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the System of Food and Agriculture Statistics
in Viet Nam**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

1. In the context of the FAO Regional Project for the Improvement of Agricultural Statistics in Asia-Pacific Countries (GCP/RAS/171/JPN), the General Statistics Office (GSO) of Viet Nam organized a national seminar on the system of food and agriculture statistics of Viet Nam, which was held in Hanoi on 20-21 June 2000 and attended by 46 participants, including domestic and international experts.

2. Dr Nguyen Van Tien, Deputy Director General of the General Statistical Office, welcomed the participants to the seminar and thanked FAO for having taken the initiative of such a gathering.

3. Dr Van Tien stressed the importance of agricultural statistics for Viet Nam, a predominantly agricultural country, and gave an overview of its development, highlighting its continuous improvement in both organization and methodology to meet user needs. He asserted that there was a need for further improvement, especially in view of the current transition toward a market economy.

4. Ms Fernanda Guerrieri, FAO Representative in Viet Nam, presented a statement at the opening ceremony. She expressed her thanks to the General Statistics Office for organizing the seminar. She took note of the progress of the Vietnamese economy in general and agriculture in particular in recent years and of the intention of the political leadership of the country to invest in and improve the information system.

5. Ms Guerrieri announced the implementation over the next few months of an FAO-funded project to set up an agricultural statistics system at national, regional and provincial levels in order to strengthen the food security information system of Viet Nam. She expressed the hope that the seminar would be a good opportunity to review the actual state of agricultural statistics and propose solutions for future improvements.

6. Mr Ryuki Ikeda, Agricultural Statistics Expert for the Project, reviewed the formulation of the project and presented its two objectives: the study of the national systems of food and agriculture statistics in Asia and the Pacific through the organization of seminars, and the formulation of a plan for the establishment of a database and related facilities to transfer data to and from countries in the region via FAO.

7. After presenting a brief picture of agriculture and agricultural statistics in Viet Nam, Mr Ikeda noted that the seminar was held to assess and review the state of food and agriculture statistics in the country, identify the needs of data users, address problems and other issues and propose measures for the improvement of the national food and agriculture statistical programme.

Overview of the food and agriculture statistics system (Session 1)

8. After the inaugural session, the seminar moved to the presentation and discussion of the papers, starting with “Overview of the food and agriculture statistical system; proposals for the improvement of the organization of agricultural statistics in Viet Nam”, presented by Dr Nguyen Sinh Cuc, Director of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery Statistics of the General Statistics Office.

9. The paper provided an overview of Vietnamese agriculture, focusing on the organization of production and on management. It noted the important role of agriculture in the national economy but pointed out that the small-scale and dispersive characteristics of agriculture were a source of problems for statistical activities.

10. The paper presented the various administrative levels of food and agriculture statistics from top to bottom, explained the relation between the General Statistics Office and line agencies involved in the collection and release of data, and outlined the main agriculture, forestry and fishery surveys conducted by the office.

11. It further pointed out the organisational problems, issues and constraints encountered while collecting and releasing agricultural data. The biggest problem of the centralised system was that personnel, labour, budget and statistical activities were managed by the General Statistics Office but operated locally (in the provinces and districts), so that the local statistics offices were guided by local governments in some cases. This meant that data collection was ruled by local leaders, which went against the requirement of independent and objective performance. Cases of overestimation and underestimation of production and area for some crops were presented to illustrate the actual situation.

12. The seminar was also informed of the disadvantages of the coexistence of two statistical systems (GSO and statistics of other agencies). The variety of producing units engaged in agriculture, forestry or fishery was a source of considerable difficulties and obstacles in data collection. Another problem was the imbalance between the inadequate budget allocated for statistical activities and the strong demand from the authorities at different levels for statistical information. The paper noted several problems and constraints generated by the paucity of the budget allocated to food and agriculture statistics.

13. The paper proposed measures to deal with each problem, issue and constraint. The solutions proposed were: (1) the organization of the statistics system at the various levels should be completely restructured and coordination and cooperation between statistics offices, agricultural offices and local governments in conducting a survey should be further emphasised and strengthened; (2) more importance should be given to the training of statisticians of the communes, including staff engaged concurrently in other activities; (3) the consistent requirement of statistical data that the data of the lower

level be released by the level immediately above should be implemented strictly; (4) data collection should shift altogether from complete surveys to sample surveys; and (5) funds should go in priority to the main surveys; as for the others, including the survey of forestry, fishery and cooperatives, they would be conducted every five years.

14. The seminar further discussed the method of review and control of the data collected and compiled from different sources. In fact, the data released by different agencies were not always consistent, and it was recommended that users stick to the official data released by GSO. It was pointed out that some unofficial sources released data based on the observation of particular areas and events that were not necessarily representative of the whole.

15. The seminar also stressed the need to add more survey items such as production cost, income of farmer and information on marketing to respond to user requirements.

16. It further recommended a reduction of the sample size. Given limited financial, logistic and human resources, the sample size should be designed for estimation at the national level. The cost of collecting and releasing data at lower levels should be borne by the local governments.

The role of agricultural statistics in Viet Nam's system of national accounts (Session 2)

17. Dr Nguyen Van Chinh, Director of the Department of National Accounts of the General Statistics Office, made a presentation entitled "Basic concept of the system of national accounts – agriculture statistical data used to compile GDP and SNA in Viet Nam".

18. According to the paper, with technical assistance from the United Nations Statistical Office and the Asian Development Bank, Viet Nam has implemented the SNA framework since 1983 to replace the old system, the material product system.

19. After providing an overview of the concept and main contents of SNA, the paper presented the methodology for calculating its integrated indicators, focusing on the calculation of GDP through three approaches, the production, income and expenditure approaches.

20. The paper mentioned the methods and information sources used to calculate gross output, intermediate consumption and value added at current and constant prices.

21. It listed the information required for quarterly and yearly calculation of gross output, intermediate consumption and value added of agriculture, and pointed out that the work required accurate, adequate and timely data on both production and price quarterly, biyearly and yearly. The paper also stressed the need to clarify some concepts and to coordinate SNA statistics, agricultural statistics and price statistics.

22. The seminar discussed the methods used to calculate GDP on a quarterly basis. Calculation of GDP was very useful to users, but it was very difficult to identify and collect gross output and intermediate consumption of crops on a quarterly basis due to the diversity among crops as well as among regions. Some crops were planted and harvested throughout the year, which made it difficult to group their production and cost by quarter.

23. It was pointed out that regulations should be applied to determine agricultural products by quarter. For annual crops planted in one quarter but harvested in another, production and intermediate consumption should be imposed upon the quarter during which the crops are harvested. For crops harvested throughout the year, the input and output should be calculated taking into account the actual situation (or a ratio in recent years could be used).

24. The question was raised of how to deal with data inconsistencies in the calculation of GDP by various departments of GSO and by line ministries. The seminar was informed that GDP was calculated through three approaches, one of which could make a comparison and find out which data source was inaccurate and which sound. Besides, there were clear assignment lines among the departments of GSO and, as a result, the data were normally consistent among them.

Data collection and analysis in crop surveys (Session 3)

25. In his paper entitled “Review of data collection and analysis in crop surveys”, Mr Hoang Dao, Deputy Director of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery Statistics of the General Statistics Office, provided detailed information on the conduct of surveys of area and production of crops.

