General Data Dissemination System (GDDS) Project - Phase 2
Socio-Demographic Statistics Project for Anglophone Africa

Labor Statistics in Sudan -
Report on a Visit to Khartoum, 14-30 March 2008
(Revised format)

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<th><strong>Main Issues</strong></th>
<th><strong>Main Outcomes</strong></th>
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| • How to collect information on the informal sector                          | • Discussed the key concepts  
• Identified Internet resources  
• Went through some of the technical issues involved  
• Discussed how information on the informal sector could be collected by means of a labor force survey |
| • Design of the labor force survey                                            | • Reviewed first draft of LFS questionnaire, and suggested redesign  
• Suggested that the five census questions on economic activity form a good starting point |
| • Improving administrative data                                               | • Some useful data already being produced  
• Need to improve quality of output  
• Staff at national and local level need training in how to present data  
• Need to ensure that output reaches policy makers at both national and state level |
At the request of the Ministry of Labor, Public Service and Human Resources Development (MLPSHRD), and with the support of the World Bank, this consultant visited Khartoum from 18 to 30 March 2008, to assist with the development of an informal sector survey (ISS), improving administrative records, and updating the labor force survey (LFS).

The Ministry recently conducted a large-scale establishment survey covering mainly Khartoum State (Establishments and Federal Ministries) and large establishments in the other States and all Federal Ministries. The survey data is now being processed. The Central Bureau of Statistics was planning to conduct a population and housing census in April. The Ministry would like to conduct an informal sector survey and another labor force survey. A draft LFS questionnaire has already been prepared. The Ministry would also like to improve the quantity and quality of administrative data that it collects.

Throughout the visit, the consultant was based in Sudan’s Ministry of Labor, Public Service and Human Resources Development (MLPSHRD), and worked closely with three senior staff from the Planning and Monitoring Directorate (which includes Information and Statistics). Brief meetings were also held with the GDDS coordinator based at the Ministry of Finance and National Economy and with the Director of Census Field Operations at the Central Bureau of Statistics. The list of persons met is shown in the Annex.

Main findings of the visit

- Sudan was preparing to conduct its Fifth Population and Housing Census in April 2008. There is a short and a long census form. The long form, which will be used in 10 percent of the enumeration areas, contains five useful questions on current economic activity: whether worked in the last seven days; if not why not; if working or previously worked, most recent occupation; most recent sector of economic activity; most recent employment status.

- Ideally the labor force survey and informal sector survey would have been conducted immediately after the census, to take advantage of the up-to-date sampling frame, but CBS has already scheduled a household income and expenditure survey immediately after the census. The LFS and ISS will therefore have to wait until 2009, and some relisting of households may be necessary.

- The informal sector survey can be done as a follow-on to the labor force survey, with the LFS being used to identify those engaged in informal activities, who would then be asked further questions.

- Steps should be taken to improve the channels of communication between the State offices and the Ministry. At present there is no automatic procedure for the national labor Ministry to receive statistical outputs produced at the State level.

- Staff would benefit from further training in how to present statistical outputs, in the form of tables, graphs and charts.
Priority 1: Informal sector survey

A. Need for data on the informal sector

The Ministry needs data on the informal sector and informal employment, because of its importance in terms of job creation, its contribution to GDP, and its effect in reducing poverty. Information is needed on the volume of informal activities, the characteristics of these workers, and their sources of capital.

B. Method of data collection

Possible methods of data collection were discussed. The required data could most easily be collected through a household survey module, as a follow-up to the proposed labor force survey (see priority 3 below). The appropriate methodology for surveys on informal employment is still being developed, but the team examined the current status of this work, and identified the types of questions that would need to be asked. It would be more efficient to collect information on informal employment as part of an overall labor force survey, rather than trying to mount a special investigation specifically on informal employment.

C. Technical assistance

Sudan would require help with sampling, and with the questionnaire design, and with the analysis. During this current visit, considerable time was spent in acquainting the key staff with the terminology involved. For this purpose, various papers produced by the ILO relating to informal work were identified on the Internet and downloaded.

Priority 2: Improving administrative records system

A. Existing sources of data - national level

The consultant was shown some of the existing sources of administrative information. Within the Labor and Industrial Relations Administration of the Ministry, there are four departments of special interest: one dealing with Sudanese who want to work abroad; another with aliens coming to work in Sudan; a labor department concerned with wages, inspection, and labor and industrial relations; an information department that does the data processing; and a new department concerned with women and children. This latter department liaises closely with their counterparts in the Ministry of Social Welfare and the National Council for the Child. It wants to hold a workshop to sensitize other ministries about its work. It does not yet have any computing facilities, but the head of the Ministry’s Information and Statistics sub-directorate indicated that she would try to provide a computer.
In contrast, the Sudanese and Aliens departments are both well established, and are supported by the Information department that produces timely monthly reports, which are passed on to Statistics. Indeed, the Information department is so well organized that it hopes soon to be able to enter the data almost in real time, so that managers will have available reports within one day of the information being collected from applicants.

In addition, some of the special bodies that report directly to the Minister also collect relevant statistical information. One example is the Higher Council for Vocational Training, which has a special form for following up trainees who have graduated from its vocational training centers. Another is the Federal Public Service Recruitment Board, which has a series of forms (concerning academic qualifications and experience) for completion by applicants for posts in the public service.

