



**THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF
ETHIOPIA**

CENTRAL STATISTICAL AUTHORITY

**CSA's Reaction to Some Statements Made in the Medium
Term Statistical Program Reports Vol. I-III**

**April 24, 1998
Addis Ababa**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction -----	1
User-Producer Relationship -----	1
Efforts Made to Materialize the Undertaking of the National Agricultural Census -----	4
Absence of Realistic and Effective Planning -----	5
Data Supply in Ethiopia are Supply Driven and not National Priority -----	6
Data Are Highly Scattered, Inconsistent and Poor Quality -----	6
Committed Resources Poorly Managed -----	7
Time Lag between Data Collection and Dissemination -----	7
Lack of Flexibility in Approach -----	10
Concerning Expatriate Professional Staff -----	11
Lack of Awareness -----	11
Coverage, Level of Disaggregation and Reporting Levels -----	11
Proposed Organizational Structure for CSA (Statistical Act) -----	14

CSA's Reaction to Some Statements Made in the Medium Term

Statistical Program Reports Vol. I-III

1. Introduction

The Central Statistical Authority (CSA) has received and reviewed carefully and attentively the three volumes of the study reports which was prepared by a task force of professionals drawn from MEDaC and CSA entitled "The medium Term National Statistical Program for Ethiopia". According to the CSA's review of the reports, statistical problems of the country are well addressed and comprehensively. The task force in its assignment has thoroughly reviewed the statistical data requirement and identified the data gap. Furthermore, it has proposed how and which institution should assume the responsibility for narrowing/filling the data gap. Last but not least, the task force has come up with a recommendation of an organizational structure which it thinks is implied and appropriate with the political and administrative set-up of the country.

First of all the CSA would like to appreciate MEDaC for initiating such an undertaking of national importance i.e. for the establishment of the Medium Term National Statistical Program for the country. However, CSA would like to take this opportunity to comment on the three volumes. The comments forwarded ranges form minor modifications of certain expressions to reservations and objections pertaining to some issues raised in the reports.

2. User - Producer Relationship

It is well known that in Ethiopia there has not been a comprehensive and well articulated statistical programs that involved a wide range of users at both national and regional levels. However, even in the formulation of this medium term statistical program, the involvement of a wide range of users was limited to

MEDaC representing “the users” and CSA, representing “the producer”. If these two institutions are the only stake holders, in formulating a realistic and effective planning, then one might conclude that these two institutions have been consulting and working together for a long time. Moreover, each year the CSA’s plan of action was evaluated and approved by the major data users, i.e. MEDaC. In this situation, one could say that there has been interaction between users and producers. Therefore, it is difficult to state that the data collection and flow of data is governed by the interest of producers only.

It is true, that there is no institutionalized forum where one could bring data users and producers together. However, CSA tried to create user producer forum regarding agricultural statistics in May 1996. In this exercise, representatives of MEDaC, MOA, and DPPC professional staff members have participated in the committee formed by the CSA and these institutions represented the major data users and producers, respectively. The committee had a number of successive meetings discussing on the contents of the agricultural survey questionnaires and suggested some modifications in the concepts and definitions and re-designing of some parts of the existing questionnaires. For example, re-arrangement of age group structure of cattle, sheep and goats was one of their suggestions. Some of the proposed suggestions were well taken and incorporated in the survey questionnaires. Thus, the committee discussed in its deliberation the definition of Belg and Meher seasons as used by CSA data collectors, and the definition traditionally used by the public was the issue raised by the data users. However, the committee members felt that these issues need to be resolved by involving all relevant agencies as well as Regional Agricultural Bureaus and thus these issues could not be resolved during these meetings.

Similarly, in order to coordinate different data producers and thereby to minimize the confusion of data users especially that of agriculture, a committee was formed by the CSA in March 1997. The committee comprised two members of the management and three members from the relevant departments of the Authority. Initially the committee contacted and arranged meeting with the higher officials of the four regions that are important in agricultural production. By visiting them at their respective regional capitals, i.e., of Oromiya, Amhara, Tigray and the Southern, Nations, Nationalities and Peoples at different times during March and April of 1997. The purpose of the meeting was to find solutions and to discuss as to how to coordinate the efforts of Regional Agricultural Development Bureaus (RADB) and that of the CSA regarding the annual agricultural survey operation.