26. The seminar was informed that in order to avoid overlaps and omissions, paddy was sorted into three seasons and other crops into two. The complete count was adopted for the area survey, whereas a sample survey was conducted to collect data on yield and production.

27. The data on planted area were gathered and adjusted based on different sources of information and then they were approved by an interagency fieldwork mission of the commune.

28. For the survey of yield and production of crops, the sample size was determined differently for paddy and for the other crops.

29. The yield and production survey of paddy consisted of two activities, forecast and actual survey. Forecast activities were carried out twice a season. The survey covered all districts and a three-stage stratified sampling was applied for the selection of samples. The sampling units were the commune, the village and the farming household. The

number of sample communes and sample households was determined in proportion to the number of communes and to the planted area of the district. The sampling units at each stage were selected using linear systematic sampling with a determined start.

30. For yield and production surveys of other crops, the sample size was the same and fixed for all districts. The sample selection was roughly the same as for paddy.

31. The paper highlighted the responsibilities of the central, province and district statistics offices in the organization and implementation of surveys.

32. The seminar was also informed of the main problems and constraints encountered in the management of crop statistics, in both methodology and practice. The insistent demand for information on production and yield of crops from official quarters, down to district and even to commune level, was not matched by budgetary allocations for the research and fieldwork involved. Among the other problems mentioned was the fact that respondents of sample households were likely to underestimate production for fear of taxation, and that Viet Nam lacked international experience in conducting crop surveys.

Statistical activities at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (Session 4)

33. Mr Huynh Ly, Head of the Statistics Division of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), presented a review of statistical activities at the ministry. After an overview of the management organisational system of MARD from headquarters to province and district levels, the paper focused on the Statistics Division and listed the responsibilities of each of its eight members. It highlighted the main functions of the division, which were not limited to providing monthly, quarterly and yearly reports on crops, domestic markets and other aspects of agriculture for the purpose of management of the ministry, but also encompassed reports on the production situation of industry, trade, population and labour of the units managed by the ministry.

34. The seminar was informed of the system of statistical indicators of MARD. The system consisted of reports issued every ten days, every month, every quarter, every six months, every nine months and every year. The 10-day report covered information on progress of cultivation and harvesting of crops and on market price of paddy. The other reports consisted of information on production by value and by kind. The information was reported by the farmers and by enterprises countrywide. In addition to preparing periodic reports, the division also collected data and prepared urgent reports on sensitive items of agricultural production such as price of rice, sugarcane and sugar, fertiliser, pesticide and other inputs. The division coordinated with other agencies to conduct the surveys and inventories – inventories on irrigation, community forestry plantation, forestry and forestry products, and surveys on sugarcane or on rural industry. The indicators were supplementary to the periodic reports.

35. The paper pointed out difficulties faced by statistical activities at the ministry,

such as in identifying harvest time. Some indicators of value were not being collected. Data on animal products or on vegetables harvested by farmers had not been gathered. Statistical organization had not been reinforced, the indicator system had not been suitably improved, statisticians at the local level had not been retrained, and so forth.

36. The last two papers were discussed jointly. After mentioning difficulties and problems in coordination and cooperation among agencies at central and local levels, most participants concurred that close cooperation between GSO and MARD was needed to determine crop seasons and to conduct ad hoc surveys. A joint effort of the agencies concerned was recommended for the collection of food and agriculture data, as no single agency could achieve the task on its own.

37. Some participants were of the opinion that the needs of users such as MARD, the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) and the Department of National Accounts of GSO should be clearly identified. It was pointed out that MARD needed timely data reflecting the trends of agricultural activities for both microscopic and macroscopic management of agriculture, whereas MPI used data at the macroscopic level only. The output data of GSO should, therefore, be macroscopic in nature to satisfy the needs of MPI. In addition, the compilation of SNA was extremely important to assess and analyse the economy and formulate policies and plans of development. So detailed information should answer the requirements of SNA compilation. The seminar concurred that it was very difficult to satisfy all user needs. User requirements should be classified, and data estimated at the national level for timely release and to avoid errors. Local governments should fulfil their statistical needs by conducting surveys through their own budget.

38. Regarding samples, some participants felt that their size should be reduced and that they should be allocated by the central level. This would help control and monitor strictly all procedures of sample selection. It was felt that, in current practice, there was a tendency to select samples aimed at average values. The two-stage sampling technique should be applied instead of a three-stage sampling, by ignoring the selection of sample commune altogether. Some participants raised the possibility of selecting sample households according to the number of households in each locality instead of planted area.

39. Shifting from complete enumeration for planted area to sample survey was also recommended.

40. Some participants raised the problem of enumerators. Enumerators were normally recruited from offices in the commune and were very much influenced by commune leaders. As a result, the data tended to be adjusted according to the latter's wishes. Several participants proposed to set up an independent statistical system from the top down to commune level. They also expressed the need for more post-enumeration surveys.

Data collection and analysis of the livestock and poultry survey (Session 5)

41. The paper entitled “Review of data collection and analysis in the livestock and poultry survey” was presented by Dr Phung Chi Hien, Senior Statistician at the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery Statistics of the General Statistics Office. It presented the organizational structure, design, and method of data collection of the livestock and poultry survey conducted annually by the office.
42. The responsibilities at each level (central, provincial and district statistics offices) in the organization and implementation of the survey were specified.
43. The survey was conducted twice a year on 1 October and 1 April. The survey on 1 October was carried out in all 61 provinces and survey items covered number and production of each animal. The survey on 1 April was conducted in 14 provinces and only two items (number of pigs and number of sows) were covered.
44. For the survey on 1 October, different procedures were applied for the selection of samples and the collection of three groups of survey items, namely, number of livestock, number of poultry and animal products, and other animals. A two-stage stratified sampling was adopted for collecting information on the number of livestock and the estimation was made at district level. Information on the number of poultry and animal products was estimated at provincial level with considerably reduced samples. The information on other animals was culled from reports of the relevant provincial agencies such as agricultural offices, farmers’ associations, bee-keeping companies and others.
45. In the survey on 1 April over 14 provinces, the sample of the 1-October survey was used to collect information on the number of pigs and sows.
46. Post-enumeration surveys were carried out in two or three districts in each province for the 1 October survey. The sample was fixed for some years.
47. The paper pointed out some of the main constraints or omissions as follows:
- Items of importance to some consumers were still absent from the survey, such as pigeon, quail for egg, snake, python, Trionychid turtle, frog, etc. They should be added to the coming survey.
 - In livestock accounting, the female of the species deserved its own tabulation.
 - Sample surveys might be not the proper manner to collect information on livestock (buffalo and cattle) due to big variations of that item among households. For the pig survey, the sampling error might be significant because the number of sample villages was not large enough and sample allocation not wide enough (three or five sample villages per district).
 - Quality was very poor for data collected from secondary sources.

