

Evaluation of an Outcome

**Expected from the UNDP Country Programme for
Turkmenistan:**

**“National capacity for socio-economic data collection, analysis
and reporting aligned with international standards and
commitments, including MDGs.”**

Michael Constable and Olga Nazarova

October 2006

Table of contents

Page

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
1. INTRODUCTION	7
1.1 Why evaluate this outcome?	7
1.2 Purpose of this outcome evaluation.....	7
1.3 Expectations	7
1.4 Methodology used	7
1.5 Structure of the report	8
2. THE DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT	8
2.1 The rationale for this CP outcome	8
2.2 Key partners, main stakeholders and expected beneficiaries	9
2.3 Major constraints	9
3. FINDINGS	10
3.1 Status of the outcome	10
3.1.1 Progress	10
3.1.2 Relevance	14
3.1.3 Lessons from defining scope and indicators	16
3.2 Factors affecting the outcome	17
3.2.1 Factors constraining progress	17
3.2.2 How?	17
3.2.3 Good practices and lessons	18
3.3 UNDP contributions to the outcome	19
3.3.1 UNDP outputs and the outcome.	19
3.3.2 Relevance of UNDP outputs	20
3.3.3 Potential UNDP contributions	21
3.3.4 Quantity, quality and timeliness of outputs	21
3.3.5 Efficiency	21
3.3.6 Reporting and monitoring	22
3.3.7 Soft assistance	23
3.4 UNDP partnership strategy	23
3.4.1 What, with whom and how effective	23
3.4.2 Participation	24
4. RECOMMENDATIONS	25
4.1 Should UNDP stay engaged?	25
4.2 Engaged in what and how?	26
4.3 Engaged with whom?	28
4.4 Others	29
Annexes	
1 Acronyms and Abbreviations	31
2 Terms of Reference	32
3 Inception Report	34
4 People interviewed and/or who provided information electronically	40
5 Documents, web sites and any other relevant material consulted.	41
6 Extract of main lessons and good/interesting practices that could have generic application	43
7 Large and supporting tables	44
8 Record of evaluation team meeting with donors on 5 October 2006.	66
9 The MDGs and their indicators.	70

***Thanks:** The evaluation team is grateful for the support received from the UNDP Country Office and from the Evaluation Adviser of the Regional Centre, and for the time and information shared with the team by managers and staff of NISSI, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, and other development partners in Turkmenistan and by staff of the UN Statistics Division.*

Summary

The evaluation: One of the six outcomes expected from the UNDP Country Programme (CP) in Turkmenistan (2005 to 2009) is: "National capacity for socio-economic data collection, analysis and reporting aligned with international standards and commitments, including MDGs". Statistical projects aimed at contributing to this outcome will end in December 2006. Should UNDP continue statistical interventions? If so, where can UNDP add most value, learning from past experience and likely interventions from UNICEF, UNFPA and the EU? The CO called for an evaluation to address these questions, to strategically position future interventions and to improve its performance.

The evaluation team's Inception Report proposed methodology and sources. The methodology involved four sequential and inter-connecting analytic steps: 1) ascertaining the extent to which the outcome has been achieved, 2) identifying influencing factors, 3) assessing UNDP contributions to the outcome and 4) reviewing UNDP's partnership strategy. The UN's ten "Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics" set international standards on HOW statistics should be collected and used while Turkmenistan's international commitments, particularly with respect to the MDGs, provide benchmarks for WHAT official statistics should be available. The UN's ten Principles and the MDGs provided the benchmarks against which progress towards the outcome was assessed.

Sources were limited by restricted access to Government users, statistics and documents, including a questionnaire which the national statistical office (NISSI) completed in 2003 on implementation of the ten UN Principles. But the team collected considerable information from NISSI managers, project staff and trainees, development partners and UN agencies in Turkmenistan as well as from the UN Statistics Division, the World Bank and other web based sources.

The development context: The UN's 2004 CCA provides the rationale for the outcome: limited access to official data and the typically poor quality of whatever official data are publicly available constrain not just UN country programming in Turkmenistan, but also that of the Government and all its development partners. This limits the extent to which Turkmenistan's progress towards the MDGs can be tracked as well as assessment of the effects of policies and programmes and overall performance of the Government and its partners. Civil society and the international community are effectively denied a means through which the Government and its partners can be held accountable.

This lack of access to information is one of the symptoms of a highly centralised one-party state in which there is no effective separation of executive, judiciary and legislative powers. The UN and other international bodies have expressed repeated concerns at violations of human rights including the suppression of independent media, freedom of expression and access to information. These factors have a major bearing on development in Turkmenistan.

Findings – progress towards the outcome: Findings drawn from several different but complementary analyses are:

- There is tangible evidence substantiating Turkmenistan's increasing use of data classification systems in international use (part of Principle # 9),
- There have been improvements in the presentation of some official statistics (Principle #3) and in simplifying their collection (part of Principle # 5)
- While Turkmenistan has a Statistical Law (Principle # 7), its provisions should be more fully aligned to the ten Principles.
- There is little tangible evidence to substantiate significant progress in meeting other international standards, as reflected in the UN's ten Principles.
- Indeed, several analyses tend to confirm the widely held views amongst the UN and other development partners that full utilization of NISSI's professional capacity and professionalism (Principle # 2) as well as its participation in the international statistical community (Principle # 10) is severely constrained by factors outside NISSI's control. Statistical practices, standards and development in Turkmenistan remain below those in most other developing countries and below those in neighbouring CIS countries,
- The overall relative performance of the statistical system in Turkmenistan, as reflected by its data and other submissions to the UN and the WB has deteriorated in the last two years, when the UNDP funded statistical projects have been operational. This questions the relevance and/or effectiveness of those projects.
- This deterioration in performance has been both absolute in terms of data availability (Principle #1) and international cooperation (Principle #10) as well as relative, in comparison with neighbouring CIS and other developing countries,
- The biggest challenges facing the Turkmenistan statistical system relate to meeting the international standards reflected in Principle #1. These relate to the relevance and impartiality of official statistics and equal access to them, and
- The performance of the Turkmenistan statistical system has been particularly poor in regularly generating credible and timely data for monitoring progress towards the MDGs. Communications with development partners as well as analyses of data from different sources point to the limited availability of official statistics,

in the public domain, that show disparities in income, education, health, etc. by socio-economic group, district, urban-rural, gender and ethnic groups. The few official statistics that are available in these areas are often regarded as impartial and politically influenced (Principle # 1).

Findings – factors affecting the outcome and lessons: The resources of the international development community increasingly gravitate towards those countries which are seen to be measuring their development results. The international standard for measuring development results is provided by the MDGs. What is required is not merely reporting progress and in this Turkmenistan's MDG report was widely criticized as lacking credibility. More important is the regular in-country monitoring of how more disadvantaged groups and areas within a country are faring relative to wealthier and more advantaged groups and areas towards the MDGs. The public availability of such data has become an international indicator of accountable governance: accountability to both national citizenry and to the global development community. The outcome thus remains very relevant for Turkmenistan's development. Also, the UN (DP) has an obvious comparative advantage as a development partner in pursuit of this outcome.

Experience in countries emerging from the breakup of the Soviet Union suggests that the political factors were more important than technical considerations in developing, using and sustaining national statistical systems that meet international standards, at least in their early years. In particular, political conditions have to encourage the growth of transparency, impartiality and accountability. Those conditions do not yet exist in Turkmenistan. Examples of the way in which political factors constrain progress towards the outcome include the vetting of proposed travel for training, usually resulting in lost opportunities, and restricted access to the internet. By comparison, technical constraints affecting progress towards the outcome are much less severe.

