

**Workshop on
Peer Review Mechanisms for National Statistical Offices in OIC Member
Countries**

19-20 December 2017

Ankara, Turkey

FINAL REPORT

Day 1: 19 December 2017

1. The Workshop on Peer Review Mechanisms for NSOs in OIC Member Countries was organised by Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC) in collaboration with the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) and Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21) on 19-20 December 2017 in Ankara, Republic of Turkey.
2. The Workshop was attended by 27 delegates from the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) of 25 OIC countries including Afghanistan, Albania, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Gabon, Gambia, Iran, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda and Uzbekistan and by 11 representatives from 4 international organisations including Eurostat, PARIS21, African Union Commission (AUC) and SESRIC.
3. The objective of the Workshop was to better understand the peer review mechanisms and to learn more about the benefits and challenges of the peer review mechanisms for OIC countries.
4. All documents of the Workshop, including all presentations and statements, are available online at <http://www.sesric.org/event-detail.php?id=1850> and shall be consulted for more detailed information.

Opening Remarks

5. Following the recitation of verses from the Holy Quran, the Opening Session started with the Welcome Address of H.E. Ambassador Musa KULAKLIKAYA, Director General of SESRIC, and followed by opening remarks of Ms. Claudia JUNKER, Head of Unit "Quality Management; Government Finance Statistics", Eurostat, and Mr. Rafik MAHJOUBI, Regional Programme Co-ordinator, PARIS21.
6. In his welcome address, H.E. Amb. Musa KULAKLIKAYA stated that monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is a necessary approach for the assurance of integrity and accountability by any institution where NSOs are no exception. He emphasized that the NSOs incorporating the appropriate M&E methods including the peer reviews show their willingness towards doing better. Briefing the activities of SESRIC that have taken place since the Fifth Session of OIC Statistical Commission (OIC-StatCom) in 2015 focusing on the Peer Review System and the OIC-Peer Review Inclination Survey (OPRIS) developed by SESRIC in collaboration with Eurostat, PARIS21, and Turkish Statistical Institute, the Director General of SESRIC informed the participants that the organisation of the current Workshop is highly requested by the 33 respondent countries. He shared his hope that the Workshop will contribute to bring about an environment for collaboration and innovation concerning the methodology and assessment environment of the peer reviews mechanism.

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7. In her opening remarks, Ms. Claudia JUNKER praised the role of SESRIC in raising awareness about the peer review mechanism among the NSOs of OIC countries. Highlighting the rounds of peer reviews facilitated by the Eurostat in the last one decade, she expressed her readiness to share the experience of Eurostat during the Workshop.
8. In his opening remarks, Mr. Rafik MAHJOUBI gave a brief history of PARIS21, its mission, and vision. He underlined the role of statistics in operationalising a sound results based management among the decision makers. Mr. Mahjoubi also stated that the peer reviews facilitated by PARIS21 aim at improving the national statistical systems by acting as a policy advocacy tool. He stressed that the peer reviews facilitated by PARIS21 are based on the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics by taking into consideration both the Regional Code of Practices and national contexts.
9. Following the Welcoming Remarks, a Tour de Table session took place during which the participants introduced themselves.

SESSION I: Briefing on the Peer Review Project for National Statistical Offices in OIC Member Countries (including Survey Results and Methodology Document Proposed by SESRIC)

10. A presentation was delivered by Mrs. Nenden Octavarulia SHANTY, Researcher at Statistics and Information Department of SESRIC.
11. In her presentation, Mrs. Shanty briefed the participants on the OIC-PEER Project which aims to facilitate learning based on South-South and triangular cooperation in statistical development through a peer review mechanism to enhance the credibility of the National Statistical Systems (NSS), to strengthen the system's capacity to produce high-quality statistics and to reassure stakeholders about the quality of statistics produced by the NSOs and the trustworthiness of the system. She also explained the Project's background, objectives, the OIC-Peer review Inclusion Survey (OPRIS) results and methodology document proposed by SESRIC.
12. Following the presentation, a Family Photo session took place.

