Agricultural and Rural Statistical Development – Capacity Building in Cameroon

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Abstract: The Cameroonian agricultural statistical system has benefited since 1979 from international assistance that has allowed the country to conduct an agricultural census, to strengthen the capacity building of the statistical system (training, survey equipments, etc.), and to put in place a medium-term agricultural program which is now implemented.

Most of sub-Saharan African countries since the drought years of the eighties have been affected by changes with the world climate and with other economic and human factors to produce chronic poverty and food insecurity. Cameroon which had been under structural adjustment of the IMF and World Bank since the early 90's and has put into place a National Council of Statistics (NCS) which is a consultative forum in-charge of managing national statistical policy with an agricultural statistic system as an important element of the NCS network.

The national core system of statistics has been established and implemented by the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) which is a permanent secretary of the NCS. This has put into place many new methods and good practices, rules and regulations for national accountability, trade, and agricultural development. At the same time data needs are expanding and become more and more complex. Thus, adjusting development policies and strategies and building integration of statistical systems have become an imperative task.

This paper discusses the national statistical network and the assistance of international agencies along with a presentation of the main system activities performed in term of data collection, processing, and dissemination. Weaknesses and strengths will be highlighted along with discussions on difficulties encountered, main constraints and new challenges. Some insight will be presented that will illuminate the way forward to improving the flow and the quality of the data produced.