**B. Existing sources of data - State level**

A visit to the Khartoum State office demonstrated that the State office does produce statistics on a regular basis, but these do not normally reach the Ministry. The State offices are answerable to the State Ministry of Local Government and Civil Service, and the monthly statistics bulletin is passed up the chain. Administrative instructions should be issued by MLPShrd, so that copies of all statistical outputs are passed automatically to the Federal Labor Ministry. The Khartoum office is probably more technically advanced than other State offices, but it was clear that, even here, there is a need for training in how to produce descriptive statistics and graphical output such as pie charts.

In many areas of its work - investigation of individual or group complaints, compensation for injuries, complaints of home workers, requests for dismissal of staff, registration of job seekers, including graduates, etc. - the Khartoum office has quite complex procedures that have to be followed, and there are forms that are used at every stage of the process. Much of the information from these forms is subsequently converted into statistical tables and charts.

This problem of a lack of communication between State and Federal offices is reflected even in the way the central government budget is handled. The consultant heard from the GDDS country coordinator (who works in the Ministry of Finance) that it is only this year for the first time that the States are included in the central government budget.

**C. Dissemination**

As indicated above, the problem is not so much the quantity and quality of data being collected. Rather, it is the question of how to analyze and present the data in a suitable format, and how to ensure that it finds its way through to the appropriate policy makers. Two things need to take place. First, staff at both national and State levels need to receive more training in how to present data, by means of graphs, charts and tables. Secondly, the channels of communication need to be opened up, so that the statistical results do flow through to policy makers at the national and State levels.
Priority 3: Labor force survey

A. Background

A series of labor force and migration surveys were conducted in 1990, 1994 and 1996. No labor force data is available since 1996. The Ministry would now like to conduct a new labor force survey, to update the data on employment and unemployment, and to collect other characteristics of the labor force.

B. Timing and funding

Ideally the LFS would have been conducted soon after the population census, so as to take advantage of the sampling frame provided by the census listing. However, this will not be possible, since CBS is already planning to conduct a Household Income and Expenditure soon after the Census. The LFS will therefore have to wait until next year.

A proposal for the LFS has already been submitted to the Ministry of Finance for multi-donor financing, and the Ministry itself has also earmarked some internal funds. At a recent workshop held in Khartoum, it was recommended that a labor force survey be conducted as soon as possible, as part of the work on developing a poverty reduction strategy. It is understood that UNDP has also expressed some interest in providing support.

C. Questionnaire

A draft questionnaire has been prepared, based largely on the format used in the earlier survey. This was examined. It leaves much to be desired in its present format, and wholesale changes are required. In particular, it is recommended that the questionnaire begins with obtaining information on current activity, rather than usual activity. The format used in the 2008 census should be followed, with those questions (based on activity over the last seven days) forming the core of the first section. In Sudan the coding of occupation is usually done to six digits: the four digits of ISCO, plus two local digits based largely on the Egyptian occupational classification.

The section on usual activity needs to be completely redesigned, and the ILO methodology for the estimation of usual activity status should be followed. According to this methodology, a person’s status over a long time period (normally a year) is examined in small chunks (say a day, week or month), and their status in each period noted. By this method it is possible to determine whether the person was usually employed or unemployed or inactive in each period, and they are then classified as usually active or inactive. Further information can then be sought about their activities over the 12 months.

In addition to the basic questions about current and usual activity, employment characteristics, hours of work, wages, etc., it would be worth considering several other module attachments. These could cover the informal sector - a topic of particular interest in Sudan (see priority 1 above) - child labor, and possibly time use as well.
Annex

List of persons met

Ministry of Labor, Public Service and Human Resources Development
Hon. Major Gen. Alison Magaya Minister
Mr Mohamed El Hassan Head, International Relations Department
Ms Salma Mohamed Abdalla International Relations Department
Ms Hanim Burhaneldin Acting Director, Planning & Monitoring Directorate
Ms Elsham Mohamed Hamid Director, Information and Statistics Dept
Ms Thorya Hamad Farah Statistical Analyst for LMI, Information and Stats Dept.
Ms Fathia Mohamed Abd. El Rahim General Manager, Labor Affairs Administration
Ms Suhair Osman Arman Manager, Women at Work and Child Labour Dept.
Ms Ehsan Khider Manager, Aliens Dept., Labor Affairs Admin.
Ms Ilham Salim Mohammed Head, IT Dept, Labor Affairs Administration
Mr Osman Ali Babiker Labour Relations Dept.
Mr Kamil Noureldin Public Relations Dept.
Mr Hussein Gibreal Elzubeir Labor Affairs Consultant, Establishment Survey
Mr Mohammed Hassan Executive Manager, Khartoum State Labor Office
Mr Mohamed Himmed Manager, Khartoum North Labor Office
Ms Zhoor Mohamed Chief of Inspection, Khartoum North Labour Office
Ms Huda A. Numan First Inspector, Khartoum North Labor Office

Ministry of Finance and National Economy
Mr El Amin Adam Abulgasim Macro-economic Policies and Programs Dept.
(GDDS Coordinator for Sudan)

Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS)
Ms Somaya Khalid El Khair Director, Census Field Operations

United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA)
Mr Arun Kumar Singh Deputy Chief Technical Adviser
Ms Awatif Musa UNFPA technical support to Population Census