48. Some solutions were proposed as follows:
- The survey on quantity of buffalo and cattle and on quantity and production of other animals should use the complete enumeration method.
 - Sample enumeration should be applied in the survey on quantity of poultry and pigs.
 - As for the survey on animal production, sample enumeration was in order, and the sample procedure should adapt to local circumstances.
49. Some participants were of the opinion that the sample size should be increased. All items should be collected through a survey instead of relying on other sources.
50. It was suggested that the frequency of the survey be increased to provide information for the quarterly compilation of the system of national accounts. It was further deemed necessary to use the same sampling frame for all surveys of livestock and poultry.
51. Participants concurred that coordination in the gathering at all levels of livestock and poultry statistics had not been as satisfactory as expected.
52. Some also expressed the need to add items of quantity to the survey. Information on efficiency of livestock and poultry farming should also be provided.

Data collection and analysis in fishery surveys (Session 6)

53. Mr Hoang Van Giang, Senior Statistician at the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery Statistics of the General Statistics Office, reviewed data collection and analysis in fishery surveys conducted by the office.
54. His paper highlighted the important role of the fishery sector in the country's economy and the inadequacy of current fishery statistics operations, concluding that it was necessary to study and improve fishery statistics in both methodology and content.
55. The seminar was apprised of the current situation of the fishery statistical system, with its two main branches, the fishery state statistics system managed by the General Statistics Office and the statistics system of the Ministry of Fishery. Four departments of GSO and one section in each provincial statistics office were responsible for collecting fishery data, ranging from production and processing to consumption and investment. The paper emphasized that fishery data collected, processed and released by GSO were the legal source of information on the fishery sector. They were widely used inside and outside the country.
56. The seminar was also informed of the statistics system of the fishery ministry at central and local levels. Fishery data compiled by the ministry were mainly used for its own purposes of management and formulation of plans and projections. They were

mainly culled from quarterly reports issued by some exporting and processing fishery companies.

57. At GSO, data on fishery were collected separately and independently for the state sector and the non-state sector. State-sector data were gathered through the regular reporting system. Every year, all fishery establishments of the state sector sent completed forms to the district or provincial statistics offices. Fishery data of the non-state sector were collected by conducting the annual survey.

58. The survey covered all fishery communes, towns and wards. Complete enumeration was applied to collect information on the fundamental conditions of the sector. The information on fishery production was collected through a two-stage stratified sampling survey. The primary sampling unit was the commune or the town and the ultimate sampling unit was the fishery establishment or the fishery household. Sampling units including sample communes and small fishery establishments were selected using linear systematic sampling with random start and sampling interval. A complete count was made for large-scale establishments. The estimation of production was made at district level. Personal interview of the head of the establishment or organization was the method of data collection.

59. The variety and multiplicity of fishery activities was a source of many difficulties in data gathering, the seminar was told. The main problems were 1) the lack of adequate and accurate data on the basic situation of the sector, and 2) inappropriate methodology, especially in the sample survey used for collecting fishery statistics. The sample size of 15 to 20 households in each sample commune was too small to represent all types and sizes of capture activities going on in the commune. Besides, not much effort had gone into fishery statistics in some provinces, the paper claimed.

60. The measures proposed to overcome difficulties and problems were: 1) a fishery census should be conducted as soon as possible to collect basic information on the fishery sector; 2) financial and technical assistance should be sought from other countries and from international organizations; 3) collection of fishery data should concentrate on provinces where fishery activities were carried out on a large scale for commercial purposes, and the sample size should be increased (the sample size in the other provinces should be much reduced, and the estimation made at province level) ; 4) cooperation between GSO and the fishery ministry should be strengthened; and 5) the date of the survey should be changed.

Statistical activities at the Ministry of Fishery (Session 7)

61. Mrs Nu Anh, Statistics Officer at the Department of Planning and Investment of the Ministry of Fishery, presented a paper entitled “Review of statistical activities at the Ministry of Fishery”.

62. The seminar was informed of the statistics organization of the ministry at central and local levels. At central level, after reaching a peak of 12 statisticians in the period 1978-1986, the statistics division dwindled inexorably to its current staff of two, at a time when fishery knew only growth and growth. Only 16 of the 61 provinces had their own fishery offices; in the others, obligation of fishery statistics was assigned to the provincial agricultural and rural development offices.

63. The paper listed at length the tasks of the division, such as gathering the relevant data from the periodic reports and surveys conducted by other departments of the ministry. Due to budgetary constraints, no survey was undertaken.

64. The current statistical indicators, including indicators on structure and production of fishery, were reviewed.

65. The paper also noted the rather good cooperation between the ministry and GSO in statistical work, adding that coordination could be improved on certain common tasks.

66. The seminar was told that leaders at the ministry and at other relevant agencies were often unaware of the importance of statistics and thus paid little attention to statistical activities.

67. The paper argued for a stable organization of fishery statistics, recognition of its importance and need for more staff and means, and for sustained training of staff at local level.

68. The seminar stressed the need for single guidance on how to prepare instructions and collect data. Coordination among agencies should be strengthened at all administrative levels. Agencies should make joint efforts so that a fishery census could be held as soon as possible. It was time for GSO and the ministry to cooperate on the definition of fishery indicators.

69. The differences in the fishery data released by GSO and by the ministry were due to differences in concept and methodology. GSO collected data through the reporting system of the state sector and conducted surveys for the non-state sector, whereas the ministry only relied on reports.

70. The seminar expressed the need to make appropriate approaches to different fishery activities, namely commercial fishery and non-commercial fishery. For culture fishery, there was a need to use the aquaculture farm instead of the fishery household in sample selection. For capture fishery, the collection of data through ports and other landing places was to be considered.

Data collection and analysis in forestry surveys (Session 8)

71. The paper entitled “Review of data collection and analysis in forestry surveys”, prepared by Mr Luong Phan Lam, Senior Statistician at the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery Statistics, was presented by Mrs Tran Minh Chau, also a senior statistician at the department.

72. The seminar was informed of the important role of forestry in Viet Nam, a country with 21 million hectares of forestland.

73. The paper noted that there were two ways of collecting forestry information. The forestry information for the state sector was collected through the regular reporting system, whereas the non-state sector relied on the sample survey.

74. The sample survey had been conducted every two or three years. The selection of samples was a combination of three-stage stratified sampling (with commune, village and forestry household as sampling units) and subjective method, which used linear systematic sampling. There was close cooperation between GSO and the agriculture ministry in conducting the survey and improving method, procedure and survey items, the seminar was told.

75. Two methods were applied in the sample survey to collect information: the questionnaire was either completed by personal interview with the head of household or sent together with instructions to a cooperative, school or other unit, which returned it completed to the district statistical office.

76. The paper presented at length the various procedures for data aggregation and estimation and went on to explain that, in the organization of the survey, GSO was responsible for procedures such as preparation of instructions, questionnaires, training, etc. The agricultural offices at different levels were instructed to cooperate with state statistical offices at different levels in organizing and guiding the survey.

77. The indicator system and method of data collection were set up years ago, and in the meantime a number of problems had emerged, the seminar was told:

- Items on afforestation and forestry products as designed in the regular reporting system should be reviewed in conformity with current policies and realities.
- According to current regulations, the central and provincial statistics offices had to report on production of each forestry product and on gross output of forestry at current and constant prices. However, data on production of forestry products in the non-state sector were collected by sample survey only every two or three years. Accordingly, releasing accurate information in non-survey years was difficult. The obvious solution was to conduct the survey every year.