Lessons from experience in other countries emphasize the importance of addressing the political context. The capacity to supply statistics is easier to build than an effective demand for them. Incentives and a powerful "champion" can help create this demand for relevant, reliable and timely official statistics. Another lesson is that this usually takes considerable time and requires a long-haul effort, most especially to create an enabling political environment.

The outcome and its associated targets and indicators, could and should have been articulated in ways which better reflect the centrality of the MDGs to the global mission of the UN (DP), and the UNCT's vision of that mission in Turkmenistan as justified in the CCA and projected in the UNDAF. The reference to international standards in the outcome should also have been related more meaningfully to the ten UN Principles. The narrower and almost exclusive focus on data definition and classification standards was lacking in these respects, even if it was politically expedient. This narrow interpretation was largely irrelevant to the MDGs and to the rights based approaches that are now more normally expected from UN. Instead, the challenge was reduced to a largely technical goal of classifying data in accordance with international classification standards.

Findings – UNDP's contributions: The evaluation verified several changes to the ways in which official data are classified and in the definitions used for statistical terms. These are in line with international use and were the result of project recommendations. Thus outputs from the UNDP projects contributed to progress in aligning official data more closely with international definitions and classifications. There remain some significant exceptions while questions on the sustainability of the changes are raised by NISSI's reported practice of maintaining the old classifications in parallel with the new. While these project outputs contribute to the outcome, their significance is relatively marginal compared to the more MDG and rights related challenges that one might have expected the UN (DP) to address given its mission, the UNCT's CCA and the agreed UNDAF outcome. On the occasions that project consultants raised some of the larger issues, such as data accessibility, they got nowhere.

The evaluation also found that the projects built capacity within NISSI. But that capacity is not yet delivering outputs to meet international commitments, especially the MDGs. Nor is NISSI's capacity being used, with the partial exception of data classification, in ways which meet international statistical standards. The full expression of NISSI's professionalism is severely constrained by political factors. Some donors already withdrew support to NISSI because it is prevented from publishing impartial statistics which show real disparities and uneven progress towards the MDGs. In short, the political context severely limits the contribution of project outputs to the outcome. Even more relevant projects are unlikely to be developmentally effective in these circumstances.

The impact of the five separate UNDP projects would probably have been enhanced had they been systematically identified and integrated as part of statistical support programme. Certainly they would have been more cost efficient, with their cost to date averaging only \$80,000. Each project inevitably had managerial and administrative requirements and a consequent workload on both NISSI and UNDP. NISSI expressed the hope that future support could be provided through a longer term and more integrated programme.

Findings – partnership strategy: The CO's strategy with its main partner, the Government, may be characterized as low profile engagement, primarily at the technical level. This led to the least contentious but narrow interpretation of the outcome at the technical level while the CO's new top management sought, in early interactions with the Government, to establish rapport and constructive and mutually trusting relationships. The top managers hope that such relationships will provide a solid platform for more assertive advocacy in the future. To further strengthen this platform, as well as to implement UN reforms at the country level to enhance cost effectiveness, the UNCT decided, in mid 2006, to integrate the parallel statistical interventions of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF into a single integrated UN statistical programme from January 2007. It is too early to draw conclusions on how effective this partnership strategy has been. Certainly the initial focus on a more technical and more readily actionable international standard engaged NISSI managers and staff. They were emphatic in their appreciation of UNDP's support from the projects and were unanimous in requesting more. Whether this will provide an effective entry point from which more meaningful progress towards the outcome can be made, remains to be seen. Much will depend on the extent to which the CO can now utilize the platform that it has established for policy dialogue to address the more serious challenges.

Recommendations - political dialogue: Progress towards the outcome has been constrained more by political than technical factors. The political constraints have to be addressed to achieve real and sustainable progress in building a national statistical system that regularly tracks progress towards the MDGs in a manner consistent with the ten UN Principles. Without progress here, little if any real progress can be made towards these UNDAF and CP outcomes. This conclusion and lessons from experience support the growing impatience from Turkmenistan's development partners, perhaps seeing competition for their resources from countries which are more visibly demonstrating development results. *Recommendation # 1: the RC should initiate a dialogue to address some of the political constraints. That dialogue should seek agreement at the highest political level that:*

- a) Future UN support to the national statistical system be used to produce official statistics which effectively monitor progress of different socio-economic groups and areas of the country towards the internationally agreed MDGs, and*
- b) These official MDG related statistics, including the raw survey data on which they are based, should be equally accessible to civil society and development partners as well as to Government.*

Recommendation # 2: The RC should strategize with the UNCT and donors on how best to approach this political dialogue. He should also fully and regularly inform them of progress or the lack of it.

Recommendations until political dialogue results in change: Complete disengagement of the UN from statistical interventions would make it difficult to monitor and report on the UN's other ongoing programmes as well as to track national compliance with international commitments. Instead, *Recommendation # 3: the UN (DP) should pursue a minimalist approach until political agreement on the above two points is reached. None of UNDP's current statistical projects should be extended beyond their scheduled termination in December 2006.* The minimalist approach should limit UN (DP) support to producing data that provide credible "snapshots" of the current situation of more vulnerable groups and parts of the country with respect to those MDGs which are considered by the UNCT and partners to be most relevant in the current context. It should not build capacity as there is little prospect that such capacity will be effectively utilized or sustained without political change.

The evaluation findings fully support the proposal to prepare a single integrated UN statistical programme to replace current parallel interventions by UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF. The UN programme should pursue this minimalist approach until the international development community is satisfied by visible and tangible progress from the recommended political dialogue. To design the new minimalist UN intervention, an inter-agency team should use a results based logical framework approach such as ZOPP. Ideally NISSI and the EU should participate in this process. If it is already too late for the EU to integrate its 2007 statistical support into the UN statistical programme, such integration should be targeted as soon as is feasible.

Recommendation # 4: The UN (DP) should not support the preparation of another MDG report unless a) the UNCT is given equal access to the raw survey data required for such reporting, and b) the UNCT retains the right to participate equally in data collection, analyses and dissemination of the report.

Recommendation # 5: If current political constraints remain, the mid term UNDAF review should make the outcome more modest so as to be realistically achievable by 2009. If, on the other hand, by then there are tangible results from the political dialogue, then this outcome should be reformulated to a) focus exclusively on the MDGs to indicate WHAT statistics will be supported by the UN, b) clearly indicate which disadvantaged groups (WHO) will be covered by these statistics, c) indicate HOW the statistics will be collected, analyzed and disseminated by relating to the ten UN Principles and d) be more results orientated.

Recommendation # 6: Because of the obvious concerns of development partners in this outcome, they should be invited to play an active role in the mid term review of the UNDAF..

Recommendations if political dialogue results in change: *Recommendation # 7: when the UNCT and development partners are satisfied with results from the political dialogue, a full and integrated UN statistical support programme should be systematically formulated from a readiness and needs assessment.* The readiness assessment should identify areas in which political considerations would be least likely to constrain progress towards the outcome and define limits within which the needs assessment should focus. The needs assessment should systematically identify and prioritize support areas to enable the national statistical system to deliver on the outcome by 2009. This should result in a substantial refocus of UNDP support towards meaningfully tracking progress of more vulnerable groups towards the MDGs and doing this in a manner consistent with the ten UN Principles.

Recommendation # 8: The UNCT should invite the EU to join in a single integrated statistical support programme, irrespective of whether that programme follows the minimalist approach or expands, because of verified political readiness, into a full programme.

