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Partnerships between Arab Statistical Offices
To Build a National Statistical System

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Abstract

This paper aims to identify the most important areas of cooperation and to exchange. The experiences between the Arab Statistical agencies. It also presents the successful experiences in three Arab countries to enhance the statistical capacities in these countries namely Egypt, Palestine, & Jordan.

In addition, this paper sheds light on the development of the national statistical system to ensure the statistical product quality, according to international standards.

The descriptive approach, based on reports from United Nations Statistical Commission, is employed in the paper.

The study recommends using the best practices in the dissemination of statistics in different media types, strengthening the partnership between media and statistical agencies, and providing financial and technical support to these national systems.

Keywords: Enhancing statistical capacities, Quality of the statistical system, Best practices, and Experiences from the Arab Statistical Agencies.

1. Introduction

The international community plays an important role in statistical development by promoting and implementing internationally agreed standards, therefore the World Bank has established a special fund to support statistical capacity in countries by providing financial support and technical assistance, in order to strengthen Arab statistical capabilities in cooperation with the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (Paris 21), the Arab League, ESCWA, in order to develop national strategies for the development of statistics & strengthening statistical capacity in Arab countries.

The international statistical system allows to identify the best practices and experiences through seminars and international conferences and meetings, which seek to use scientific methods to improve the level of performance and improve the quality of statistical products for the application of the concepts of modern management low cost and high quality to achieve user satisfaction and the development of human resources.

Despite the achievements of the Arab statistical agencies in statistical work, but there is still some relative disparity between the countries, which needs to be more effort to keep up with statistical levels in developed countries.

This paper is based on the idea of developing and modernizing the national statistical system to ensure keeping up with product Statistical international standards, this can be done by Statistical Capacity Building of the National Statistical System, through providing a set of ideas about the mechanisms of statistical capacity building in the Arab countries.

Also, this paper gives a recommendation for the Arab countries to improve their statistical capacities & identify the experiences between the Arab Statistical Agencies for statistical capacities building.

2. Methods

This study depends on a descriptive analytical approach based on International reports, from United Nations Statistical Commission and World Bank.

3. Statistical Capacity Building in Arab Countries

World Bank has presented statistical capacity indicator, in order to the international assessment of national statistical capacities, and compare between members countries.

The following are the indicators of statistical capacity at the level of Arab countries.

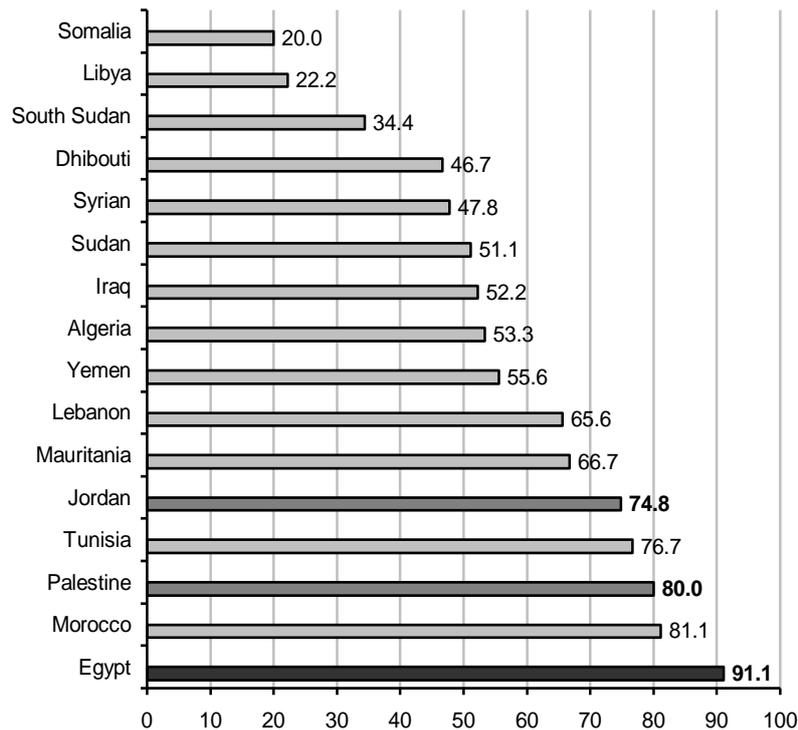


Figure 1: Statistical Capacity in Arab Countries, 2015

According to Figure (1) we note that Egypt are ranked first among Arab countries, which shows that there is a significant evolution in the statistical work in Egypt, Then Morocco come in the second rank, and Palestine in the third rank, in spite of their participation in the index in 2009, but it's making rapid strides towards progress, then comes the Jordan in the fifth rank among Arab countries, while coming in last rank both of Somalia, Libya, and South Sudan.

4. Best Practices and Experiences Used in Statistical Capacity Building

The experiences of Arab countries in the capacity building is limited experiments, Although these countries focus on the importance of statistical capacities building, interested on the obstacles which encountered, and requirements.

