

Workshop for improving the collection of Local Government Statistics-under STATCAP

A Workshop was conducted by the Publications Division of the Department of Census and Statistics at INGAF on 24th September 2009, to improve the collection of Local Government Statistics. There were 60 participants including officials from Local Government Authorities (Municipal Councils-4, Urban Councils-5, Pradeshya Sabhas-4) of Colombo district and the Statistical Officers and Senior Statistician of Colombo district.



Inaugural session of the workshop commenced with the welcome address of Mr. D.C.A Gunawardena, Director, Prices and Wages division of the Department. He stated that the collection of administrative statistics is the most vital component of overall statistics, because of its cost effectiveness, accuracy and the frequent availability. He further said that to improve the quality of administrative statistics a programme has been planned island wide of which this is the first workshop.

The inaugural address was followed by the self introduction of the participants from the Local Government authorities. This session was facilitated by Mr. D.B.Weerawarna, Statistician Publication division.



Next, the keynote address was delivered by Mrs. D.B.P.Suranjana Vidyaratne, Director General of the Department of Census and Statistics. The DG said that this is the first time an event of this nature is happening in the history of the department. She further said that this workshop would strengthen the ties between the Department of Census and Statistics and local bodies, and provides an opportunity for both institutions to benefit mutually. She also expressed her thanks to the officials of the Local Authorities of Colombo district for their presence.

The objectives of the workshop were elaborated by Ms. W.J. Nigamuni, Deputy Director Prices and Wages division. The questionnaire currently being used to collect the statistics needs to be redesigned to capture the changes taken place recently in this sector and the Department intends to do a publication on Local Government Statistics for the use of policy makers and people who are involved in Development activities.



Mrs. H.D.E. Somaratne, Director-Industries division stressed the importance of the collection of building statistics, also adding that there were delays in getting these statistics. Mrs. Somaratne agreed to accept the amendments proposed by the local bodies to the questionnaire being used currently to get the information in a timely manner.



Next, Mrs. Nalani Kumarasinghe, Deputy Director National Accounts division explained the method of estimating the GDP and how the statistics provided by the local authorities used for this purpose.

A presentation was made by Mr. K.P.S.P De Silva Arshakularathna, Statistical Officer Publications division, on the questionnaire currently being used by the department.



Mr. D.C.A. Gunawardena Director, Prices and Wages division of the Department moderated the discussion on redesigning the questionnaire. This discussion was very useful and provided an opportunity to strengthen the relation between the department and local government authorities. Following the discussion, Mr. D.L.R. Wijetunga, Senior Statistician of Colombo district expressed his gratitude to the Publication Division for providing an opportunity to have this type of meeting with local bodies and the experts in the department. He requested the co-operation of the local government authorities to solve the problems currently being experienced in collecting the local government statistics.

The Workshop concluded with the vote of thanks of Mrs. U.Maheshwaran, Senior Statistician of the Publications division.