Recommendation # 9: As part of a full statistical support programme, if present travel restrictions on NISSI professionals continue, the UN should finance briefing visits by globally recognized statistical experts to Turkmenistan in order to brief NISSI staff and other concerned Government users on new professional developments and best practices related to MDG monitoring and the ten UN Principles.

Recommendation # 10: UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA should explore a joint UN initiative at the sub-regional level that aims to:

- a) Put into the public domain the UN's best estimates of progress by vulnerable groups/parts of countries towards the MDGs, in cases where official data are either not available or considered impartial, and*
- b) More assertively advocate for change where current conditions constrain progress towards the MDGs.*

The following checklist is intended to facilitate the CO's management response to these recommendations. It may also help in the subsequent monitoring of follow-up and audits and programme evaluations. A critical checkpoint on follow-up will be the UNDAF mid-term review. Strategic decisions should then be taken by the UNCT and its partners on any adjustments to future directions of UN programmes and operations in Turkmenistan. The mid-term UNDAF review is currently scheduled for July 2007.

Summary Checklist for follow-up to recommendations from this evaluation

#	Summary recommendation (check text for full recommendation & for pre-conditions)	Suggested lead responsibility	Suggested timeline	CO agrees: Yes / No?	Results achieved by mid term UNDAF review
1	Political dialogue	UN RC	Start by 30/11/06		
2	UNCT & Donor meeting	UN RC	By 15/11/06		
3	Design joint UN minimal support programme	UNDP Prog. Officer (with other UN)	By 30/11/06		
4	Don't support 2 nd MDR	UNDP DRR	By 30/11/06		
5	Revise UNDAF & CP outcomes at Review	UNDP DRR	By mid 2007		
6	Invite donors to participate in UNDAF mid term review	UN RC	By April 07		
7	Readiness and needs assessment	UNDP Prog. Officer (with other UN)	Depends on political results		
8	Invite EU to participate in joint UN programme	UN RC	By 15/11/06		
9	In country updates by top global experts	UNDP Prog. Officer	Depends on # 7		
10	Joint UN regional initiative	Director, RBEC	By January 07		

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Why evaluate this outcome?

The UNDP Country Programme (CP¹) in Turkmenistan runs from January 2005 to December 2009. One of its six expected outcomes is: "National capacity for socio-economic data collection, analysis and reporting aligned with international standards and commitments, including MDGs". This CP outcome aims to contribute to the achievement of the first outcome expected from the UNDAF outcome: "By the end of 2009, policies to promote social well-being and human security are strengthened and expanded in accordance with national goals and the nationalized MDGs".

UNDP-funded projects in support of the above-mentioned outcome are scheduled to end in December 2006. The UNDP Country Office (CO) indicated, in the Terms of Reference (ToR - Annex 2) and in briefing the evaluation team that it soon needs to make strategic decisions on future interventions in pursuit of this outcome. This calls for an evaluation of progress to date in this outcome so that lessons can be drawn and future performance improved.

Similar programmes and projects are supported by UNFPA and UNICEF. The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in mid 2006 committed itself in principle to developing a joint UN programme to support this outcome. The CO also mentioned possible collaboration with the European Union (EU) TACIS Programme which was also preparing a new programme to develop statistical capacity, commencing in 2007. The key national counterpart, the National Institute of State Statistics and Information (NISSI), had stated the need for closer cooperation.

1.2 Purpose of this outcome evaluation

The ToR (Annex 2) elaborate on the above stated expectations from the evaluation. In brief, these are to assess how and why the outcome is (not) being achieved, UNDP's contributions and partnership strategy in pursuit of the outcome, to generate lessons and make recommendations to improve performance.

1.3 Expectations

The CO's management, in early discussions with the evaluation team, emphasized their primary expectation that the evaluation input into the strategic positioning of the CO: should UNDP continue its interventions in this area? If so, where can UNDP add most value, taking into account lessons from past experience and likely interventions from UNICEF, UNFPA and the EU. UNDP has to make key decisions on future interventions in this area with the UNCT and NISSI during the annual review of the UNDAF and UN CPs in December 2006. The CO stressed that it wanted to become more results orientated and hoped to agree on conditions and more rigorous benchmarks, linked to international standards, for any future interventions.

1.4 Methodology used

At the outset, the evaluation team, comprising consultants Michael Constable (team leader) and Olga Nazarova, prepared an Inception Report. This described HOW the evaluation team proposed to carry out its ToR. Its purpose was to ensure that the team correctly understood expectations and that their proposed programme of work, methodology and schedule of deliverables were agreed by stakeholders. A draft Inception Report was submitted on 2 October to the Evaluation Working Group which the CO had established to oversee and steer the evaluation. The finalized Inception Report (Annex 3) incorporates comments made.

The methodology used is described in Annex 3. The methodology draws heavily on UNDP's "Guidelines for Outcome Evaluations" (2002). This involves four major sequential and inter-connecting analyses: 1) ascertaining the extent to which the outcome has been achieved, 2) identifying influencing factors, 3) assessing UNDP contributions to the outcome and 4) reviewing UNDP's partnership strategy.

To contribute to these analyses, NISSI's performance in data collection, analysis and reporting is benchmarked against the international standards defined by the UN's ten "Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics". The need for such principles was prompted primarily by the break-up of the Soviet Union. That led to the emergence of new countries in which official statistics at the time lacked credibility amongst the general public and by the international statistical community. The development of different systems of governance and economic management in the new countries called for vastly different roles for official statistics. In order to facilitate understanding of the role and character of official statistics in these new contexts, a conference of European statisticians adopted, in 1992, ten Fundamental

¹ All acronyms are listed in Annex 1.

Principles of Official Statistics. Statisticians in other regions quickly recognized the global value of these Principles. As a result the Principles were adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) in 1994.

"The UNSC is the paramount authority on statistical policy for member states (of the United Nations). It agrees statistical standards and nomenclature and sets out methodological best practice. As well as its normative function, it is responsible for championing statistics in the UN system, for coordinating the international statistical system and for promoting the development of national statistical systems worldwide".² The Fundamental Principles set standards which "codify the manner in which national statistical offices operate....By publishing these Principles, the UNSC has set out an objective and ethical standard against which national statistical systems can be judged". "These ten Principles are a now a universally agreed framework for the mission of national statistical offices."³ In short, the ten Principles set international "professional" standards for the way in which statistics are collected, analyzed and reported and for the general performance of a national statistical system and agency.

The UNSC carried out a survey on implementation of the Principles in 2003. For this, the UNSC sent a questionnaire to the national statistical offices in member countries of the UN. NISSI returned a completed questionnaire for Turkmenistan. NISSI's replies to the questions on implementation of the Principles would have provided a valuable baseline against which to assess progress in meeting international standards since late 2003. However, UNSC emails to the evaluation team on 27/9/06 indicated that, in accordance with the "confidentiality" Principle (see # 6 in Box 1), UNSC would not be able to provide a copy of NISSI's completed questionnaire without the approval of NISSI. The team then tried to obtain a copy of the completed questionnaire directly from NISSI. As this had not proven successful by 2 October 2006, UNDP/Turkmenistan sent a formal Note Verbale to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) asking for a copy of the completed questionnaire and for other material required by the evaluation team. No reply had been received up to the time of completing this evaluation report.