78. Finally, the paper stressed the need to study the experience of other countries. The seminar concurred that it was a challenge not only for Viet Nam but also for other countries to obtain forestry data of good quality.

79. It was recommended that forestry data be collected through different approaches. In Viet Nam, forestry statistics were collected through producers. Another possible approach was through users. Collection of data on consumption of paper factories, other industrial factories, and households, and on export and import should be studied to adjust or replace data collected through producers.

80. Participants concurred that some survey items should be excluded and some added.

The first agricultural census of Viet Nam (Session 9)

81. Mr Nguyen Hoa Binh, Senior Statistician at the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery Statistics, made a presentation of the first agricultural census held in Viet Nam in 1994 and 1995, amounting to an overview of the objectives, scope, content, method and implementation process of the census. It also noted the experience gained from taking the census.

82. The paper expounded on matters related to the preparation of the census, such as the establishment of an interagency technical working group at central level and of provincial and district guiding boards, the successive training sessions held for supervisors and enumerators, the holding of pilot runs in four provinces, the attention brought to public relations and to the timely printing of the required documents – all of this even before fieldwork actually began.

83. The first agricultural census of Viet Nam, the seminar was told, covered not only agricultural households but also other organizations and households in rural areas and the basic situation of communes and villages countrywide.

84. The census consisted of two parts: basic information was surveyed in 1994 through complete enumeration of all rural households, communes, enterprises and establishments involved in agriculture, forestry or fishery; data on income, expenditure, economic structure and production efficiency (both for crops and animals) were collected in 1995 by sample survey.

85. In order to collect the basic information, three forms of questionnaire were designed. The questionnaires were completed using the direct interview method.

86. The seminar was informed of the main reasons for the successful conduct of the

first census of agriculture in the country:

- The experience of agricultural censuses of other countries was thoroughly studied well in advance; correct and adequate census items were determined; the census was well and strictly organized, instructed and implemented in close cooperation with the institutions concerned at central and local levels; and funds were allocated on time to localities, especially to enumerators.
- The seminar was also informed of some failings and outstanding issues in conducting the first census as follows: lack of experience and insufficient preparation time (eight months compared with two years in other countries); the coverage of all households in rural areas rather than only agricultural households led to several problems; some census items were too complicated, the explanations not specific enough and the characteristics of individual regions not properly taken into account.
- The budget allocated for the census was very limited, so, some important activities such as cartographic preparation were excluded. Also due to the lack of budget, no final meeting was held at national level to assess the problems, issues and constraints encountered and to propose solutions for the next census.

87. The seminar pointed out problems and constraints common not only to agricultural censuses but to other censuses as well: preparation time was always short, not much time was spent on methodology, so that census items and methods were changed during implementation; not much effort went into the preparation and update of maps and lists; tabulation was not always adequate; cooperation in the implementation of various censuses was seldom sufficient; post-mortems to address problems, issues and constraints encountered and suggest solutions were rarely held; and the utilization of the output of censuses remained very limited.

88. The seminar expressed the need to shift census implementation from complete enumeration to sampling.

CLOSING REMARKS

89. Dr Nguyen Sinh Cuc, Director of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery Statistics of the General Statistics Office, summarized the main issues presented and discussed as conclusions and recommendation of the seminar (It is attached in the following page). during the two days of the seminar.

90. Dr Le Manh Hung, Deputy Director General of the General Statistics Office, informed the seminar that the office was formulating a programme to promote statistical activities in the period 2001-2020. He pointed out directions for food and agriculture statistics in Viet Nam in the coming years. He stated that the seminar had been very beneficial by assessing the current situation and offering suggestions for improvement. On behalf of GSO, Dr Le expressed his thanks to FAO for its initiative and support in the setting up of the seminar.

91. Mr Generoso G de Guzman, FAO Consultant, made the closing remarks. He highlighted the rapid development of the economy of Viet Nam in recent years, and of agriculture in particular. He also mentioned issues and problems that remained to be solved, such as poverty and food insecurity. Mr de Guzman emphasized the importance of setting up a good information system in order to identify problems and, as a result, be able to design and monitor policies, programmes and projects more effectively. He also noted that joint efforts should be made to formulate and improve the system of food and agriculture statistics, especially in a country where human and logistic resources were limited. He hoped that the project under which the seminar was held would help strengthen the national agricultural statistics of all member countries. He concluded his statement by thanking GSO leaders and all participants for their contributions to the success of the seminar.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SEMINAR

1. In the two-day seminar, international and domestic participants presented and discussed the main following issues:

- The current state of the organisational and operational system of Vietnamese agricultural statistics – progress made, problems encountered, constraints felt and emerging issues.
- The method of collection, treatment and release of statistical information in the field of agriculture, forestry and fishery.
- Issues being studied and improved, such as sample survey, complete enumeration and post-enumeration survey, according to the following principles: statistics of line ministries are part of state statistics; data released by the General Statistics Office are the orthodox source of information on agriculture, forestry and fishery; data collected by line ministries are operative and unorthodox information.
- Information on progress, technique, marketing and export.
- The relationship between the agricultural statistical system of GSO and the statistics of the ministries of agriculture and fishery.

2. During the discussion, FAO consultants made suggestions and recommendations on matters related to content and to data collection methods, and stressed the need for cooperation and coordination between GSO and line ministries. Recourse to sample surveys for the collection of data on planted area, crop yield and production was emphasised and other measures for improvement were proposed.

3. Participants from GSO, provincial statistics offices and line ministries engaged in frank discussions on the actual situation and issues of agriculture, forestry and fishery statistics in Viet Nam. The discussion extended to consultants' comments, especially recommendations on surveys, including surveys of planted area, production, and livestock and poultry, and on the census of agriculture.

4. Participants were clearly aware of the importance of agriculture, forestry and fishery statistics and of the leading role of the food and agriculture statistics system of GSO. They expressed their appreciation of the cooperation and coordination among agencies involved in food and agriculture statistics.
5. Participants thoroughly discussed problems of organization and methodology as well as the coordination between the two systems of statistics, namely state statistics and statistics of line ministries.
6. They also pointed out the considerable imbalance between the strong demand for information and the limited ability of the current system of agriculture, forestry and fishery statistics to meet user needs. In this context, the main points were as follows:
 - Funds for statistical work are not adequate or proportional to the tasks assigned.
 - Food and agriculture statistical work is very much understaffed, especially at local level, and there is a dire need for proper training.
 - The methods of data collection and processing among agencies still differ.
 - FAO has not paid much attention to the agricultural statistical system of GSO.
 - International cooperation remains limited.
7. The seminar concurred to propose the following measures to the leaders of the General Statistics Office and of the ministries of agriculture and fishery:
 - Strengthen the statistical organization of line ministries, especially the Ministry of Fishery;
 - Formulate a clear-cut coordination mechanism between the agriculture, forestry and fishery statistics system of GSO and that of the ministries of agriculture and fishery;
 - Improve the system of indicators and the methods of data collection and processing;
 - Shift the method of data collection from the reporting system to sample surveys, with the orientation of maximum cut in sample size to reduce expenses;
 - Provide the necessary working conditions, especially expenses for the operation of agriculture, forestry and fishery statistical activities;
 - Submit to the government a proposal for the holding of an agriculture and fishery census; and
 - Call for assistance and support from FAO and other international organizations for projects aimed at strengthening the agriculture statistics system of GSO.
8. The seminar expressed its appreciation of the FAO initiative of holding national seminars in the Asia-Pacific region. The contents of the two-day seminar in Viet Nam proved the validity of such initiative.
9. The recommendations made by Mr Ikeda and Mr de Guzman were found to be very useful for the improvement of food and agriculture statistics in Viet Nam in the future.