SESSION II: Peer Review Mechanisms Conducted by International Organisations

13. The session was moderated by Mrs. Zehra Zümrüt SELÇUK, Director of Statistics and Information Department of SESRIC.
14. Ms. Claudia JUNKER, Head of Unit "Quality Management; Government Finance Statistics" of Eurostat, was the first presenter of the session. Ms. Junker introduced the peer reviews (PR) conducted by Eurostat in detail; its objectives, methodology and other dimensions. The PR by Eurostat is based on the structure and procedures of the ESS (European Statistical System) peer reviews and is designed for candidate countries and countries with a developed statistical

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system. Ms. Junker summarized the objectives of these reviews which are; to assess compliance of the reviewed National Statistical Institute (NSI) with principles 1-6 and 15 of the European Statistics Code of Practices (CoP), to evaluate the coordination role of the NSI within the statistical system, to highlight transferable practices suitable to foster compliance with the CoP, and to recommend improvement actions needed in view of fully complying with the Code. Ms. Junker detailed the monitoring and reporting phases of the PR by showing the templates and results.

Discussions

- **Questions from Albania:**

Q1: The levels of the National Statistical Systems (NSSs) are different. How about the peer reviews for National Banks in which they have their own principles? For your kin information, we are in the official process with the National Bank and the Bank is somehow on the NSS but it is a crosscutting issue on peer reviews.

Q2: What is the relation between sectoral levels?

- **Answer from Eurostat for Albania's Q1:** National Banks have special category in each country. We have to make distinction. National Bank is not the only producer of financial statistics; the statistics department of the Bank should follow the procedures namely the statistical principles. The heads, Director Generals generally report to the ministers or other responsible persons. They have to keep statistical confidentiality; they should not share the balance of payment statistics and other relevant documents to anyone. It should be followed by the department, entity, not the bank as statistics departments are part of the NSS.
- **Answer from Eurostat for Albania's Q2:** Concerning the sector reviews, this is about institutional environment. There may be some recommendations that may be valid for the entire peer review process.
- **Question from Afghanistan:** For your information, we have no experience in peer reviews. When the reviewer finalizes the report, what happens if we do not agree on the items? Will it harm the credibility of peer reviews?
- **Answer from Eurostat:** For the non-EU member states concerning diverging view and sector assessment, we discussed the recommendations with the management. For instance, in Belarus, in the global assessment, classification is set by a standard setting body not by the statistical office. The NSO of Belarus said that the standard setting committee can give them the recommendations if they are provided with these. There is no diverging view but we discuss the recommendations with them.
- **Question from Bangladesh:** Is there any opportunity to get involved in the survey or census that will be new to our system? How can we accumulate peer reviews into our surveys?

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- **Answer from Eurostat:** Concerning sector reviews, it reviews the statistical surveys such as labour surveys or business surveys. Other than EU hardly applies sector assessment. We have some funding for the sector assessment for the eastern neighbourhood Mediterranean but not beyond these regions. We have never done on assessment on census.
- **Question from Egypt:** What should we do to apply for the mechanism, should it be through governmental approval? What are the benefits for the NSOs, does it improve the system? What type of the preparations/requirements should be carried out?
- **Answer from Eurostat:** The request should always come from the NSOs. Informing the government for the benefits before requesting is important, as you will get recommendations to do better. If there will be a recommendation, it does not mean that the NSO is not doing a good job, but they could improve on the issues mentioned in the recommendations. The assessment conducted could improve the quality of the NSOs.
- **Question from Iran:** Before conducting peer review, what are the requirements that we should prepare? Do we need to have a national strategy beforehand?
- **Answer from Eurostat:** There is no minimum requirement before the conduct of peer review.
- **Comment from Gabon:** I would like to follow-up the comment from Eurostat's concerning the benefits of implementing peer review and the recommendations resulted from peer review process. If the senior management does not agree with or reject the recommendations, we cannot proceed further.
- **Question from Niger:** Concerning the 16 principles of European Code of Practice (CoP), are these about the peer reviews across Europe?
- **Answer from Eurostat:** We added 16 items related to coordination in the peer review process. The principle just says that the NSI should ensure the coordination of application of European Standards.