The following a summary of the best practices of the Arab countries in statistical capacity building:

- Benefit from opportunities the regional & international training.
- Job Rotation for employees and its role in capacity building.
- The qualifying specialist team in the field of censuses.
- Dependence on technical assistance in statistical capacity building.
- Exchange of experiences between generations within the statistical organization.
- Good planning contributes to Statistical Capacity Building.
- Benefit from a team of experts in the statistical organization to take advantage of them both domestically and internationally.
- Annual evaluation of employees and identify training needs.

5. Development of National Statistical Systems

Arab statistical agencies are started in applying the Excellence Model of the European in the administration (EFQM), in order to raise the capacity of employees and Restructuring, improve the IT environment, and update internal work environment, to dissemination of the culture of excellence among employees to ensure a comprehensive framework for the management of work according to international standards.

The self-assessment framework is Considered for government jobs (CAF) comprehensive tool for quality management according to European Framework Quality Management, It aims to help government agencies to adopt quality and improve state institutions techniques, it is the beginning of a long-term strategy development, a quick investment for time and training.

- **Egypt** has begun to apply self-assessment for European model (CAF) In Jan. 2016, to achieve the overall quality due to the implementation of the state plan for administrative reform to raise efficiency of government agencies through motivating employees, and activation strategy team spirit, and the opportunity to participate in the work to get to the outstanding performance to achieve higher efficiency in the provision of government services, in addition to increasing the number of customer and satisfaction levels.
- **Palestine** has obtained on ISO 9001:2008 certificate in 2010, and during 2014, PCBS began the preparatory phases for applying the Excellence Model in management (EFQM), in order to raise the capacity of staff, and promoting the culture of excellence among PCBS staff and ensure a comprehensive framework for managing PCBS operations benchmarked against international standards.
- **Emirates** is an example of a mature & successful experiments globally in the application of excellence model, This success has led to the public sector outweigh on the private sector in the quality of services & institutional status, and had become a private sector organizations looks forward to government institutions, which led to get the government of Dubai to first place globally in government performance.

6.The Most Important Areas of Cooperation and Exchange The Experiences Between the Arab Statistical Agencies

- **Egypt** has a partnership with ESCWA, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), in the prepared a population Atlas, whoever the most important methods to view and analyze statistical data and information on the demographic.
- **Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, Jordan and Palestine** prepared a unified guide of statistical concepts for Arab countries to facilitate international comparisons.

- **Palestine** has issued Charter of practices of the Palestinian official statistics in 2006 to enhance the degree of complying with the concepts & a commitment to the basic principles.
- **Jordan** initiative to provide the Arab statistical organization by the matrix linking the International Classification of occupations and Arab Classification of professions.
- **Saudi Arabia** translated parts of the methodologies, definitions guide, and how to calculate the environment and sustainable development indicators into Arabic for dissemination to the Arab countries to take advantage of it in the application of these indicators.
- **Emirates** has evaluated the administrative records data and put the necessary initiatives to improve the accuracy.
- **Iraq, Palestine, and Jordan** established centers and special committees to manage the development of data quality.
- **Qatar** has taken serious steps in the field of dialogue with the users of the data through the establishment of seminars and workshops to learn their needs & increase awareness of the importance of statistics in development processes.

7. Results

Through to the Study we concluded that: Although to the progress achieved in the Arab countries, but faces a number of obstacles that apply on the most or all of the statistical agencies, especially in developing countries, which need to be more harmony with statistical levels in developed countries, had highlighted of these obstacles are the Financial, Administrative, Professional, and External.

- **Financial Obstacles:** The decrease in the funding of the most important constraints, which faced by statistical agencies of the inability of the organization to compete with private sector.
- **Administrative Obstacles:** The most important point is wasting the efforts without clear objectives, as a result of the low administrative capacity to manage the organization statistical, with the absence of good planning system.
- **Professional Obstacles:** is a collect of statistical data without practical benefit, While not available to users, with Lack of commitment to the scientific and professional ethics in determining the methods and procedures for statistical data collection, processing, storage and display, in addition to not to work to ease the burden the respondents, Non maintain the confidentiality of individual data, and non-use of international concepts, classifications and methods in statistical work.
- **External Obstacles:** Represented in the state's general policy conditions and Unavailability of local Efficiencies capable of work and relying on external expertise.

8. Conclusions

- The central statistical agencies are the only source for the issues of official statistics in the Arab countries.
- The importance of coordination between ministries and government agencies and decision-makers through the electronic linking to prevent inconsistencies in statistical data with those agencies.
- Increasing the regional forums on a statistical capacity building is involving in the statistical system at the national and regional levels, that would lead to a better professional coordination between the different components of the national statistical system to the provision of high- quality statistics.
- Necessity the agencies take to self-assessment on the statistical products.
- Necessity of good marketing statistical products published so attractive way and clear and understood by everyone.

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