Then the CSA organized a workshop in September 1997 and invited MEDaC, MOA, DPPC and two Technical personnels of the RADB from each region and discussed for one and half days on how to collaborate with the RADBs. CSA volunteered to give technical assistance to the RADBs by training their development agents (data collectors), however, the training could not takeplace because of the budget constraints of the RADB. The outcome of the workshop and the recommendation was officially submitted to MEDaC and to the other participating agencies.

Following are given some more interaction by CSA with potential data users:-

a. For every socio-economic and demographic survey and censuses that have been undertaken by the CSA, there is always a seminar of user-producers before launching the operation. The major objective of the seminar was to discuss on the content of the survey questionnaires and manuals. In these exercise

potential data users of surveys and censuses were involved. Such seminars have been organized on:-

- i) The 1984 Population and Housing Census,
- ii) The 1992 Nutritional Surveillance Survey,
- iii) The 1994 Population and Housing Census,
- iv) The 1995/96 Household Budget and Welfare Monitoring Surveys,
- v) The 1998 Welfare Monitoring, Health and Nutrition Surveys,
- ...etc.

b. Survey data dissemination and user-producer seminars have been carried out on:-

- i) The 1990 Family and Fertility Survey in March, 1994 and
- ii) Annual Agricultural Survey in November, 1995

3. Efforts Made to Materialize the Undertaking of the National Agricultural Census

It is clear that data generated from undertaking National Agricultural Census is of paramount importance for agricultural sector planning and for monitoring and evaluation of the sector's performance. Realizing this, CSA immediately, after undertaking the 1984 National Population and Housing Census, thought it is advantageous to make use of the logistics support and the manpower developed as a result of conducting the census and to make use of the results of the census cartographic work as a frame to launch the National Agricultural Census. Thus, in 1985/86 CSA prepared a project proposal to carry-out the first National Agricultural Census in Ethiopia. However, this proposal has not been in the priority to be given the budgetary support. Hence, the effort to undertake this census has not succeeded.

CSA kept on pushing on this matter and once again, following the 1994 National Population and Housing Census, CSA tried to take advantage of the experience gained in the 1994 population census. Hence, CSA prepared a project proposal to undertake the agricultural census in 1995 and submitted it to the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MOPED) but there was no response.

CSA further discussed this matter with the Ministry of Agriculture, FAO, UNDP,...etc. in 1995 and prepared a comprehensive project document with external support component (mainly from UNDP and FAO) and submitted the project proposal to MEDaC through the MOA. Again this project has not been given priority and has not been heralded with budgetary provision to materialize it. Once again, CSA included the undertaking of the National Agricultural Census in its current three year work program. Hopefully, this time the Agricultural Census will be given its due attention. So that the CSA will undertake the necessary census preparatory activities in 1998/99 and launch the census in 1999/2000.

4. Absence of a Realistic and Effective Planning

In recent years the government requested all government institutions to present their five and three year work plans showing all their activities and budgetary requirements. And these work plans have been submitted to the relevant Department of MEDaC that the work plans were approved and the budget was allotted for the projects. In the CSA's Plan "The National Integrated Household Survey Program" is the program that has been introduced and

implemented effectively since 1979/80. Hence, the statement “Absence of Realistic and Effective Planning” cannot be justified.

5. Data Supply in Ethiopia are Supply Driven and not National Priority

The CSA did not and would not collect data for its own sake, but proposes to undertake surveys in its plan of action in order to narrow the large statistical data gap that exists in the country. Unless the proposed plan of action presented by the CSA is approved by the government there is no way that the office could carry out either surveys or censuses. It is only when the government is convinced that the output of the statistical surveys and/or censuses are important for the policy makers and are of national priority, that the relevant government body would allocate the required amount of resources. It is not clear for CSA as to which statistical programs have been entertained that were not of national priority.