SESSION II (Continued)

15. Mr. Rafik MAHJOUBI, Regional Programme Co-ordinator at PARIS21, presented the concept and scope of the Peer Reviews of African National Statistical Systems implemented by PARIS21. The focus of this peer review is on governance of the NSS, its organisation, strategic planning, service to users, funding, and sustainability. Peer review teams typically include both senior statisticians (normally the head or deputy head of the NSS) and senior policy makers from two other countries.
16. Mrs. Leila BEN ALI, Director of Statistics at the African Union Commission (AUC), highlighted the details of the African peer reviews led by PARIS21. Mrs. Ali enlightened the audience that the African peer review of NSSs was launched by the Economic Commission for

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Africa's Committee on Development Information (CODI) meeting in 2003. CODI recommended that African countries, supported by PARIS21, carry out peer reviews to ensure that good practice passes from country to country, based on the first-hand experience of peers, to help accelerate the change processes in reforming statistical systems. Ms. Ali listed the key actions taken on the peer review exercises. The methodology, and the way forward have been also summarized during her presentation.

Discussions

- **Question from Malaysia:** If we look at the peer review reports, the reviewers come up with many recommendations, without setting priorities. NSOs may have limited capacity for setting the priorities. Is it possible to set priorities by the reviewers? Perhaps, short term or long term priorities?
- **Answer from PARIS21:** I do not see any objections against reviewers set priorities. However, there should be some discussions with the head of NSO and top management.
- **Answer from Eurostat:** In the short term we set some priorities.
- **Answer from AUC:** We started the peer review process by sending the Snapshot (self-assessment questionnaire) and it needs to be filled by the member states. This questionnaire bases the expert to prepare the recommendations and they should be prepared before conducting the country visit. Besides, we also ask the country to provide additional documentation to support their answers to the questionnaire.
- **Question from Gambia:** Question will be addressed to AUC. Concerning the theme of peer reviews, who will be the responsible person for selecting the Director General level as peer reviewer?
- **Answer from AUC:** Normally, the country requested peer review will also present or give suggestion the peer reviewer countries including two deputy heads. When we sent the Note Verbal to the countries, some countries said to be the peer reviewer
- **Answer from PARIS21:** The country decides the peer reviewers. The country coordinator will discuss with the relevant persons in the country to have a better guidance on goals and achievements.
- **Comment from Gabon:** We understand the main goal of peer reviews is for improving the NSS and its practices. I still could not get the impression that statistical sector (for instance central banks) could be taken into consideration.
- **Answer from AUC and PARIS21:** The central bank also generates statistics. It is not sector specific. In our discussion, we stressed on coordination. The central bank of your country is also producing statistics. Not sector specific.

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- **Comment from Bangladesh:** To my understanding, peer reviewers are kind of expert panel. Nutrition survey to ensure the credibility to recommend the peer review.
- **Answer from PARIS21:** You can do if you want on a specific sector. There are different tools to rationalize your goals. At the moment, we are not aware of any international organisational which has expertise on this issue.
- **Question from Palestine:** Questions addressed to PARIS21 and Eurostat. Using UN fundamental principle of official statistics and European CoP statistics for peer review seems too broad. Is there any comparability?
- **Answer from PARIS21:** We look at the UN standards but also European standards but in consultation with the country.
- **Answer from Eurostat:** European CoP does not contradict with UN standards but we may say CoP more operational. We also know that African charter, ASEAN block, Latin America, etc have their own frameworks.
- **Comment from Senegal:** There are some different review processes. There are reports resulted from peer reviews, but we should go beyond that. The implementation of the recommendations should be converted into an action plan through the legislations. If we have such an action plan, different countries can move easily forwards.
- **Answer from PARIS21:** That is one of the recommendations. Peer review should be carried out before self-assessment. During the system level review, it can be taken into consideration.
- **Question from Tunisia:** We need direct recommendations so that we could improve. Other issue is pertinent to governments. It depends on the governmental decision whether it is possible to adopt the recommendation so that the government would apply.
- **Answer from AUC:** The peer review report will be presented to the executive management and the responsible ministers. Later, it will be submitted to the heads of states so that they will give their attention to the implementation. Concerning the charter, we are in the stage of updating to undersign.
- **Question from Mozambique:** What were the criteria in choosing the country? What should we do for peer review?
- **Answer from AUC:** The date is proposed by the country as 2019. 15 peer reviews are in the process. Name of the national coordinator will be shared. Two deputy heads will be chosen from neighbouring countries.
- **Comment from Iran:** Peer review is kind of evaluation that cannot be done by an NSO but by an International Organisations.