The evaluation team was similarly denied access to NISSI's official statistics and documents (these are generally not in the public domain) despite both informal and official requests. However, the team was able to gain informal access to some official data and publications. The evaluation team's request to meet with some Government users of official statistics was denied by MoFA through which all such requests have to be made in Turkmenistan. However, meetings were held with several NISSI managers and project staff, and concerned managers and staff in UN agencies and in the European Union, as listed in Annex 4. Data and analyses from the UN, the World Bank and other sources (listed in Annex 5) were used to fill gaps arising from the non-accessibility of NISSI's data and/or to comment on the standards and reporting of NISSI. Quantitative analysis was supplemented by qualitative analyses and anecdotal evidence. Sources included a meeting of donors especially organized by the CO for the evaluation on 5 October (Annex 8) and a focus group discussion with some trainees of the projects.

1.5 Structure of the report

This introduction is followed by a brief description of the development context for the outcome. Section 3 presents the analyses and findings of the evaluation while Section 4 presents recommendations. To make the main text of the report more reader friendly, long tables, even where these are central to the analyses, are presented in Annex 7. All supporting data are in the Annexes including an extract of lessons learnt from the evaluation.

2. THE DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

2.1 The rationale for this CP outcome

The rationale for this outcome as well as for the other outcomes expected from the presence and operations of the UN in Turkmenistan in the period up to December 2009 are analyzed in the CCA. The rationale is epitomized by the following quotation from the CCA: "Neither the Government nor civil society organizations participated in CCA consultations. Many donors – including, critically, the Bretton Woods Institutions – have left the country or sharply curtailed their investments. As a result, international donor support has been exceptionally constrained in recent years,the statistical and analytical foundations on which a CCA should be based are inadequate in Turkmenistan. Such factors and the small UN presence confront the UNCT with considerable difficulties in meeting the procedural and substantive requirements for a rigorous assessment of the country's development environment, as well as challenge the capability of preparing a broadly grounded CCA."

² Models of Statistical Systems, Roger Edmonds, October 2005

³ How are we doing? Performance indicators for national statistical systems. Willem F.M. de Vries, Deputy Director-General of Statistics Netherlands

The limited access to official data and the typically poor quality of whatever official data are made public constrains not just UN country programming in Turkmenistan, but also that of the Government and all its development partners. The widely held view amongst development partners is that official statistics are collected, analysed and presented merely with the aim of verifying that the projections, primarily economic, made by the top level of Government are being well met. Data on disparities between groups or across different parts of the country are not available publicly and there is no regular tracking of progress towards the MDGs.

2.2 Key partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries

The National Institute of State Statistics and Information (NISSI) is the main agency of Turkmenistan responsible for official statistics collection, processing, analysis and dissemination. NISSI coordinates the statistical activities of all Government entities in following accepted common definitions and standards. NISSI's data was developed over many years using different methods and technologies. Its databases need to be consolidated for quicker and more efficient access to consistent and reliable information. Integrated database and electronic mail networks are gradually being established to facilitate data transfer and communication between the NISSI central office in Ashgabat and regional branches. NISSI is the intended direct beneficiary of the UNDP funded interventions aimed at pursuing this outcome.

The extent to which civil society participates is severely limited. There are no major entities that can speak for civil society. Some quasi private entities such as the Union of Economists are allowed to operate only so long as they comply with official policy and practice, and that is facilitated by their membership being largely restricted to Government employed professionals.

The development partners currently providing support to NISSI are UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and the European Union. The Asian Development Bank (AsDB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) supported NISSI in the past.

2.3 Major constraints

The Constitution states that "Turkmenistan recognizes and respects the fundamental democratic rights and freedoms accepted by the world community and fixed in international law." In December 1995, the country also adopted a declaration adhering to the aims and principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Despite these legal proclamations, human rights, including the right to information, remain amongst the most serious challenges in the country. Turkmenistan is regularly and severely criticized for violations of human rights, especially following an assassination attempt on the President in November 2002.

There is no effective separation of executive, judiciary and legislative bodies in Turkmenistan. All powers are in reality concentrated in the presidency. Pluralistic politics have not developed. The de facto one-party state does not tolerate opposition, alternative parties or policy viewpoints.

Access to alternative sources of information is severely restricted. There are four state television channels but cable television, which provided affordable access to popular Russian channels, was banned in July 2002. Since then, only wealthier households can access more popular Russian channels by satellite antennae. The Government funds almost all print media, and state licensing is required for all printing and copying activities. Restrictions are imposed on the use of the Russian and other previously used languages in media and in schools and universities. A 2000 UNDP Report⁴ estimated that Turkmenistan had only 1 Internet user per 4,000 population, which puts it among the lowest in the world. Moreover, over 95 percent of registered users are in the capital, Ashgabat. There has been only one Government internet provider since May 2000 and internet use is tightly monitored. Access to official statistics, except those published in the media, is difficult for everyone except Government officials. The few official statistics that are published typically read like propaganda....proclamations of huge increases in industrial and/or agricultural production; for example, [click here](#) to see the official statistics on the Government's web site. Statistics relating to disparities between socio-economic, gender and ethnic groups and across regions are not generally available. The few official data that are available on socio-economic indicators are often regarded as impartial (Annex 7 Table 1). The limits imposed on access to information were criticised by the Resolution 2003/11 of the UN Commission on Human Rights. That resolution expressed grave concerns at "the suppression of independent media and freedom of expression, at attempts to restrict access to the international media and at restrictions on the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of country, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of choice."

⁴ UNDP. Report on the State of IT Development in Turkmenistan. 2000
Evaluation of CP outcome for UNDP/Turkmenistan

3 FINDINGS

3.1 Status of the outcome

3.1.1 Progress

This section assesses the extent of progress towards the CP outcome: "National capacity for socio-economic data collection, analysis and reporting aligned with international standards and commitments, including MDGs". To do so, the analyses focus the extent to which and the way in which national capacity has been used to collect, analyze and report on socio-economic data, especially that relating to the MDGs. Capacity can of course be built but not used, an issue reviewed later. Here the focus is on the end results, to what extent has national statistical capacity been used in a manner which is aligned to international standards. The assessment first defines international standards, then relates the current situation in data collection, analyses and reporting with those standards. This initial analysis, largely qualitative and based on perceptions for the reasons given in section 3.2.1 is supplemented by other more quantitative analyses. The latter include an analysis of the data reported by Turkmenistan to the UN, comparison of UNSD's profiles of the national statistical offices in Turkmenistan and neighbouring CIS countries and analysis of similar comparisons of the World Bank's indicators of statistical capacity. Lastly this section draws on analyses by UNDESA and the World Bank on national capacity to monitor the MDGs.