6. Data Are Highly Scattered , Inconsistent and of Poor Quality

It is not clear which statistical data are highly scattered, inconsistent and of poor quality. All surveys are conducted using standard methods of data collection and sound methodological procedures. In spite of this fact, CSA does not claim that all statistical data produced are perfect and free from sampling and non-sampling errors that are inherent in any survey. There may be non-sampling errors which might be attributed to data collectors’ and to the respondents in answering to the questions raised in the survey. However, the office is continuously trying to control the non-sampling errors by providing its field staff with intensive training and by closely supervising the data collection activities. Moreover, CSA is improving the quality of its survey reports by incorporating the standard errors and coefficient of variations starting from 1994/95. It is the belief of CSA that there is still room for refinement of the methodology and the quality of the data. But it is not fair to conclude by saying the data produced are inconsistent and of

poor quality. It is also the CSA's belief that detrimental and sweeping phrases such as the data produced are "fragmented, fragile, inconsistent, of poor quality, highly, scattered ...etc." should have been avoided.

7. Committed Resources Poorly Managed

The purpose of introducing the National Integrated Household Survey Program (NIHSP) is to maximize the use of allocated budget and to get optimum statistical results out of the committed resources. The NIHSP constitutes different surveys that are important for the country, the major one is Agriculture. There is no dispute on putting agriculture on a top priority in a country where food security of the entire population is dependent on agriculture. Thus, the government needs to get timely and reliable data of agriculture annually. The other surveys that are integrated with agriculture are considered mainly to fill the data gap. Thus, different socio-economic surveys are introduced and conducted each year under NIHSP. Furthermore, in order to make effective use of the committed resources, recently CSA has been and is carrying out socio-economic surveys of national importance to other agencies at cost on subcontract basis, e.g. survey of informal sector, benchmark survey on the use of fertilizer,...etc. The decision of the types of surveys to be conducted each year depends on prior approval by the relevant agency, in the current case by MEDaC. At this juncture, there is no evidence to state that the CSA has poorly managed its committed resources.

8. Time Lag between Data Collection and Dissemination

Regarding the time lag between the data collection and dissemination has shown considerable improvement has been shown in recent years. That is, mainly due to the commitment and hard work of CSA staff and introduction of powerful data processing equipment and personal computer based software. Moreover, the

efforts put by the management to shorten the time needed for editing, coding, data entry and time needed for processing the data has helped to narrow the time lag. The close supervision of the management to meet the deadlines set in the action plan had also contributed to speed up each activity and able to meet the given deadlines.

As mentioned above, due to the efforts made by the CSA staff and the management and the capacity building of the office, the problem of the time lag is progressively improving with time. The report of Area and Production, Meher Season, of the 1981/82 Agricultural Sample Survey took 11 months to be released, i.e., it was released in January 1983. However, the above mentioned report was released after eight months for the preceding year. The same report of 1991/92 Agricultural Sample Survey was disseminated in August 1992, i.e., 6 months after data collection was completed.

Coming to the recent years, i.e., 1994/95 up until to date, the reports of Area and Production become available for the data users within the range of two to four months time after the data collection was completed. In the 1995/96 Agricultural Sample Survey, the report on Area and Production was made available in June 1996, while that of 1996/97 was made available in April 1997 in less than two months. It is to be noted that the data collection activities would not be completed until February 1997. This is an outstanding achievements considering the vastness of the country, transportation and communication problem and the limited skilled manpower and logistics support the office has to retrieve the filled-in questionnaire from the field.

Regarding the Annual Manufacturing Industry Survey, the data collection activity used to take from eight to 12 months. However, by improving the

logistics support provided for the survey activities, and by increasing the number of field staff, the period of data collection was highly reduced to three months in 1995 and further reduced to six weeks in 1997. The time lag between time reference and dissemination of the survey result has been substantially reduced. For example the 1995/96 data on manufacturing industries were collected in June 1997 and the report was printed and disseminated in October 1997 in just three months. In the same year, to fill the data gap of manufacturing industrial sector, the small scale manufacturing survey was conducted in January 1997, and cottage and handicraft manufacturing industries survey was conducted in March 1997. The reports from these surveys were made available in May, and November, 1997, respectively.

At this juncture, it is also in order to mention CSA's achievement in delivering the 1994 Population and Housing Census result to users in a very short time. The 1994 Census covered the residents of all the regions in the country which was a total population of about 54 million. In the Census detailed data on Population and Housing were collected. The editing, coding and data entry operations were completed in a duration of about 12 months. The computer processing operation of the data was also carried out simultaneously with editing, coding and data entry. As a result, the processing of the data was also completed in about 15 months time after the census enumeration. The report presenting the census result for all regions was published and disseminated in about 18 months time after the census enumeration. This is really a good achievement compared to the experiences of many African countries where these operations took much longer time.