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- **Answer from PARIS21:** As the name suggests, it is coordinated by the International Organisations and it should be done by a “peer”. The international organisations can guide the country how to conduct the peer review as per their preference.
- **Answer from Eurostat:** It should be an “external” assessment to make the assessment. It can be done by a self-assessment.

SESSION III: Country Experiences in Conducting the Peer Review Processes

17. Representatives from participating OIC countries, namely Albania, Cameroon, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Mozambique, Niger, Palestine, Senegal, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda and Uzbekistan made presentations on the experiences and perspectives of their countries in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) mechanisms including some countries experiences in conducting peer reviews coordinated by International Organisations.

18. The session was moderated by Mr. Rafik MAHJOUBI, PARIS21.

Discussions

- **Question from Afghanistan to Iran:** Was there any institution make assessment on the work of SCI of Iran?
- **Answer from Iran:** It is not accepted that any other institution can evaluate SCI. But SCI can make its self-assessment.
- **Question from Eurostat to Iran:** What are the other constituents of NSS? How large is the environment?
- **Iran:** As seen in the presentation, the relevant bodies should follow the Statistical legislation. Labour Force Ministry, Health Ministry, Central Bank, Mining Ministry, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Interior, etc.
- **Question from Morocco to Kazakhstan:** How much time did the global assessment take? How many personnel were dedicated for this work?
- **Answer from Kazakhstan:** Team of experts are from UNECE and Eurostat; who was leading the global assessment process.
- **Answer from Eurostat:** 6-7 experts worked from the international organisations. Almost all staffs in the office were involved. It took one month including two times expert missions for 5 days in each. We also invited academia as well during the visit. We understand that this is a huge work to accomplish, but at the end it will give a lot of benefit to the NSI.
- **Question PARIS 21 to Eurostat:** What is the difference between peer review and global assessment?

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- **Answer from Eurostat:** Global assessment is a peer review with an extended scope including statistical domains.
- **Question from Iran:** What is Light Peer Review (LPR)?
- **Answer from Eurostat:** We marked some levels as fully, most and partly compliance; and thus the LPR is created.
- **Question from Afghanistan to Kyrgyzstan:** What do you mean by improvement of organisation?
- **Answer from Kyrgyzstan:** It includes human resources; structure of the statistical system.
- **Answer from Eurostat:** There is sufficient number of staff but more on the regional offices rather than at the central Headquarters. Strengthening the central office is an important item.
- **Question from SESRIC:** Were all data produced by the NSO of Kyrgyzstan synchronized to the mobile application?
- **Answer from Kyrgyzstan through:** The data is displayed more user-friendly and targeted.
- **Question from SESRIC:** Is there any monitoring or follow up process after implementing the peer review by PARIS21?
- **Answer from PARIS21:** We have 2 types of evaluation. NSDS is a base for the evaluation whether it is integrated or not.
- **Comment from SESRIC:** As there will be some costs spent for the peer review process, it would be better if the country could include the cost for peer review in their NSDS.
- **Question from Egypt to Tunisia:** In the recommendations part, what does it mean by strengthening the information collection?
- **Answer from Tunisia:** It was about data collection and use of modern tools, modernisation and use of administrative sources.
- **Question from Saudi Arabia:** What is the timeline, how much will it take to complete the peer review process?
- **Answer from PARIS21:** First step, we sent questionnaire (3 month prior to country visit); continued by collecting the response (1 month prior to country visit); then country visit conducted. Afterwards, peer review teams are asked to provide feedback within 2 weeks. In total, peer review process will last for 4-5 months.
- **Question from Gambia:** Who will bear the cost of implementing peer reviews?
- **Answer from PARIS21:** We usually pay for the mission of the experts for their trip and per diem. Sometimes we also gave sponsor for some workshop logistics.

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- **Answer from Eurostat:** We have similar elements concerning the financial support for the missions of the experts. Eurostat paid all costs for the experts and observers.
- **Comments from Eurostat:** We suggest that the DG or deputy DG shall present at the peer review meeting. We also organised 1 day meeting specifically with the junior staffs at the NSI in order to learn their fresh ideas and we suggested that the top management not to present at the meeting with junior staffs.
- **Comment form Uganda:** Uganda is ready to be reviewed by international organisations (external peer review).
- **Comment from Eurostat to Uganda:** Without internally reviewing we cannot complete international reviewing. Peer reviews are basically for overall environment on how the statistical system is organized and internally reviewing is not a precondition.
- **Question from Niger to Uganda:** About certification, could you give more information?
- **Answer from Uganda:** As this will take more time, we could discuss further. At least to say, we need experts who are appropriate to work that is why we put certification.