10. The seminar on the system of food and agriculture statistics of Viet Nam (in the context of Project GCP/RAS/171/JPN) was deemed a success, as it achieved its objectives.

AGENDA

Date/Time	Topics	Resource Person
Tuesday June 20		
8:00 - 8:30	Registration	
8:30 - 9:30	Inauguration - Opening address (introduce delegate, contents of the seminar) - Address of GSO' leader - Statement by FAO Representative in Viet Nam - Introductory Remarks of Project "Improvement of Agricultural Statistics in Asia and the Pacific" (GCP/RAS/171/JPN) - Remarks from the chair	Mr Hoang Dao, Deputy Director, Dep. of agricultural, forestry and fishery statistics – GSO Dr Nguyen Van Tien -Deputy Director General of GSO Ms Fernanda Guerrieri Mr Ryuki Ikeda, Agricultural Statistics Expert (GCP/RAS/171/JPN) Dr Nguyen Sinh Cuc, GSO
9:30 - 10:00	Overview of Food and Agricultural Statistics System, Measures proposing for future improvement of the organization and task concerning agricultural statistics in Viet Nam	Dr Nguyen Sinh Cuc, GSO
10:00 - 10:20	Tea Break	
10:20 - 10:40	Discussion	
10:40 - 11:10	The basic concept on SNA, agricultural statistics data used to GDP and compile SNA at Viet Nam	Dr Nguyen Van Chinh, GSO
11:10 - 11:30	Discussion	
12:00 - 13:30	Lunch	
13:30 - 14:00	Methodological review of data collection and activities on analysis of crop surveys	Mr Hoang Dao, GSO
14:00 - 14:40	Methodological review of agricultural activities in Ministry of Agriculture and rural development	Mr Huynh Ly, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
14:40 - 15:00	Tea Break	
15:00 - 16:00	Discussion	
16:00 - 16:30	Chairperson	

Date/Time	Topics	Resource Person
Wed. June 21		
8:30 - 9:00	Methodological review of data collection and activities on analysis of livestock and poultry surveys	Dr Phung Chi Hien, GSO
9:00 - 9:20	Discussion	
9:20 - 9:50	Methodological review of data collection and activities on analysis of Fishery surveys	Mr Hoang Van Giang, GSO
9:50 - 10:10	Tea Break	
10:10 - 10:40	Methodological review of fishery statistical activities in Ministry of Fishery	Ms Nu Anh, Ministry of Fishery
10:40 - 11:20	Discussion	
11:20 - 11:30	Chairperson	
11:30 - 13:30	Lunch	
13:30 - 14:00	Methodological review of data collection and activities on analysis of Forestry surveys	Mr Luong Phan Lam, GSO
14:00 - 14:20	Discussion	
14:20 -14:50	Overview of Agricultural Census 1994 in Viet Nam	Mr Nguyen Hoa Binh, GSO
14:50 - 15:10	Discussion	
15:10 - 15:30	Tea Break	
15:30 - 16:30	Conclusion, closing	
	- Summary of the seminar	Dr Nguyen Sinh Cuc
	- Address of GSO's leader	Dr Le Manh Hung - Deputy Director General of GSO
	- Address of the Technical Officer of the Project	Mr Generoso G.de Guzman
	- Closing statement	Mr Hoang Dao
16:30 - 18:00	Farewell Party	

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

	Name	Organization
1.	Dr Nguyen Van Tien	Deputy Director General, GSO
2.	Dr Le Manh Hung	Deputy Director General, GSO
3.	Dr Nguyen Sinh Cuc	Director, Dep. of Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery Statistics - GSO
4.	Mr Hoang Dao	Deputy Director, Dep. of Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery Statistics - GSO
5.	Mr Le Duy Luong	Deputy Director, Dep. of Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery Statistics - GSO
6.	Mr Van Trong Khuong	Director, Administration Dep. GSO
7.	Mr Than Van Nien	Deputy Director, Personnel and training Dep. GSO
8.	Dr Nguyen Van Chinh	Director, National Account Dep. GSO
9.	Dr Tran Kim Dong	Director, Integral Statistics & Information Dep. GSO
10.	Mr Phan Dinh Tran	Director, Dep. Methodology - GSO
11.	Mr Do Trong Khanh	Director, Division of International Co-operation-GSO
12.	Mr Le Thu	Deputy Editor - in - Chief, Figures & Events Magazine - GSO
13.	Dr Phung Chi Hien	Senior Statistician, Dep. of Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery Statistics - GSO
14.	Mr Hoang Van Giang	Senior Statistician, Dep. of Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery Statistics - GSO
15.	Mr Luong Phan Lam	Senior Statistician, Dep. of Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery Statistics - Dep. of Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery Statistics - GSO
16.	Mr Nguyen Van Toan	Senior Statistician, Dep. of Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery Statistics - GSO
17.	Mr Nguyen Hoa Binh	Senior Statistician, Dep. of Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery Statistics - GSO
18.	Ms Dinh Thi Hoan	Senior Statistician, Dep. of Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery Statistics - GSO
19.	Ms Tran Minh Chau	Senior Statistician, Dep. of Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery Statistics - GSO
20.	Ms Vu Thi Phuc	Senior Statistician, Dep. of Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery Statistics - Dep. of Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery Statistics - GSO
21.	Mr Pham Quang Vinh	Statistical Officer, Dep. of Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery Statistics - GSO
22.	Mr Luu Van Vinh	Statistical Officer, Dep. of Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery Statistics - GSO
23.	Mr Cao Van Hoach	Statistical Officer, Dep. of Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery Statistics - GSO
24.	Mr Ho Sy Hiep	Statistical Officer, Dep. of Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery Statistics – GSO

25. Mr Nguyen Ngoc Khoa Statistical Officer, Dep. of Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery Statistics – GSO
26. Ms Nguyen Thanh Huong Statistical Officer, Dep. of Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery Statistics – GSO
27. Ms Tran Thi Minh Statistical Officer, Dep. of Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery Statistics – GSO
28. Ms Do Thu Ha Statistical Officer, Dep. of Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery Statistics – GSO
29. Mr Bui Sy Truy Director, Thai Binh Provincial Statistical Office
30. Mr La Van Chinh Director, Yen Bai Provincial Statistical Office
31. Mr Phan Duy Thuyen Director, ThuaT.Hue Provincial Statistical Office
32. Mr Le Van Cua Director, Binh Dinh Provincial Statistical Office
33. Mr Ngo Van Tong Director, An Giang Provincial Statistical Office
34. Mr Nguyen Hong Ngon Director, Vinh Long Provincial Statistical Office
35. Ms Fernanda Guerrieri FAO Representative in Viet Nam
36. Mr Vu Ngoc Tien Officer, FAO Office in Viet Nam
37. Mr Mr. Julian Lefevre WFP Representative, Viet Nam
38. Mr Le Hong Thai Director, Dep. of Agriculture and Rural Development - Ministry of Planning and Investment
39. Mr Ha Hai Ly Statistician, Statistical Section, Dep. of Planning and Projection - Ministry of Agriculture
40. Mr Huynh Ly Chief of Statistical Section, Dep. of Planning and Projection - Ministry of Agriculture
41. Mr Dang Kim Son Deputy Director, Policy Dep. Ministry of Agriculture
42. Ms Le Thi Nu Anh Statistical Officer, Dep. of Planning and Investment -Ministry of Fishery
43. Mr Thai Thanh Duong Director of Fishery Information Centre, Ministry of Fishery
44. Mr Ryuki Ikeda Agricultural Statistics Expert - Project manager
45. Mr Generoso G. de Guzman Technical Officer of Project