Box 1 The UN's 10 Fundamental Principles for official statistics and national statistical systems

Principle 1. *Official statistics provide an indispensable element in the information system of a democratic society, serving the Government, the economy and the public with data about the economic, demographic, social and environmental situation. To this end, official statistics that meet the test of practical utility are to be compiled and made available on an impartial basis by official statistical agencies to honor citizens' entitlement to public information.*

Principle 2. *To retain trust in official statistics, the statistical agencies need to decide according to strictly professional considerations, including scientific principles and professional ethics, on the methods and procedures for the collection, processing, storage and presentation of statistical data.*

Principle 3. *To facilitate a correct interpretation of the data, the statistical agencies are to present information according to scientific standards on the sources, methods and procedures of the statistics.*

Principle 4. *The statistical agencies are entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics.*

Principle 5. *Data for statistical purposes may be drawn from all types of sources, be they statistical surveys or administrative records. Statistical agencies are to choose the source with regard to quality, timeliness, costs and the burden on respondents.*

Principle 6. *Individual data collected by statistical agencies for statistical compilation, whether they refer to natural or legal persons, are to be strictly confidential and used exclusively for statistical purposes.*

Principle 7. *The laws, regulations and measures under which the statistical systems operate are to be made public.*

Principle 8. *Coordination among statistical agencies within countries is essential to achieve consistency and efficiency in the statistical system.*

Principle 9. *The use by statistical agencies in each country of international concepts, classifications and methods promotes the consistency and efficiency of statistical systems at all official levels.*

Principle 10. *Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in statistics contributes to the improvement of systems of official statistics in all countries.*

Source: [Web site of the UN Statistics Division](#)

The UN's ten Principles for official statistics and national statistical systems (Box 1) are broad ranging and cover such key questions as the relevance of the statistics collected, their impartiality, access to them, professionalism in their collection, analysis and reporting and much more. You can get more information on each of the ten Principles on the [web site of the UN Statistics Division](#)

Annex 7 Table 1 presents the information collected on the current situation with respect to each Principle as it is practiced and/or seen to be practiced in Turkmenistan. The views of NISSI as well as those of development partners are presented long with observations of the evaluation team from other sources. The table also gives some examples of good practices relating to the implementation of each Principle, culled from experience in other countries. From the table, it is observed that:

- Most progress appears to have been made in the implementation of Principle # 9, the alignment of data classification to international classification systems, e.g. NACE.
- Some progress might also have been made in the implementation of Principles 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8 though most had not yet seen hard evidence substantiating this and the evaluation team was not able to access any such evidence.
- On Principle # 7 on legislation, while Turkmenistan has a Statistical Law, some of its provisions could be more fully aligned to the ten Principles.

- On Principle # 2 on professionalism, the balance of both views and evidence obtained suggests that full utilization of NISSI's professional capacity is severely constrained by factors outside NISSI's control (see section 3.2).
- Similarly NISSI is not able to fully participate in the international statistical community (Principle #10) for reasons largely outside its control.
- The biggest challenges facing Turkmenistan's statistical system relate to Principle #1, on the relevance of official statistics, especially to the MDGs. Meetings and communications with development partners as well as analyses of data from several other sources point to the limited availability of official statistics, in the public domain, that show disparities in income, education, health, etc by socio-economic group, district, urban-rural, gender and ethnic groups. The few official statistics that are available in these areas are often regarded as impartial and politically influenced.

These observations are subject to qualification and/or verification from more quantitative analyses in the remainder of this section.

With restricted access to official statistics, the evaluation team analyzed the availability of statistics on Turkmenistan in international statistical publications. This analysis provides indicators relating to several international standards including the relevance of and access to data (Principle #1), the timeliness of statistics ((Principle #2), consistency with international definitions and classifications (Principle #9) and international cooperation (Principle #10). For its various statistical publications, the UNSD relies on national statistical institutes to regularly complete questionnaires to supply the needed data. The evaluation team met with UNSD and subsequently emailed each section within the Division to obtain information on the extent to which NISSI had supplied the requested data. The replies generally indicate that NISSI submitted data periodically in the 1990s and even some data up to 2002, but that responses since then have been less frequent. The following quotations, taken directly from UNSD's responses, are typical:

".....lately we have not received any reply from Turkmenistan"
 ".....We have not received anything from them since that time (2002)..."
 "...nothing at all has been received at least since 1995."
 ".....no further response from Turkmenistan".

This non-response to UN requests for data is illustrated more quantitatively by a simple review of the UN's latest Monthly Bulletin (August 2006). The Monthly Bulletin of Statistics, compiled by the UN, presents statistics for most countries of the world for a wide cross section of economic indicators. The August 2006 Bulletin presents data by country in 34 economic indicators, each covered by a separate table. NISSI provided data for Turkmenistan in just 4 of the 34 tables. This 12% response rate is compared with the response rates of neighbouring CIS countries in Table 1.

Table 1. Response rates of Turkmenistan and neighbouring CIS countries

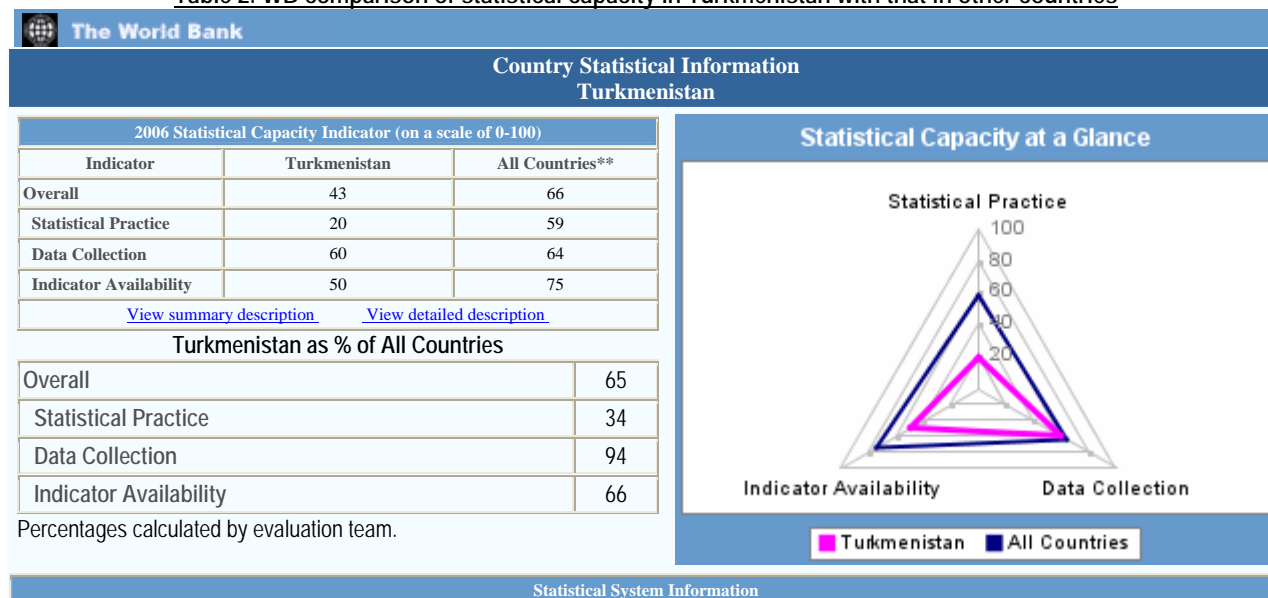
Country	Number of tables in which the country is listed with data	% of all 34 tables
Turkmenistan	4	12
Kazakhstan	25	74
Tajikistan	11	32
Uzbekistan	4	12

Source: UN Monthly Bulletin of Statistics, August 2006

From these analyses, it may be observed that the total number of data entries provided by Turkmenistan is less than those for neighbouring CIS countries. Moreover, the relative performance of Turkmenistan has deteriorated: - whereas the number of entries for Turkmenistan reached 8% of those for Kazakhstan and 16% of those for Tajikistan in the period up to 2004, the percentages declined to just 1% and 3% respectively for the period since 2005. In other words, while Kazakhstan and Tajikistan have increased their rates of providing data to the UN since 2005, Turkmenistan has reduced its provision of data since 2005. A similar (or even worse) picture emerged from the evaluation teams scanning of other UN or WB publications relying on data submissions from member countries.

The UNSD has developed a central repository of country profiles of statistical systems. This is based on information provided annually by national statistical offices. Annex 7 Table 3 clearly shows the lack of information for Turkmenistan compared to its CIS neighbours.