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SESSION IV: Brainstorming Session on OIC-Peer (Conduct and the Way Forward)

19. The session was moderated by Ms. Claudia JUNKER, Eurostat. In this session, Ms. Junker provide some provoking questions concerning preparatory phase, selection of expert team, country visits, validation of results/reports and follow-up or peer review.
20. First provoking question: What do you think the experts should be provided before conducting their missions?

Discussions

- **Comment from Gabon:** As Gabon, we have not conducted any peer review. Concerning the documents, country annual work programmes could be submitted to the reviewer. Programme of the governments, various reports about the structure including report of the work on the office can also be communicated. Contracts and working plans with the technical and financial partners can be shared.
- **Comment from Iran:** The most important is the report of self-assessment should be sent to reviewer previously.
- **Comment from Palestine:** NSOs need to have an idea before starting the peer review process. They should believe that peer review would give benefit to them. Relevant documentation should be arranged beforehand so that a strategy is derived. They should set as a plan. Terminology, classification and international standards should also be achieved.
- **Comment from Tunisia:** In order to have a peer review, countries must give their commitment; the staff should be involved in the process. Country should prepare documentation (some sort of legal texts which will be a fundamental base) beforehand to complete the process duly. Internal and external results can be added. Partners involved in the production of statistics should be noted. For instance, 5 year development plans can be submitted.
- **Comment from Niger:** Before the expert arrives, countries should conduct self-assessment. So that their assessment should be encouraged. I think that this is important. In one hand, they should arrange legislation documentation as regards with statistical operation and different aspects, in addition to existing documents. Country should identify reforms if there will be any process even it is not finalized it should be shared. Assignment of a national coordinator, a name probably for the African union, what sort of qualifications should be set before the person is selected, such criteria should be identified. He should be donated some inputs beforehand.

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- **Comment from Morocco:** Defining the objectives. The experts have to express what they want to do. What is done, who does it within the statistical system of official statistics and the relevant hierarchy, with whom the centre shall work and international partnerships. Everyone will know the relevant stakeholders.
- **Comment from Afghanistan:** Regarding self-assessment, we have a data satisfaction survey, based on the survey we identify what is achieved. It is important to contact with countries that have experience on this. A further contact with PARIS21 might be necessary. A national action plan should be set. It is better to assign focal points to work together. Based on the recommendations, the country can develop a strategic plan. Not only accessibility and but also user-friendliness should be checked. It should be in line with our action plan.
- **Comment from Albania:** Completely agree on suggested items. What kind of principles such as CoP or UN standards that will be used, should be identified. Organisational teams could be established to arrange all the answers to self-assessment. This team should be supported through a technical team to support. About documents, the experts are focused how NSO think about itself, how do they introduce the indicator, user satisfaction surveys input might be very useful for the experts. Concerning cost effectiveness, how do we use resources in order to produce relevant indicators, and also the human resources?
- **Comment from Bangladesh:** If BBS wants to conduct an internal and external peer review, who will be the member of the coordination committee? NSDS for preparing the peer review, self-assessment and the roadmap is important. How can we start the peer review?
- **Answer from Eurostat to Bangladesh:** There are different kinds of assessments. Self-assessment that can be done anytime by any country. If the country would like to have an external assessment, that is called peer review. For Asian countries, we could ask PARIS21 if your institution would like to have the peer review. Peer review provides external experts. The country will decide whether they could like to be reviewed externally. The process will continue with preparation and then self-assessment questionnaires will be sent to the country. An external review will provide your institutions a fresh view from outside.
- **Question from Chad:** A concern from our side, when should we address the strategy before or after the peer reviews?
- **Answer from Eurostat:** Peer review is best before the development of strategy since peer review provides the NSI some inputs.
- **Answer from PARIS21:** Strategies are documents which will be needed to use findings will be elaborated for a new one.
- **Comment from Gabon:** In principle, some financial documents and human resources should be linked in the activities.