STATEMENTS

OPENING SPEECH

Dr Nguyen Van Tien, Deputy General Director, GSO

STATEMENT AT THE OPENING CEREMONY

Ms Fernanda Guerrieri, FAO Representative in Viet Nam

INTRODUCTION OF THE FAO REGIONAL PROJECT "IMPROVEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS IN ASIA AND PACIFIC COUNTRIES" (GCP/RAS/171/JPN) AND OBJECTIVE OF THE NATIONAL SEMINAR

Mr Ryuki Ikeda, Agricultural Statistics Expert GCP/RAS/171/JPN
c/o FAO/RAP

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dr Nguyen Sinh Cuc, Director, Dep. of Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery
Statistics - GSO

STATEMENT OF GSO'S LEADER (AT THE CLOSING SECTION)

Dr Le Manh Hung, Deputy General Director of GSO.

CLOSING REMARKS

Mr Generoso G. de Guzman, FAO Consultant

OPENING SPEECH

Dr Nguyen Van Tien
Deputy General Director
General Statistics Office

First of all, on behalf of the General Statistics Office (GSO), I welcome you all for your attending to the seminar. I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to FAO Region, Managing Board of the Project GCP/RAS/171/JPN and Mr. Ryuki Ikeda for your initiative to assist GSO organizing a national seminar on system of food and agricultural statistics in Viet Nam.

As you know, Viet Nam is a agricultural country with 76% of population living in the rural area. The agricultural statistics, therefore, plays a very important role. Agricultural Information collected, processed and released by GSO is the orthodox information source of the Viet Nameese government for management and formulation of plans. In order to release adequate, accuracy and timely information, agricultural statistics in Viet Nam is organized in a centralized system from central to localities. This agricultural statistical system has been establishing since 1956 - the same time with the establishment of GSO of Viet Nam. In the past 45 years, the system of agricultural statistics of Viet Nam has been continuously developed and improved in both organizational and technical aspects. Its output information has satisfied the requirements for management and planning purposes of domestic agencies at all levels and international organizations. Nowadays, the agricultural statistical system in Viet Nam is well organized from central level to provincial and district levels with the total of more than 1000 staff (excluding statisticians of commune level). It is able to fulfill tasks assigned by the government especially tasks of conducting surveys, processing and releasing data on food, livestock, poultry, forestry, fishery and irrigation.

In the activities of data collecting and processing, the agricultural statistical system of GSO has co-ordinated closely with related agencies, chiefly with agencies of agriculture, forestry to improve data quality and release data of multiform.

However, in the transition period of the country, there are increasing demands of information of better in quality and variety on data output, the problems and constraints of the organizational system and methodology of agricultural statistics are exposed. This makes difficulties for agricultural statistics to satisfy all users' needs. The Viet Nameese government has been formulating policies and measures to improve the organization and technical aspect of the GSO in general and the agricultural statistical system of GSO in particular. Some international organizations have supported and assisted GSO and agricultural statistical system especially in training of staff and exchanging of information. However, so far the agricultural statistical system of GSO has not received the assistance of any official project. GSO, therefore, highly appreciate the initiative of FAO in organization of seminar. We do hope that, FAO and other international organizations, through this seminar, will get better understanding the current state and the demands of the agricultural statistics in Viet Nam and then will offer good co-

operation and effective assistance for future improvement of our agricultural statistics.

Finally, I would like to express my best wishes for a fruitful seminar.

STATEMENT AT THE OPENING CEREMONY

Ms Fernanda Guerrieri
FAO Representative
Viet Nam

It is my great pleasure to participate in this National seminar on Food and Agricultural Statistics in Viet Nam. On behalf of all FAO colleagues who are concerned with Vietnamese agricultural statistics, I would like to thank the General Statistical Office for organising this meeting.

Since the introduction of the Doi-Moi policies in 1986, Viet Nam has accomplished a remarkable economic growth. It has managed to keep pace with other high growing economies in Southeast Asia. Not counting the turbulent Asian economic Crisis of 1997-98, Vietnam's GDP has been growing at approximately 8 percent during 1990.

Agricultural production has been progressing steadily primarily due to the revolutionary land use policy introduced during Doi-Moi. Allowing farmers to freely manage their farm and market their own produce provides the single most important incentive for them to increase agricultural production, improve agricultural productivity and sustain the new liberalisation policy of government.

The economic growth in Viet Nam is still basically centred on the agricultural sector which accounts for more than 25 percent of GDP. More than 45 percent of the country's foreign exchange earnings come from agricultural exports. Moreover, in the rural areas, home to close to 70% of the country's total population, farming and fishing are the only form of livelihood known to most of them.

Improvement of agricultural and rural communities is a major challenge in Viet Nam. A steady development of agricultural sector can greatly contribute to social and economic development and improvement in the next ten years, Government of Viet Nam has continued to keep agricultural and rural development as its centrepiece. We at FAO are committed to help Viet Nam in this development effort.

It is indeed heart-warming to note that Vietnam is one of the few countries in the Region that is investing in the improvement of its information system. Its leadership is fully aware that well-focused development requires timely and reliable information support. When this Japan-supported regional project, Improvement of Agricultural Statistics in Asia and Pacific Countries was first presented in the Sixteenth Session of the Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics (APCAS) in Tokyo in 1996, Viet Nam readily acceded to be considered among the participating countries.

In the next coming months, we shall see the start of the implementation of an ambitious project to set up a national, regional and province-level agricultural statistical system to strengthen food security information system in the country. This is follow-up project of an earlier Italian Government-supported pilot project for the development of a national food security program which was implemented in Vietnam and Lao PDR. The Italian Government saw the importance of this initiative and the seriousness of Government to set up a within standard national agricultural statistical system and thus, generously

agreed to continue to support this expressed request of Government.

In this context, allow me to emphasise that we view this seminar as integral part of the continuing process to help government improve the quality and timeliness of its official statistics. We hop that the presentations during this seminar, which are focused on the review of the system of food and agricultural statistics in Vietnam will help make clear how the dada are collected at grass-root level, transported to the central government, processed/summarised and finally used for evolving economics policies. Thus methodologies used in the collection and analysis of data will figure prominently. We also hope that this seminar, through and open and free exchange of views and future and further improvement of food and agricultural statistics in Viet Nam.

I would therefore like to encourage your active participation and frank discussions during this seminar to bring useful conclusions and recommendations.