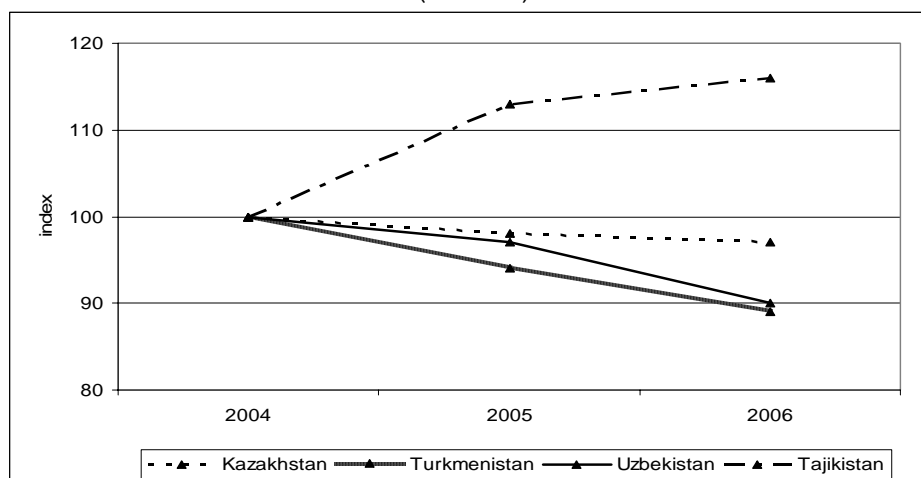
Table 2. WB comparison of statistical capacity in Turkmenistan with that in other countries



Source: [WB web site on statistical capacity by country](#)

The [WB web site on statistical capacity by country](#) is another useful database of information on national statistical systems and statistical capacity. It includes information on statistical law, national statistical strategy, statistical practice, data collection and publications. The WB also calculates a statistical capacity indicator for each country based on criteria consistent with international standards and recommendations. The WB's capacity indicator for Turkmenistan is briefly compared with the "average" for all countries in Table 2. The WB rates Turkmenistan's overall statistical capacity at around 66% of that in all low and middle income countries. While Turkmenistan scores relatively highly (94% of that in other countries) for data collection, it is weakest (only 34% of that in other countries) in the area of statistical practice. These comparisons are clearly illustrated in the diagram in the right of Table 2.

Graph 1. Changes in the Statistical Capacity of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan as % of "average" capacity of all countries (2004=100)



Source: Calculated from the WB data presented in Annex 7 Table 6.

Annex 7 Table 4 provides more detail on how the WB arrived at its ratings for Turkmenistan. ([Click here](#) if you want to see even more detail on the WB web site.) This shows that the WB's indicator for statistical practice reflects primarily the periodicity of macro-economic data. Of greater relevance to this "development" outcome evaluation are socio-economic data, including the availability of poverty and quality of life surveys. WB data for these and other indicators on Turkmenistan and neighbouring CIS countries is compared in Annex 7 Table 5. These comparisons confirm the general pattern that emerges from the earlier analyses and show that the statistical system of Kazakhstan appears

most developed, with those of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan quite some distance behind. Turkmenistan is even further behind, in some cases considerably. This is illustrated by the relatively low periodicity of its surveys on poverty, living standards, child malnutrition, HIV/AIDS, gender equality and in other areas relevant to the tracking of MDGs.

The WB data on statistical capacity can also be used to show differences over time. For this, 2004 is taken as a baseline as it is in the subsequent period that the UNDP statistical projects were intended to build capacity. Graph 1 indicates that while statistical capacity in Tajikistan increased relative to that of other countries, that in Kazakhstan fell marginally, while statistical capacity in both Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan deteriorated more sharply relative to that in other countries since 2004. Turkmenistan was bottom again, with a performance even worse than that of Uzbekistan in both 2005 and 2006. A similar pattern, with the same rankings emerges if the comparison is made just with other CIS countries instead of all other countries (see Annex 7 Table 6).

The UN Statistics Division assessed member countries' capacity to produce the MDG indicators using official data supplied to international organizations and to the international statistical system (Development indicators, Report of the UN Secretary-General, 22 December 2005). UNSD first analyzed the number of "country data points" available in its database by country and indicator since 1990. At least two data points are required to discern trends over time. Table 3 summarizes: it shows that Turkmenistan fell in the bottom 21% of all countries. The data for Turkmenistan can be used to monitor only 20 out of 60 indicators. This is less than any neighbouring CIS country: Kazakhstan can monitor 34, Uzbekistan 28 and Tajikistan 24. Turkmenistan had fewer data points than any of these countries for 9 indicators and more for two indicators. Details by indicator are in Table 7 of Annex 7.

Table 3. Distribution of countries by number of indicators on which trend analysis is possible

Number of indicators with at least two data points	Number of countries within each data point range	Percentage of all countries
1-10	4	2
11-20	36 (includes Turkmenistan)	19
21-30	93 (incl. Tajikistan & Uzbekistan)	48
More than 30	58 (incl. Kazakhstan)	30
Total countries	191	100

Source: UN Statistics Division/DESA, Background Document for Statistics Commission in March 2006 (see Annex 7 Table 7 for details)

Another UNSD analysis takes the latest available year that each indicator is available in the databases of international organizations monitoring MDGs. This includes data derived from surveys sponsored and/or carried out by international organizations — such as the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS). Table 4 compares this data for Turkmenistan with neighbouring CIS countries. Fuller details by MDG indicator are given in Table 8 of Annex 7.

Table 4 shows that a) the number of indicators for which the latest data is 2000 or later is substantially lower for Turkmenistan than for any neighbouring CIS country and b) Turkmenistan's data is relatively older than the other CIS countries which have a relatively larger proportion of their latest indicators in 2002 or later.

Table 4 Number of indicators with year indicated as the latest data available in international database

	Turkmenistan	Kazakhstan	Tajikistan	Uzbekistan
1999 or before	2	6	2	2
2000	11	5	11	7
2001	5	7	7	7
2002	7	8	7	11
2003	10	15	15	14
2004	3	2	2	2
2005	-	1	1	1

Source UN Statistics Division/DESA, Background Document for Statistics Commission in March 2006. (See Annex 7 Table 8 for details)

From the analyses presented in this section and in the supporting Annex Tables, it is concluded that:

- There is tangible evidence substantiating Turkmenistan's increasing use of data classification systems in international use (part of Principle # 9),
- There have been improvements in the presentation of some official statistics (Principle #3) and in simplifying their collection (part of Principle #5)

- While Turkmenistan has a Statistical Law (Principle # 7), some of its provisions should be more fully aligned to the ten Principles.
- There is little tangible evidence to substantiate significant progress in meeting other international standards, as reflected in the UN's ten Principles.
- Indeed, several analyses tend to confirm the widely held views amongst the UN and other development partners that full utilization of NISSI's professional capacity and professionalism (Principle # 2) as well as its participation in the international statistical community (Principle #10) is severely constrained by factors outside NISSI's control with the result that statistical practices, standards and development in Turkmenistan remain below those in most other developing countries and below those in neighbouring CIS countries,
- The overall relative performance of the statistical system in Turkmenistan, as reflected by its data and other submissions to the UN and the WB has deteriorated in the last two years, during the period that the UNDP funded statistical projects have been operational. This raises questions as to why the performance of the system has deteriorated despite receiving support from the UN and EU (section 3.3.2).
- This deterioration in performance has been both absolute in terms of data availability (Principle #1) and international cooperation (Principle # 10) as well as relative, in comparison with neighbouring CIS countries,
- The biggest challenges facing the Turkmenistan statistical system relate to meeting international standards reflected in Principle #1, relating to the relevance and impartiality of official statistics, especially as they relate to the MDGs and equal access to them, and
- The performance of the Turkmenistan statistical system has been particularly poor in regularly generating credible and timely data for monitoring progress towards the MDGs. In particular, communications with development partners as well as analyses of data from different sources point to the limited availability of official statistics, in the public domain, that show disparities in income, education, health, etc by socio-economic group, district, urban-rural, gender and ethnic groups. The few official statistics that are available in these areas are often regarded as impartial and politically influenced.