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- **Comment from Gambia:** Depending on the nature of the peer reviewee, the expert should tell us what is needed. Financial capabilities of the peer reviewee should be considered as they need to pay for the expert and the venue of the workshops and others.
- **Answer from Eurostat:** In our peer review meetings, we just need a regular office for 10 people and some small refreshments.
- **Comment from Iran:** The upper/top management rules such as political, economic, cultural situation, domestic rules could affect statistical functions.
- **Eurostat:** Concerning statistical confidentiality, your country may have law about transparency.
- **Comment from PARIS21:**
 - Concerning the Gambia's recommendation that the documents should be requested by the experts, actually, we don't know of the documents that the country has. It is important to work together which documents are available or not.
 - Regarding Iran's comment on cultural, regional issues etc., we have regional experts who know the culture or region. We make sure that the staff in charge of the region work closely to achieve balance.
- **Question from Iran:** Have you used peer review to rank the countries?
- **Answer from Eurostat:** We never do such according to the principles. The country will take benefit from peer review process not focus on the rankings. It is not, of course, the objective of the peer reviews.
- **Additional answer from PARIS21:** Peer reviews are not for ranking the countries. World Bank does ranking of countries on statistical capacity.
- **Comment from Iran:** However, there is an internationally approved method such as university rankings can be provided.
- **Comment from Jordan:** Following from Iran's comment, this is not a matter of ranking, but classifications can be applied to the countries. Minimum requirements can be announced and the countries can be listed. About preparations, based on our experience, we have a recent law. We try to institutionalize this self-assessment. Language barrier is a problem, and sometimes the translation doesn't reflect the real situation. About external documents, we have translated them. About the mechanism, visits should be paid beforehand; technical training can be realized so that they can prepare themselves. The peer reviewers could conduct interview with the staffs.
- **Comment from Kuwait:** First objective is to improve our statistical system. It has some phases, data processing and dissemination. Before the peer reviews and self-assessment, the

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expert should be competent. We should overall plan and have underlying legislation. Regulation should support implementation. We should have consultative mechanism.

- **Comment from SESRIC to Jordan:** Concerning language barrier experienced by Jordan, we would like to suggest that the reviewer shall have proficiency on the country language to prevent misunderstanding. Besides, national coordinator could be appointed to bridge the peer reviewer with the staffs at the NSO.
- **Additional suggestion from SESRIC:** Peer review results will be shared to the higher level. Perhaps the retired experts who were in the higher level position and additionally who have experience in peer review could be nominated as reviewers.
- **Comment from Tunisia:** When we look at the OIC countries, reviewee and reviewer should speak the same language, and the country should have the peer review experience. Different approaches should be considered as for the users.
- **Comment from Saudi Arabia:** Presentation of the chair, recommendations about the experts, reflections of the session should be shared so that we can set what we need to set. Every country is different. If a country wants to have peer review, they should inform the peer reviewer about the country's NSDS and its structure; the products on annual basis, how much data is produced. The country should do a self-assessment. What are the recommendations of the experienced countries, we need to review these. The time is important, and what will be cost? Objectives are also important in this regard.
- **Comment from Afghanistan:** Ranking will have a good result. For instance, WHO has an assessment for EMRO countries. Ranking does not mean to list them but more to encourage the countries to improve their systems.
- **Comment from Cameroon:** A little contribution, we have noted down different sources of information, at the end of the day all these evaluations if done by an external expert, this will improve overall quality. PARIS21 provided a basic structure. When we look at the recommendations of peer review, PARIS21 or Eurostat may have a look on how to move forward the structure. Reviewer would provide a roadmap. Such a roadmap can be applied. Different stages can be identified, so that preparations could be done properly. Secondly, in parallel with Afghanistan's comment, the country needs to obtain a score to compare itself in line with certain principle to improve the points such as quality assurance.
- **Answer from Eurostat:** We have done it without ranking; we put it in a document to show the good points of the countries. We have the guidelines for the reviewed country and for the experts.