It is to be remembered that the census in the Affar and Somali Regions were undertaken once again in July - August 1996 and July - October 1997,

respectively. The result from these censuses were ready in even a shorter period. That is, the result of the census of Affar Region was released to users in a duration of about three months i.e., in December 1996. The results of the census of the Somali Region was released to users in a duration of about four months, i.e., in February 1998.

The above cited examples are selected to demonstrate how the performance of the office is progressively improving in recent years regarding dissemination of the results of the annual surveys and censuses. With all its constraints presented in the Executive Summary, of the Medium Term National Statistical Program for Ethiopia, the CSA is doing its level best. Despite the lag of institutional restructuring and the high number of resigning professional staff, the office cannot be blamed as it is deteriorating and performing poorly.

9. Lack of Flexibility in Approach

Lack of flexibility in CSA's approach of data collection, processing and dissemination could not be really mentioned as a problem any more, because, currently, the office is trying to adopt new techniques in its survey methodologies whenever it is possible. For instance, in the field of Agricultural Statistics, the office formulated a project proposal and presented to the USAID/Ethiopia in 1996 in order to improve the methods of its data collection, processing and dissemination. As a result, the introduction of GPS for area measurement and the balance sheet approach for data collection in livestock survey. These methods are being tested and piloted on experimental basis. The data processing is also planned to be decentralized to improve on the timeliness of the data dissemination. New techniques of crop cutting are also being experimented.

10. Concerning Expatriate Professional Staff

No expatriate staff has been hired for CSA's ongoing programs, except the few short term Technical Assistant that was considered. These personnels involved are those expatriates especially who came for the data processing aspects of the 1994 National Population Census, introduced IMPS software to speed up the data entry and processing activities of the Census. These expatriates have trained over 20 professional staff in IMPS software, in which these programmers were able to adopt the same software for all types of surveys by the office. The only expatriate the office currently is the Resident Advisor of Agricultural Statistics. He is here to bring alternative approaches in survey methodology, and improvement of agricultural statistics in general.

11. Lack of Awareness

As a matter of fact, the outputs of all statistical surveys and censuses are being used by all Regional States, Central Government and interested private sectors, NGOs and others. Hence, the CSA data are not tuned to the needs of narrow users. Obviously one might argue about the problem of lack of awareness of the public, since the importance of statistical data is not known by the majority of the population. This not particular problem for Ethiopia, it is common in other developing countries too. Creating public awareness is very important in getting reliable data from the respondents. However, we don't really think this problem is disastrous in Ethiopia as it is indicated in the report, "The present state of statistical data is a mirror image of failure in understanding the importance of statistical data of the society".

12. Coverage, Level of Disaggregation and Reporting Levels

First, the use of the term "coverage" has to be straightened in the context of any surveys and censuses, in general and that of CSA's, in particular. Coverage of

a given sample survey or of a census may be viewed in terms of area/geography and sampling rate.

With regard to area/geographic coverage, surveys embraced by CSA's NIHSP has not included nomadic areas of Afar and Somali Regions. This fact is always mentioned in the survey reports (example, crop and livestock statistics) of CSA in order not to confuse users. One of the reasons for not covering these areas is that the methodology employed by CSA for areas inhabited by sedentary population does not effectively apply for areas inhabited by nomadic population. As in the case of other countries with substantial nomadic populations, special methodologies are required. At the moment CSA does not have both the technical and organizational capacity to conduct regular surveys in these areas. But given the necessary support, CSA will be able to develop the appropriate methodology for surveys covering the nomadic areas.

In the report "Level of disaggregation" and "Reporting level" are used as if they denote different notions. But as far as CSA is concerned both the phrases mean the same thing and can be used interchangeably. By definition Level of disaggregation is a geographical, administrative, institutional, etc. part of a whole defined in such a way that each level is important on its own so that the survey data is disaggregated in order to report for it. Reporting level is also a domain, usually an area domain, for which separate survey results are reported. From the discussion in the report, level of disaggregation seems to address classification of the data by various factors or dimensions of interest, for example, by age, sex, etc. As a result this term may be renamed as "level of classification".