3.1.2 Relevance

Rapid globalization in the last decade has been accompanied by fundamental changes in the way in which development is viewed by the international community. Most importantly, at the international millennium summit in 2000, in which Turkmenistan actively participated, the world's heads of state committed their countries to the pursuit of common global targets in development, namely the millennium development goals (MDGs). Globalization, the MDGs and other major global developments (e.g. WTO trade agreements, the WB's PRSP and HIPC initiatives and the enlargement of the European Union) have together prompted the emergence of a global agenda that increasingly calls for each country to visibly measure its development results (see Box 2).

An outcome from the 2002 Monterey conference is that in return for more support to developing countries' pursuit of the MDGs, the donor community expects tangible improvements in governance. The latter requires specific reforms in public management, and in particular, more rigorous focus on development results. The measurement of results requires relevant, reliable and timely data, especially to track the MDGs. Countries which cannot or do not measure their development results will increasingly lose out. Resources of the international development community will gravitate towards those countries which are seen to be measuring their development results. Some development partners of Turkmenistan have already largely withdrawn (WB, AsDB) while others are now reviewing their options.

Box 2. The need to measure results

- If you do not measure real results, you cannot tell success from failure.
- If you cannot see genuine success, you cannot reward it.
- If you cannot reward real success, you are probably rewarding failure.
- If you cannot see real success, you cannot learn from it.
- If you cannot recognize failure, you cannot correct it.
- If you cannot see mistakes, you cannot learn from them.
- If you demonstrate real results, you can win public support
- If you demonstrate development effectiveness, you can win international support.

Source: adapted from Kusek and Rist 2004

The international standard for measuring development results is provided by the international MDGs and their indicators (Annex 9). Most countries have reported progress towards the MDGs. The quality of the first round of MDG reporting was questioned by the international community for some countries. In this respect, Turkmenistan's first MDG

report has been severely criticized and particularly the credibility of the data on which it is based. Annex 7 Table 1 gives several examples of the unavailability of official data for the regular tracking of progress towards the MDGs and the unreliability and infrequency of the data that are available. Recent meetings of development partners (6 June 2006 and 5 October 2006) drew attention to the consequences of such weak data for the targeting of vulnerable groups, in generating feedback for managing implementation of the programmes and in monitoring performance. Such consequences were noted in the UNDP CP "effective targeting or monitoring of programmes has proven to be hard, and initiatives requiring collection and analysis of data, such as the national human development report, have been unsuccessful." (p3). Information is vital for targeting and designing development policies and programmes and for measuring their results. Specifically, data need to be capable of sufficient disaggregation to reveal disparities between socio-economic, gender, ethnic and regional groups within a country so that the different dimensions of both relative and absolute poverty can be identified and tracked. Without such data, it is difficult to target and design development policies and interventions. Relevant, reliable and timely information is also a prerequisite for accountability to the top level of Government and to the citizens of Turkmenistan as well for reporting on the MDGs and other international commitments to external partners and the global community.⁵

Another consequence of the lack of reliable and timely data, compounded by the relative lack of access to the Internet, is that students, teachers and researchers are denied material for their education and research. The UN in its 2004 CCA indicated that this negatively affects all levels of education including that at the primary level. It also negatively affects the quality of research which is undertaken within Turkmenistan. The decline in human capital triggered by the lack of official statistics adversely affects advancement on many fronts within the country and the standing of the country, its researchers and its degree holders in the international community.

The relevance of official statistics

Official statistics provide an indispensable element in the information system of a democratic society, serving the Government, the economy and the public with data about the economic, demographic, social and environmental situation. To this end, official statistics that meet the test of practical utility are to be compiled and made available on an impartial basis by official statistical agencies to honor citizens' entitlement to public information. [Principle 1 of the ten UN Principles.](#)

"In as much as official statistics are used to evaluate the success or otherwise of Government policies, it is essential that not only are they accurate, balanced, relevant and free from political manipulation but, an possibly even more important, perceived by the electorate as being so. This concept is at the heart of democratic accountability. If, for whatever reason, people believe the information being published by government statisticians lack integrity then they are an expensive irrelevance." Roger Edmunds (2005)

While Governments are usually the major users of official statistics, civil society needs access to them: statistics enable individuals to make more informed choices and decisions about their own and their children's lives; statistics should provide an objective means of assessing the performance of service providers in government and others. In conclusion, relevant, reliable and timely information are essential for Turkmenistan's global and domestic context and future. This CP outcome remains very relevant for the country's development.

Given the local sensitivities attached to official statistics, the UN system has an obvious comparative advantage as a development partner. The UN is neutral with respect to ideology and political alignment. The UN is not out to sell the approaches or goods of any one country or region. The UN is guided by the charter, principles, targets, commitments and standards agreed by the world community following transparent and democratic processes. For such reasons, UN agencies have proven track records in supporting national statistical systems and in building capacity in the collection, analysis and dissemination of official statistics. This is recognized in the 2004 UNDAF: "the United Nations System offers a comparative advantage with regard to helping the Government achieve tangible progress toward the MDGs and their nationalized targets, drawing on the organization's successful practices and lessons learned as well as its ability to encourage efficient aid coordination and facilitate accountability among donors." (p9).

The UN's major in-country presence is reflected in the programmes of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF. With UNFPA and UNICEF providing support to the national statistical system in their respective thematic and target group areas, a clear niche remains for UNDP. UNDP's broader mandate gives it the potential to add value in areas defined by those MDGs not covered by UNFPA and UNICEF as well as for complementary support in building capacity in the MDG areas covered by the other UN agencies. UNDP is also able to support the development of the national statistical system as a whole with a view to facilitating future improvements in governance, aid coordination and aid effectiveness. In this,

⁵ UNDP has conducted a review of best practices in monitoring and reporting MDGs, in *MDG Monitoring and Reporting: A Review of Good Practices* (UNDP, August 2005).

UNDP could champion the UN's ten Principles and promote their general use as well as their use in relation to official statistics for monitoring and reporting on progress towards the MDGs.

3.1.3 Lessons from defining scope and indicators.

The ultimate expectation from UNDP's statistical interventions is reflected in the UNDAF outcome: "By the end of 2009, policies to promote social well-being and human security are strengthened and expanded in accordance with national goals and the nationalized MDGs".