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- **Answer from PARIS21:** About language barrier, recommendation goes at least one expert should speak the same language, but regardless of the language the reviewer must be a qualified person. About ranking, looking at the weaknesses and strengths is better than a ranking.
- **Question from Chad:** Do you have any specific conditions about the lack of staff problem similar in Senegal?
- **Answer from PARIS21:** There is a Pan African committee supported by European Union and African Union. PARIS21 will join the missions of the peer reviews as an observer. We can advise the members of union. We may consider at later stage.
- **Comment from Jordan:** English is not a language barrier, but it is about documentation. All the documents would be biased, and not accurate.
- **Answer from PARIS21:** They may ask all the documents, however the documents are in Arabic.
- **Comment from Eurostat:** We understand that not all of the documents can be translated properly, but the content can be clearly listed.
- **Comment from Malaysia:** In my opinion, the idea of this peer reviews is to improve the system of the country. Based on a reviewer country, before we go to a country we do not know about the country. For preliminary discussion, we better need documents to support our views along with the documents. We normally require statistical system documents which are related to the production of official statistics. We refer to document which are related to statistical capacity and training facility, planning on the specific capacity. Quality assessment documents, future planning of the statistical planning of the country would be useful. If possible, the information on how the statistics is being used in the process of decision making by the policy maker, main users and other stakeholders shall be available.
- **Comment from Saudi Arabia:** Our objective should be not peer review. The system should be improved. I need to learn the weaknesses so that I can improve it. We should prevent biased interventions.
- **Comment from Uganda:** Concerning documentation that is not approved. In our trials, we used many document, but many of them not approved by the higher authorities. When we ask the authority we have been said that the document is not approved. Regarding Malaysia's comment about the use of statistics, which documents are required to see the status of the system?
- **Answer from Eurostat:** It is matter of trust, if you feel that the document should be approved it could be sent as a draft.

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- **Answer from Malaysia:** Some terms we can refer, the statistics documented in the various economic reports for example; also, budget reports includes statistics.
- **Question from Egypt:** Does the NSO prepare all components of the assessment before the arrival of the experts? Should all relevant constituents of NSS meet beforehand? Is the review based only documents? Does it include all the actors of data producers?
- **Answer from Eurostat:** Documents are needed to be prepared and submitted to the experts. They could not conduct the country visit without an idea. Visits validate the views of the documentation throughout meeting with colleagues inside the institution and data producers as well as other users, media, business chambers, etc.

SESSION IV (Continued)

21. Second provoking question: What kind of self-assessment questionnaires should be used?

Discussions

- **Comment from Eurostat:** I personally think to have standard questionnaire. Timing issue something 3 months is the minimum period to start. During prior discussion, we have touched upon the experts. One of the criteria is that one of the experts should know the better understanding of the region and culture of the country. The experts do not have to come from the same region.
- **Comment from PARIS21:** Two observers may be enough. Peer reviews in Africa suggest to other countries two deputy DGs. Profiles of other one was the language and knowledge of the region. Our questionnaire is country specific, is composed of 3 items; firstly principles of UN official statistics is applied, secondly regional aspects if we work on Africa we take African charters and so on. Thirdly country's statistical practices are concerned. About the experts, DGs will not be appropriate to review the documents.
- **Comment from AUC:** The expert should have knowledge on African charter/context in our region.
- **Comment from Uganda:** 5 knowledgeable people; 2 observers (one from NSO and the other from subject specific area), 2 producers of statistics who must be knowledgeable on production of statistics, and 1 who was acting on behalf of NSO chairperson.
- **Comment from Turkey:** Regionalization is an essential element of peer reviews. In order to provide correct information, countries can compare with other countries. Instead of ranking, they can look at the standards. Regarding the experts, in our cases, there were two retired DGs and one Eurostat expert and we thought that the composition was ideal. The two DGs were very well informed. Choosing right persons is up to the Eurostat and PARIS21. Concerning documentation, in the translation case, we had many documents in Turkish and consulted with

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Eurostat. We only translated title, list of contents, and executive summary. During the conduction of peer reviews, we did not experience many difficulties. We all need to clarify our mind about the aim of conducting peer review; this is to see our weaknesses to improve. The comment of Iran on cultural and political issues, we separate the politics from the statistical sphere though we faced difficulties with European Union but the cooperation is going on its way.