Finally, may I also express my best wishes for a fruitful meeting.

Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FAO REGIONAL PROJECT "IMPROVEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS IN ASIA AND PACIFIC COUNTRIES" (GCP/RAS/171/JPN) AND OBJECTIVE OF THE NATIONAL SEMINAR

Mr Ryuki Ikeda
Agricultural Statistics Expert
GCP/RAS/171/JPN
c/o FAO/RAP

(1). Introduction of the Project

This project was formulated following the recommendation of the sixteenth session of the Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics (16th APCAS), held in Tokyo, Japan, in October/November 1996. At the session, the importance of strengthening cooperation and the establishment of a system for collection and dissemination of statistics among member countries of the Commission were discussed. Japan expressed willingness to contribute in this matter and offered a budget for a trust fund project to be executed by FAO. This project was approved and it actually started its activities in September 1998.

The two objectives of the project are:

- Study national systems of food and agricultural statistics and organise National/Regional Seminars on Production and Use of Agricultural Statistics, and National/Regional Workshop on specific areas.
- Formulate a Plan for the establishment of a database and equipment facilities to provide a capability to transfer data in electronic format both to and from countries in the Region, and FAO, using common concepts, standards and classifications.

Over the last several years, a number of country projects have been implemented at national level by FAO and other international organizations. This regional project is the first, in the field of Agricultural Statistics, to include as many countries in this region. This project covers 16 countries i.e. Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

Currently there are many issues in agriculture of global importance, such as trade, environment, and freedom from hunger and so on. Accurate figures indicated by good statistics can greatly contribute to finding solutions to these concerns. Demand for accurate and comparable statistics among countries will be ever increasing. In this connection, this project is expected to contribute to meet some of these needs.

(2). Background of Agriculture and Agricultural Statistics in Viet Nam

In most countries of this region, agriculture provides the foundation for industrial development. In Viet Nam, beyond doubt, one of the main industries remain to be

agriculture, although industry and service sectors have been progressing rapidly in recent years.

Strong agricultural policies, therefore, should inevitably comprise the mainstay of the countries' important development policies.

On the other hand, statistics can provide quantitative representation of the actual conditions of the society and economy. This means statistics are like soft infrastructure indispensable in the contemporary society. Presently, it is difficult to think of situations where statistics are not used. This is specifically relevant in the promotion of administration and economic activities.

In the agricultural area, statistics also plays an important role of providing useful indicators for various policies of production, exportation, food supply and demand etc.. Furthermore, for a qualified planning, formulating and evaluation of projects, basic data reflecting the actual situation is strongly needed.

The need for accurate and timely statistics is well appreciated. Agricultural statistics of Viet Nam adopts a centralized system. General Statistical Office (GSO) is recognized as the principal organization in charge of official national statistics. GSO once implemented Agricultural Census and have been conducting periodical surveys for various commodities. The statistics of GSO provide vital inputs to estimate various components of the country's system of national accounts (SNA).

On the other hand, the Ministry of Agriculture collects up-to-date data/information on growing conditions of crops and market information for promotion of agriculture. The Ministry of Fisheries also collects data on exportation of fishery commodities. These agencies have been receiving external technical assistance from various international agencies including FAO, to strengthen their function and capacity ..

It is under this environment that this National Seminar is being organized.

(3). Purpose of the seminar

This seminar aims to;

- assess the state of national food and agricultural statistics service in Viet Nam;
- review existing food and agricultural statistical activities;
- identify demands of/and expectations from data users;
- discuss problems, issues faced in the collection, analysis, use and dissemination of food and agriculture statistics; and
- formulate recommendations for future improvement of the national food and agricultural statistical program.

The seminar will serve as a forum for identifying data gaps, deficiencies in methodologies, duplication of efforts/activities, and measures for improving or streamlining agricultural statistics.

We have endeavoured to make sure that both the data producers and users are equitably represented today. We therefore enjoin you to have a free and open discussions of the issues of the strengths and weaknesses that may be constraining the development of a user-friendly and responsive national food and agricultural statistics in Viet Nam.

CLOSING STATEMENT

Dr Le Manh Hung
Deputy General Director
General Statistics Office

On behalf of GSO's leaders, I would like to extend the congratulations to the success of the seminar.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to inform you that GSO is on the way to prepare and formulate the programme of promoting statistical activities for the period of 2001-2020. It is a very important but also difficult work and it is the first time for GSO to formulate such a long-term and comprehensive development strategy. It is certain that agricultural and food statistics will be put on an adequate and proportionate place in the programme.

Although I could not attend all sections of the seminar to hear all your discussion and recommendations, I have read carefully resource papers prepared by GSO, MARD and Ministry of Fishery. These papers described a clear picture on current state of agricultural, forestry and fishery statistics.

Being a person in charge of formulating the statistical development strategy for the coming decades, I would like to present some directions for the future improvement of food and agricultural statistics:

1. Food and Agricultural statistics in particular as well as statistics in general should aim at users, should identify the need of domestic and international users. A practical and efficient system of indicators and data output of food and agricultural statistics, then, should be set up. I would like to emphasize the word "efficient", meaning that indicators or data output generated has to be used and satisfy the users' need. comprehensively
2. To study and set up synchronously forms of data collection, including censuses, sample surveys and, in some cases, reporting system (applied for large-scale establishments only). Synchronism in this context meaning that all forms of data collection should be properly set up. These forms should supplement and support each other to avoid overlap and serve effectively for compilation of data output. It is necessary to make a survey plan including list and frequency of censuses for each decade as well as list of annual surveys.
3. To improve methods of food and agricultural statistics with the direction of applying international standards and make it accord with the actual situation of Viet Nam. This is done in order to raise the data quality and make it possible for application in practical and international comparison.

For example: Much more attention should be paid for improvement of the food production survey in Viet Nam to get the data that could more approach to the actual situation. Some issues should be studied such as in recent years, GSO has managed to improve and control the Yield survey of paddy. The problem is that which method should be applied to obtain accurate data on planted area. I'm afraid that the complete enumeration of planted area basing on reports of villages might provide us unreliable data. An other problem is to set up a national standard on "dry and clean paddy" for calculating unanimously of paddy production in the whole country. etc.

4. To push up the application of information technology in processing, tabulating, keeping and disseminating of food and agricultural statistical information. In recent year, much effort of GSO has been made to promote and apply information technology in statistical operation, especially the installation of infrastructure and application in some specialities. It should be noted that, although information technology could be applicable to food and agricultural statistics due to the stability in methods and system of questionnaires and output tables, however, the application of information technology in this field is still very limited. Unfortunately, no paper in the seminar mentioned on this matter. To my mind, basing on the improvement of statistical method and standardization of questionnaires and output tables, information technology should be strongly applied, the priority should be first allocated for application in some steps such as data processing and communicating.

5. The assignment and co-ordination inside GSO and between GSO and other agencies in the field of food and agricultural statistics should be clearly and well implemented. The co-operation and co-ordination among departments inside GSO should be well set up to avoid overlapping and missing of survey units and survey items. For example, production of crops, which are collected in agricultural surveys, should not be included in the "multi-purpose survey" conducted by other department in GSO. The clear assignment also should be made to collect data of establishments/companies engaging in several economic activities. Information collected in food and agricultural surveys should satisfy the requirement of compilation of SNA. The assignment and co-ordination between GSO and other agencies involved in statistics, especially MARD and Ministry of Fishery should be clearly determined basing on their functions and demands on information to avoid overlap and waste. It is necessary to emphasize that the organizational improvement of statistical system of other agencies should be implemented on the basis of establishing a sound national statistical system in the period of renovation of economic management mechanism.

