PHILIPPINE
STATISTICAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

A Concept Paper

Rationale

The Philippine Statistical System (PSS) traces a long history that saw its evolution from the conduct of the very first census in 1903 to the highly decentralized and dynamic setup that it is today. Some few years back, statistics hardly figure in public debates or coffee table conversations, except those on the results of opinion polls that have become a fixture in many forms of media these days. It seemed then that statistics is made of stuff only economists, financial analysts, journalists, academicians, and intellectuals can understand and talk about.

Recently though, statistics has started getting its share of public attention, if not recognition. Thanks to past and recent commentaries and opinions of some high profile personalities, people are now discussing the changes and movements of the Gross National/Domestic Product, poverty incidence, inflation and unemployment rates, budget deficit, among others. Although more often than not, these views have put statistics under scrutiny, the ways and circumstances that these have been played up in the newspapers, television and radio, indicate the growing impact of statistics in the country's affairs. The situation, moreover, presents opportunities for the PSS to educate the public on these indicators, to highlight the need to generate, use, and disseminate timely and relevant statistical information, and to elicit support towards the improvement of statistical services in the country.

The creation of the **Statistical Advisory Council** in the Philippines is a step further towards mainstreaming statistics in the daily workings of society, and is premised on the two-pronged mission of the PSS to promote an efficient and effective government statistical service and ensure the relevance of the statistical products and services to changing user needs and requirements. Similar to the Statistics Advisory Council in Australia, the Statistics Commission in the United Kingdom, and the National Statistics Council in Canada, the SAC's overriding objective is to help the statistical system in reaching out to users through wider consultation mechanisms and processes on the quality, quality assurance and priority setting of the PSS and on measures designed to promote statistical integrity and ensure responsiveness of statistics to public needs.

Objectives

1. To reach out to data users in various sectors by forging stronger linkages with the PSS and to provide a wider consultation process and venue where advice could be given for the improvement, extension and coordination of statistical programs and services;

2. To promote the quality and integrity of statistics by involving key industry/sector data users/stakeholders in the discussion of issues and quality improvements that the PSS needs to undertake to address these issues; and

3. To enhance public recognition and appreciation of statistics through the consultative/advisory role of the Council.

Functions

The main function of the Council is to give independent, expert, and relevant advice to the PSS, through the National Statistical Coordination Board (Executive Board), that will provide additional safeguard on the quality and integrity of Philippine statistics. Moreover, the Council is expected to boost statistical advocacy among the public in general, and among users in the different sectors/institutions represented.

Composition

The Council will be an independent advisory body composed of eminent professionals, academicians, practitioners, and other stakeholders selected based on individual or professional stature/standing in relevant sectors/ institutions that constitute the user base of statistics.

The Council will have as its **Chair**, the current Chair of the NSCB Executive Board to provide the crucial link between the Council and the PSS.

Members

Eminent individuals from the following sectors/ subsectors:

- Social Sciences
- Research organizations
- Business
- Information and communication technology
- Mass media
- Professional organizations
- Other eminent individuals who played key roles in statistics development and utilization such as past NSCB Chair and/or retired professionals
- Union of Local Authorities in the Philippines

Terms of service

For the first term, some members of the council will serve for a period of three (3) years while some will serve for two (2) years. Thereafter, a member shall serve for a period of two years. No member may be re-appointed immediately after the current term. This means that there will be some new members each year thus ensuring diversity of issues, concerns, and ideas and dynamic representation of stakeholders.

Meetings

The Council shall meet at least once a year at a date to be determined by the Chair or agreed upon by the body. Representation/substitution in the meetings will not be allowed as the members are selected based on individual expertise/professional standing.

After each meeting, the Secretariat shall prepare a summary of issues/concerns discussed and a corresponding action plan to be discussed with concerned agencies and inter-agency committees (IACs) and presented to the NSCB Executive Board for appropriate action. The heads of the major statistical agencies and chairpersons of the various IACs shall thus be invited to attend the meetings of the Council. A status report on the resolution of issues and/or implementation of action plans will be presented in the immediately succeeding meeting of the Council.

Secretariat

The NSCB Technical Staff shall provide the secretariat services to the council and shall prepare the provisional Council's Annual Report for review/approval of the Council.

Terms of reference of the Council

The Council shall:

1. Assist the NSCB Executive Board in the advocacy of statistics;

2. Advise the NSCB Executive Board on statistical issues such as the overall quality of official statistics, data gaps emanating from current and emerging concerns, and the need to further strengthen the statistical capability of the PSS; and

3. Serve as partner of the statistical community in upholding the integrity of Philippine statistics.