

## Experts discuss trends and approaches to assessing statistical quality

Statistical quality is an important and timely topic, increasingly recognized as key to the future of statistics. The need to have a clearer view of statistical quality brought together leading experts from national and international statistical agencies at the Statistical Quality Seminar 2000, cosponsored by the Korea National Statistical Office (KNSO) and the IMF, and held in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea, on December 6–8, 2000. The seminar was jointly funded by the Korean authorities and the Japan Administered Account, under which Japan contributes to the IMF's training and technical assistance activities. The seminar covered a broad range of issues related to data quality, including trends and approaches to statistical quality assessment and national experiences in assessing and improving the quality of official statistics. In his opening remarks, Young-Dae Yoon, KNSO

Commissioner, noted that there was broad recognition that statistical quality was a multidimensional concept that went well beyond traditional views that equated data quality with accuracy. This set the stage for the enthusiastic and thought-provoking exchange of views that followed.

### Creating a framework

Presenting the lead-off paper, "Toward a Framework for Assessing Data Quality," Carol S. Carson, Director of the IMF's Statistics Department, explained that work on data quality has been under way in the IMF for some time. The subject had been tackled using a two-pronged approach—attention was given first to defining data quality and, second, to developing a structure and a common language that could be used as a framework to assess data quality. This led to two

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#### Press Releases

- 00/67: \$3.8 Billion in Debt-Service Relief for Zambia, December 8
- 00/68: \$91 Million in Debt-Service Relief for The Gambia, December 14
- 00/69: \$76 Million PRGF (approved in principle) for Niger, December 14
- 00/70: \$18 Million PRGF for Guinea-Bissau, December 15
- 00/71: \$790 Million in Debt-Service Relief for Guinea-Bissau, December 15
- 00/72: \$142 Million PRGF (approved in principle) for Moldova, December 15
- 00/73: Second Annual PRGF for Mozambique, December 19
- 00/74: \$200 Million in Debt-Service Relief for São Tomé and Príncipe, December 20
- 00/75: Membership and \$151 Million in Postconflict Assistance for Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, December 20
- 00/76: \$890 Million in Debt-Service Relief for Niger, December 20
- 00/77: \$1 Billion in Debt-Service Relief for Malawi, December 21
- 00/78: IMF–World Bank to Support Debt Relief of \$4.5 Billion for Nicaragua under HIPC, December 21
- 00/79: \$58 Million PRGF (approved in principle) for Malawi, December 21
- 00/80: \$7.5 Billion for Turkey under Supplemental Reserve Facility, December 21
- 00/81: \$1.5 Billion in Debt-Service Relief for Madagascar, December 22
- 00/82: Extension of Stand-By Credit for Bosnia and Herzegovina, December 22

- 00/83: \$12 Million PRGF (approved in principle) for Rwanda, December 22
- 00/84: \$810 Million in Debt-Service Relief for Rwanda, December 22
- 00/85: \$800 Million in Debt-Service Relief for Guinea, December 22
- 00/86: \$144 Million PRGF for Cameroon, December 22
- 00/87: New Currency Amounts for SDR Valuation Basket, December 29 (see page 15)
- 01/01: IMF Proposes Quota Increase for China, January 4, 2001 (see page 6)

#### News Briefs

- 00/114: \$13 Million PRGF (approved in principle) for The Gambia, December 11
- 00/115: IMF Completes Estonia Review, December 13
- 00/116: Final Approval of PRGF for Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, December 15
- 00/117: Köhler Statement on Strengthened Argentine Program, December 18 (see page 14)
- 00/118: Fourth Review for Ukraine under Extended Arrangement, December 19
- 00/119: First Review of PRGF and \$1.2 Million Credit for São Tomé and Príncipe, December 19
- 00/120: First and Second Review for Nicaragua under PRGF, December 20
- 00/121: \$10.5 Million PRGF (approved in principle) for Guinea, December 20
- 00/122: Final Approval of PRGF for Moldova, December 21
- 00/123: Final Approval of PRGF for Niger, December 27
- 00/124: Final Approval of Third Annual PRGF for Guinea, December 27
- 00/125: Final Approval of PRGF for Malawi, December 28

initiatives—the establishment of the IMF’s Data Quality Reference Site (see box, page 12), and the development of generic and data set–specific quality assessment frameworks.

Carson explained that the emerging frameworks were the product of an extensive, iterative consultation process with statisticians from a broad range of national and international organizations. They were designed to be a flexible, comprehensive tool for assessing data quality that could be used by statisticians and nonstatisticians alike. The frameworks, which aimed to bring together best practices and internationally accepted concepts and definitions in statistics, were developed by drawing on the growing literature on data quality, the Statistics Department’s practical experience, and feedback from extensive consultations, as well as field testing by IMF staff. The frameworks were a work in progress and in the coming months would be subjected to further field testing and additional rounds of consultations with statisticians and others. Further work on the frameworks would include the development of additional data

set–specific frameworks, possibly in collaboration with other international statistical organizations in cases where the data set lay outside the IMF’s traditional macroeconomic focus.

Participants appreciated the work undertaken by the IMF, emphasizing that it filled an important gap.



- 00/126: Final Approval of Second Annual PRGF for Nicaragua, December 28
- 00/127: Final Approval of Third Annual PRGF for Rwanda, December 28
- 01/01: IMF Managing Director Welcomes U.S. Interest Rate Cut, January 3, 2001

**Public Information Notices (PINs)**

- 00/103: Barbados, December 4
- 00/104: St. Kitts and Nevis, December 4
- 00/105: Republic of Congo, December 7
- 00/106: Romania, December 12
- 00/107: Zimbabwe, December 13
- 00/108: Pakistan, December 14
- 00/109: Kazakhstan, December 18
- 00/110: Postprogram Monitoring Discussion, Thailand, December 20
- 00/111: Seychelles, December 26

**Transcripts**

- Press briefing, Thomas Dawson, IMF External Relations Department Director, December 12
- Economic Forum: “The Information Economy: New Paradigm or Old Fashion?” December 5 (see page 18)

**Letters of Intent and Memorandums of Economic and Financial Policies (date posted)**

- Estonia, December 13
- Nicaragua, December 13
- Republic of Congo, December 14
- Moldova, December 15
- Mozambique, December 19
- Guinea, December 20
- Niger, December 20

- São Tomé and Príncipe, December 20
- Turkey, December 21
- Rwanda, December 21
- Ukraine, December 21
- Cameroon, December 27

**Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (date posted)**

- Guinea-Bissau (interim), December 15
- Macedonia, Former Yugoslav Rep. of (interim), December 15
- Moldova (interim), December 21
- Niger (interim), December 27
- Guinea (interim), December 28
- Madagascar (interim), December 28
- Malawi (interim), December 28
- Nicaragua (interim), December 28
- Rwanda (interim), December 28

**Concluding Remarks for Article IV Consultations (date posted)**

- Poland: Preliminary Conclusions, December 13

**Report on the Observance of Standards and Codes (date posted)**

- Pakistan, December 7

**Other**

- Financing IMF Transactions, Quarterly Report: June 1–August 31, 2000, December 12
- IMF Financial Activities, December 8, December 15, December 22
- IMF Financial Resources and Liquidity Position, 1998–November 2000
- Policies for Faster Growth and Poverty Reduction in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Role of the IMF: An Issues Brief*, December 20 (see page 6)