6. To push up the international co-operation to study and learn knowledge, experiences and assistance in statistics of advanced countries and international organizations.

7. To provide necessary conditions for operation of statistics in general and food and agricultural statistics in particular, including the strengthening of legal environment, training of staff, expenses, etc.

Ladies and Gentlemen, during the implementation of statistical renovation, this seminar is very beneficial for agencies involved in food and agricultural statistics to assess the

current state, address problems and issues to be solved, determine tasks/steps to be first solved and propose orientation and steps for future. On behalf of GSO' leaders, I would like to extend our thanks to FAO for its initiative and support in organising of the seminar. I would especially like to thank Mr. Ryuki Ikeda and Mr. Generoso G. de Guzman - FAO's consultants, for direct participation in organising and attending of the seminar. A special thank also goes to related agencies, especially MARD and Ministry of Fishery for the close co-operation in statistical activities in general and in this seminar in particular. I appreciate highly the participation of some PSOs' leaders for sharing the opinions of the local level. I also appreciate highly the effort made by Dep. of Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery Statistics in preparation and organization of the seminar especially in preparation of resource papers. A special thanks also goes to the interpreter for contribution to the success of the seminar. Finally, I would like to express my best wishes for your health.

Thank you very much.

CLOSING REMARKS

Mr Generoso G. de Guzman
FAO Consultant
FAO RAP

I appreciate this opportunity and privilege to once again come to Hanoi. This time to participate and witness this lively two day seminar on the Vietnam's national System of Food and Agricultural Statistics. Since my first visit in 1993, I am witness to the remarkable transformation of Vietnam in almost all area. I remember the first time I was here, people appeared to be stern, avoiding any eye-to-eye contact, and wary of the intentions of strangers. But now, you could see Vietnamese readily and freely greeting you with their lovely smiles. Slowly, the pedal bikes are being replaced by the more modern motorbikes, soon more four-wheeled vehicles will be congesting the narrow streets in Hanoi. These are not only sure indicators of development, but as well, additional complexities in dealing with day-to-day living.

The papers presented in the seminar covered a wide of topic concerning food and agricultural statistics . The quality of the papers and the interesting discussions they generated was a clear demonstration of the irreversible changes going on in Vietnam since the opening of the country to the world in late 1980.

Today, Viet nam is recognised as the second largest rice exporter in the world. The economy has been progressing in pace with the economic tiger in Asia, like Singapore and Korea. To be abreast with global progress, it has joined such regional organizations as ASEAN and APEC in 1995 and 1998, respectively. I understand that the Government is also in the advance stages of preparation for membership at WTO.

This does not however mean that the country does not have its own share of problem in the global malaise call poverty and food insecurity. The Asian Development Bank estimates that 37% of the total Vietnamese population are poor. Food security remains a concern of Government.

From a food deficit economy, Vietnam, in the last ten years, has transformed itself into a rice net exporting county. However, with almost no land available for further expansion of the arable sector, the pressure on the existing land is very high. The average size of an agricultural holding is only 0.7% hectare, and the average farming household comprises 4.8 persons. The increase in rice production has been mainly due to increased yield through the introduction of improved varieties and the increase in use of fertiliser and plant protection methods. However., improved technologies and production remains dependent on marked weather changes and as a result, the food supplies situation and marketable surpluses will continue to experience fluctuations and difficulties from time to time.

Total rice production has increased significantly, but due to the increase in exports this has not always led to an increased availability in the domestic market. With rice providing the staple food for the population, the production of other food crops for domestic consumption and of cash crops is only slowly increasing. The fluctuation in the production and supply of rice due to weather, natural calamities and inadequate transport cause the nutritional status of large groups of the population to be still poor, particularly as regards the provision of proteins, fats and vitamins.

From a global perspective, the important role that agriculture plays in ensuring national food security was put in focus at the World Food Summit held in Rome in 1996. At that time, it was estimated that over 800 million people in developing countries subsist on diets that are deficient in calories. About 96% of these food insecure suffer from chronic deficiencies. Approximately 170 million children under five years of age, representing in the Summit made a resolve to reduce the number of undernourished people in the world by at least 50% by the year 2015.

In this context, the problems, issues and discussions made in this seminar are indeed a time one. It highlighted the long road ahead and the bottlenecks, restrictions --political, social, cultural, economic and financial -- that need to be overcome before one sees the establishment of a national food and agricultural statistics and information system that is at par with other more developed national statistical services in the region.

Getting better data on food and agricultural issues is not an end in itself ; rather, it is an essential means to the end of better understanding the problems of poverty, food security, and malnutrition. And subsequently, being able to more effectively design and monitor policies, programmes and projects which seek to address these problems.

A good information system is a valuable asset and has many uses: national accounts; policy analysis and advice; sector performance analysis; food security poverty monitoring and impact analysis for policies and programmes. These are concerns vital to a vibrant government's functions. Under a global economy, however, official statistics is not confined only to supporting government planning and policy needs. More important, it should be responsive to the need of the private sector, the farming community included, who, after all, are the principle actors and players in the global market.

The amazing developments in information technology and telecommunications, inevitably remove all geographic barriers. Any country wanting to join the global market can not ignore this phenomenon. It has now become imperative for governments to establish their respective information websites on the internet and provide the global user with timely, reliable and useful information for investment and marketing.

Viet Nam has already entered the playing field on the global market. There is no more turning back. Here, the battlecry is **ONWARD TO PROGRESS**. To succeed, one has to strive to increase production, improve productivity and distribution systems, and develop a truly competitive marketing system.

An integral support system towards this end is to set in place a national food and agricultural statistical system that's is characterized by its transparency, reliability and

timeliness. This is a responsibility that cannot be monopolized by a single government agency alone. Specially in a country like Vietnam, where both human and logistic resources are limited. Unselfish cooperation among all institutions and individuals, representing sources, producers and users of statistics and information, from the private and government sectors, are necessary if Vietnam is to continue in its trek to progress and development.

This regional project, GCP/RAS/171/JPN seeks to establish a region-wide system of information exchange among APCAS member countries. This system hopes to generate the synergy that will lead to a cooperative effort to strengthen the national agricultural statistics and information services of all member countries. At the end of the project, we hope to see a regional plan for the establishment of all member countries. At the end of the project, we hope to see a regional plan for the establishment of a regional statistics and exchange that responds to the needs of each member country. This Seminar has provided the project insights that are vital in the formulation of such plan.

Before concluding, allow me to thank Dr Nguyen Van Tien and Dr Le Manh Hung Deputy Directors-General of General Department of Statistics for taking time out from their busy schedule to grace the opening and closing sessions of this Seminar and offering us useful food in Vietnam. I also would like to commend the resource persons for the considerable efforts they have made in preparing and presenting high quality papers touching on critical issues affecting the current state of development or NFAIS.

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Thank you very much.