guided and assisted by officials and staff of Antipolo City CENRO in the planting of 200 seedlings, which were provided by the DENR.



➤ **Badminton Fun Games with the Media**

A new event in the form of a night of badminton fun games with the media was held on October 5, 2007 at the Sheridan Badminton Center in Mandaluyong City, led by the NEDA Development Information Staff as lead organizers. The 18th NSM Steering Committee approved the activity as it acknowledged the need to balance the mental challenges of government statistical service with physical and social exercises, while involving more interaction between statistical personnel and the media. Members of the media who attended were from the GMA News, Business World, Pilipino Star Ngayon, and Malaya. A special guest was Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya, himself a badminton aficionado.

Regional Celebrations

Statistical activities were conducted in all regions outside the NCR. These ranged from a simple activity, such as hanging of streamer or display of NSM posters to more innovative and impressive statistical activities, such as holding of a statistical congress, statistical forum and lecture series, motorcade, statistical exhibits, workshops, and radio/tv interview/guestings. These were all geared to raise statistical awareness and appreciation focusing on the theme of the event. The NSM observance in the region was spearheaded by the Regional Statistical Coordination Committees (RSCCs) with the NSCB Regional Divisions providing the secretariat services in Regions I, IV, V, VI, VIII, IX, X, XI, XII and CAR. The NEDA and/or NSO Regional Offices coordinated and provided support in the celebration of the NSM in the other regions of the country.

18th NSM Closing Ceremony

The 18th NSM closing ceremony was held on November 5, 2007 during the 2007 BSP-DepEd Oratorical Contest held at BSP. Governor Amando M. Tetangco, Jr. of the BSP was the keynote speaker. Dr. Romulo A. Virola formally closed the 18th NSM.