- **Comment from PARIS21:** The main goal is not an approach to regionalize, but just to bring regional aspects. Sometimes, political concerns are beyond the capability of NSO.
- **Comment from Eurostat:** We see only the recommendations. The issue is how to formulate this.
- **Comment from PARIS21:** Decision makers are the key stakeholders of peer reviews.
- **Comment from Eurostat:** We discussed the recommendations including with the top management. When we have common agreement, then the report will be published. NSO then circulated to other governmental institutions. A meeting, through inviting some other external stakeholders, is designed as per our practices.
- **Comment from Turkey:** In our case, recommendations are evaluated internally. We requested some edits, wanted to clarify some points with experts. Owner of the report is also important. NSO is the ultimate owner of the report though experts have written it. It shows the status of the NSO. Communication is another important point. It would be nice to share with media so that the results can be shared with the public.
- **Comment from Palestine:** In our experience, the owner of the report is NSO though it was drafted by the experts. We had discussion with the experts. Which recommendations should be included it has been submitted to the office of DG. We organised the press conference and it was at the high level.
- **Comment from Tunisia:** As per our experience, after the expert visit, we followed up the results since it is on our institution. NSO would approve the last version of the report. It was approved through our high council of statistics. Later, it was submitted to higher authorities. As a supporting tool, it's not only a report, it is to improve our system. Also important for the credibility of our institution.
- **Comment from Senegal:** Review is a participatory process. Every partner should be involved in the report. NSO is the owner of the report, and then the implementation will come. This is the reason we need the government to raise awareness. We need to convince them for proper decision making. Coming to communication, it should be done with the relevant stakeholders. If the resources are available there will be no problem.

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- **Comment from Jordan:** I agree with my colleagues, NSO is the owner of the report. We do have a similar council in Jordan like Palestine. We presented the recommendation, it was very useful. They said we are in the right direction. Gaps identified, recommendations incorporated into the strategy. We received political support. The experts wrote the report but the NSO should be communicated for approval. NSO will publish it. NSO will identify the priorities, they know about the time schedule; of course the experts shall be consulted when the time schedule planned. A new visit should be organised to elaborate on the time plan.
- **Comment from Afghanistan:** The owner of the report should be one level above the NSO. In Afghanistan, National Statistical committee is chaired by the Vice President to direct the NSO in correct direction. For the validation, DG or Deputy DG should approve. PARIS21, it is better to publish on their website the reviewers and reviewees, based on this report, countries can be supported.
- **Comment from Eurostat:** Once we agree on the report, we ask NSO formally in which we recommend them to publish the final report on their website. After 2 weeks, the report will automatically be published on our website. Publication should be on both sides.
- **Comment from Niger:** In addition to recommendations, experts should take other steps beyond the recommendations. There are recommendations can be met in the short term, some other can be done in mid or long term.
- **Comment from Albania:** Regarding the ownership of the report, it depends on the legislation in the country applied. If the legal framework allows, NSO can be the owner of the report. Concerning the recommendations, common agreement should be reached to publish the report.
- **Comment from Kyrgyzstan:** Global assessment helped us to see where we are, what the priorities are, and where to move/improve. It has to develop our strategies and to understand the position. Owner of the report should be the obligatory statistics. NSO is the key agency which provides the information for the real development of the country. It is important to organize meetings to explain and distribute the document.
- **Comment from Eurostat:** We have some diverging views concerning the ownership and publication of peer review final report. Concerning the ownership one said that it is the NSO who owning the report and to publish or perhaps the highest authority (or upper level body) shall publish the report. It depends on the context of the country.
 - It should be the NSOs; we have to take the responsibility to encourage. High councils can be helpful but NSOs are more suitable. For publishing the reports, common agreement should be reached between the expert and the NSOs. Concerning communication, there are different practices; NSOs, high councils, according to the methodology and context of the country.

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- Improvement actions based on the recommendations should develop further in either development strategies or donor agency programmes so that they could be implemented.
- **Comment from AUC:** Agreed by the NSO and NSS, recommendations come from different areas. However, the recommendations shall be nationally accepted and in line with African union context.
- **Comment from Tunisia:** Standardization of the whole documentation is kindly expected.
- **Comment from Palestine:** The advisory council is a board. NSO is independent in its mandate and work.

SESSION V: Drafting the Outcomes of the Brainstorming Session

22. The session was moderated by Mrs. Zehra Zümürüt SELÇUK, Director of Statistics and Information Department of SESRIC.
23. The participants reviewed the draft recommendations and finalized.

Closing Remarks

24. The workshop is ended with the closing remarks by H.E. Amb. Musa KULAKLIKAYA, Director General of SESRIC.