As discussed in the report and demonstrated in the data gap matrix, it is evident that CSA's most surveys have not fully satisfied the requirement with

respect to level of disaggregation and reporting level, The problem is basically two-fold:

The first problem is related to sample size. The area level at which statistical results are to be reported and the extent of survey data classification are determined by the size of the sample which is a function of funding and institutional capability. In order to sustain a detailed and disaggregated analysis from the survey data both the fund and the capability to be given the due consideration. To be more specific, consider the annual agricultural sample survey of CSA. Currently the survey results are reported at Zonal level. But such results are now wanted at woreda level. To meet this requirement the current sample size has to increase roughly 10-11 fold. As a result of this it is fairly clear to imagine the implication of expansion of this order on funding and capacity.

The second problem is related to sectors/sub-sectors which should be addressed separately. The NIHSP of CSA is designed to narrow the national data gap, and enrich the national data base cost effectively. As a result of this, different surveys which may require approaches and design of their own are compromised and integrated under a single survey program. However, there is still flexibility within the program to suit objectives of individual surveys. One limitation of integrated survey programs is that they cannot address satisfactorily all variables of interest in a given sector. For instance from CSA's Annual Agricultural Sample Survey, it is hardly possible to obtain all types of agricultural information, such as fruits, vegetables, cash crops etc. required by users. This survey is expected to furnish timely and reliable indicators on major and outstanding areas of interest. NIHSP is also instrumental to plan and design special surveys pertaining to agricultural items with a highly skewed distribution, for example, fruits, vegetables, cash crops, etc.

12. Proposed Organizational Structure for CSA (Statistical Act)

The Constitution of the FDRE empowers National Regional States for self-government. National States are responsible, among others, to prepare and implement development plans. For effective planning and implementation reliable data is essential and hence their demand for reliable data is appreciated. Data collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination is expensive, time consuming and requires qualified and experienced professionals.

In order to establish a statistical office the basic requirement is office space, logistics support, field vehicles, computer equipment and accessories, adequate financial and human resources to run the office. The human resource should include skilled manpower (professionals) with subject matter background. That is, professional with first degree and postgraduate training in statistics, economics, sociology, demography, geography, computer science, ..etc. and with relatively longer period of experiences in planning and undertaking censuses, socio-economic and demographic surveys and thereby processing and analysing the resulting data, preparing the reports and disseminating to users.

It took CSA over two decades to reach at its current stage and still it needs to develop more skilled manpower and further strengthening in this regard. CSA has 22 branch statistical offices (only 15 are currently operational) and each has only one professional staff with first degree. Considering this situation, it is of paramount importance to think of strengthening the CSA and its branch offices in terms of logistics and human resources. Hence, CSA could be in a position to fulfill the data requirement of users in terms of content and aerial coverage. Moreover, CSA will be in a better and efficient position to play the coordinating and advisory role that has been entrusted to it.

A proposal has been made by the task force for a new organizational structure in such away that there will be a Federal Statistical Authority and independent (decentralized) regional statistical offices. According to the task force the relationship between FDA and Regional Statistical Offices are "Functionally Centralized and Administratively Decentralized". This is tantamount to setting up eleven statistical offices other than the office at federal level. There is no way that the Federal Statistical Office would be able to have control with respect to quality and timeliness over the data to be collected by the decentralized regional statistical offices. It is clear to imagine the kind of problems that the Federal Statistical Office is going to encounter in processing and compiling such data set. Moreover, it is worth to point out that this is not cost effective and a very expensive exercise to indulge in.

In developed and developing countries with federal administrative set up, Statistical Offices Operate at Central Level. For example, in the USA the Bureau of the Census operate from the center having 12 branch offices in the entire country. Similarly Canada, Philippines, Nigeria, ...etc.operate their statistical offices on centralized basis.

The task force cited Nigeria as running its statistical office on a decentralized basis. But Nigeria has a Federal Statistician Office (FSO) with six zonal federal branch statistical offices and statistical branch offices all over the 30 states. The states also have their own independent state statistical offices. The zonal branch statistical offices (of FSO) have the responsibility to coordinate the activities of 4-7 state statistical offices (of FSO). The state branch statistical offices (of FSO) are much stronger in terms of logistics and human resources than the independent state statistical offices. Definitely, the zonal branch and state

branch statistical offices of the Federal Statistical Office give substantial support in terms of coordination, methodology, standardization...etc. to the independent state statistical offices with respect to their statistical operations.