The scope and definition of the outcome could be improved:

- Social well-being and human security mean different things to different people and cultures. This could and perhaps should, given that Turkmenistan committed itself at the millennium summit, be defined more precisely by relating it directly to the international MDGs as well as selected national goals and relating it explicitly to the rights based approach that the UN stands for. The rationale provided for this outcome in the CCA envisages this: "Improvements in data and information will support the monitoring of achievement of the MDGs as well as international human rights conventions to which Turkmenistan is a party." The UNDAF is also explicit and defines the corresponding CP outcome as: "National capacity for data collection, analysis and reporting aligns Turkmenistan with international standards, particularly in human rights, socioeconomic indicators and population and development". The important human rights dimension was in fact lost in the final wording of the UNDP CP outcome. UNDP's 2005 CPAP indicates that "a linkage will be established between the indicators used to measure UNDAF outputs and the contribution of these outputs to the achievement of the MDGs." (p10).
- It doesn't say whose social well-being and human security is expected to improve. UNDP, and for that matter the UN system's Development Group (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP), above all, seek to make a difference for the poorer, more marginalized, more disadvantaged groups in each country. This is emphasized in UNDP's cross-cutting drivers. Again the rationale given in the CCA was explicit: "What can the UN system offer? a) Support to Government in identifying disparities and promoting the fact that there are disparities in Turkmenistan".
- "Policies... strengthened and expanded". This wording renders it difficult to measure progress, even if the rest of the statement was more precisely defined. The UN is expected to manage for results and to encourage others to do so. The UNDP CP indicates that a "special focus will be placed on monitoring for results". A more results orientated articulation of this outcome might be: "so that policies and programmes are implemented to achieve measurable improvements in xx MDG indicators by 2009" where xx are precisely defined by the CO.
- The reference to national MDGs. Given the context and the likelihood, following the already largely discredited 2001 MDG report, that national MDGs might be used for domestic political purposes, the UNCT could be on more solid ground if this outcome relates to "national goals" and the international MDGs, preferably indicating which in both cases. The UNCT might justify this by reference to one of the purposes of the international MDGs, namely to adopt common global goals for development efforts across nations, thematic areas and organizations.

The loss of the explicit reference to human rights significantly weakens the UNDP CP outcome. This begs the question if the UN cannot speak out for rights, who can? It is particularly unfortunate as the CCA and UNDAF had both paved the way for a rights base to this outcome.

The baseline for the CP outcome is described as: "Existing data collection and analysis practices do not comply with international standards". The expectation might have been that the target and indicator would similarly relate to international standards, and that in each case the standards would be defined by reference to the UN's ten Fundamental Principles as well as to the MDGs and other international commitments. However, both the target and the indicator are confined to only part of one of the ten Principles, namely data classification standards. From the UN rights perspective as well as to reflect the centrality of the MDGs, this is woefully inadequate. There are other Principles which are being applied or not applied in ways which impact on human rights and tracking the MDGs far more significantly than data classification standards. UNDP/Turkmenistan probably chose to focus on this, at least initially, for political expediency and possibly tactically as an entry point. Perhaps this was the easiest and least politically sensitive of the Principles to address, at least from the more technical perspective of a Programme Officer. And perhaps this was the most readily actionable area to address from the viewpoint of NISSI counterparts.

Similarly, the indicator and target relate to the Annual Statistical Bulletins which are just one of NISSI's regular outputs and which are not put into the public domain. The evaluation team was refused official access to these Bulletins but unofficially saw that they contain little data that directly relate to the MDGs. Given the primary mission of the UN development agencies, including UNDP (e.g. see the emphasis given to MDG's in UNDP's cross cutting drivers), to

help countries pursue the international MDGs, the rationale for this outcome presented in the CCA and the explicit reference to MDGs in the finalized outcomes of both the UNDAF, the CP and the CPAP, one might have expected an indicator or indicators more directly related to capacity to track the MDGs.

In conclusion, the outcome and its associated targets and indicators, could and should have been articulated in ways which better reflect the global mission of the UN('s DP), and the UNCT's vision of that mission in Turkmenistan as justified in the CCA and projected in the UNDAF, and, to a lesser extent, in the text of the UNDP CP. More specific recommendations are made in section 4.

3.2 Factors affecting the outcome

3.2.1 Factors constraining progress

Turkmenistan is still, at 15 years after independence, a young country. Experience in other countries emerging from the breakup of the Soviet Union suggests that the political factors were more important than technical considerations in developing, using and sustaining national statistical systems that meet international standards, at least in their early years. In particular, the requirements for transparency, impartiality and accountability that are inherent in international statistical standards were often alien to the culture of governance inherited by such countries. To put in place statistical systems that can be used to track performance, in particular progress towards development results, failures as well as successes, was and remains a major challenge to some such countries. In this and other regions, some governments preferred not to move towards such standards for political reasons and/or to hide socio-economic mismanagement and/or corruption. The corollary of this is that political conditions in a country have to encourage the growth of transparency, impartiality and accountability. It takes time for such conditions to develop. Most of those met by the evaluation team, in one for or another, suggested that those conditions do not yet exist in Turkmenistan. The analyses and observations of the team support that view.

Nevertheless, some progress has been made. The 1998 Statistics Law was a step in the right direction. While there is scope for improving some of its provisions (see Annex 7 Table 1), many others already reflect international standards. Also, enforcement of the law as it relates to the day to day working of the national statistical system remains a challenge. Similarly, development partners noted that while NISSI has probably built up its professional statistical capacity, not least from the support that has been provided by several partners over the years (see 3.4), that day to day realization of that capacity is not evident in NISSI's outputs, both within Turkmenistan as well as in its reporting to the international development community.

Another factor affecting progress towards the outcome relates to the use of information and communication technology (ICT). There are undoubtedly technical constraints involved. For example, one project consultant reported that "the technical infrastructure of the country does not allow introducing modern approaches as electronic questionnaires" (Rauch, March 2005) but even more important are the restrictions placed on access to and use of the Internet when and where this is technically possible.

In all the above areas as well as in others, the major constraints on progress towards the outcome are more political than technical. It was such factors, manifested in the "adjustment" of official data, that led to the 2005 withdrawal of the AsDB from further support to NISSI (see quotations from the AsDB's project completion report in Annex 7 Table 1.)

By comparison, the technical factors affecting the outcome appear relatively less daunting. Clearly the development, use and sustainability of a national statistical system that meets international requires professional experience, skills and appropriate institutional capacity. Building this capacity requires much more than just training. Training needs to be accompanied by changes in the way in which NISSI operates on a daily basis, in particular to encourage and reward transparency, accountability and efficiency. While there may be scope for encouraging this within NISSI, the overall context within which NISSI operates is likely to limit the effectiveness of any such changes. For progress in these areas to be sustainable and replicable again calls for the overriding political factors to be addressed.

3.2.2 How?

Many examples of how political factors limit adherence to international standards are given in Annex 7 Table 1. Taken together, such examples suggest that the Government is reluctant to publish statistics that could be used to track its performance and progress towards development results, most especially the MDGs. The comments of development partners reproduced in that Table also indicate that the same factors limit the extent to which development partners can design, implement, monitor and evaluate their support programmes in the country.

A practical illustration of the way in which political factors constrain progress relates to the approvals required from MoFA, the Cabinet of Ministers and even the Deputy Prime Minister before NISSI professionals can travel for overseas training, study tours and/or international statistical conferences. Some data are cited in Annex 7 Table 1. Generally, more requests have been denied than approved by each of the UN agencies involved in NISSI in the past two years. The experience of NISSI's other partner, the European Union, is even worse. An email (9 October 2006) to the evaluation team from an externally based consultant involved in the EU's statistical programme # 8 indicates: "As for the participation in international events, we have invited 6 officers to 4 different events, and none of them was able to attend". A June 2006 (draft) Progress Report on the Statistics 8 Programme noted: "Participation in overseas events and study visits: TMH (NISSI) reported that it is quite difficult for them to get the approval from the Government for these activities. For this reason, they asked to reduce as much as possible the provision for these activities."

MoFA also has to clear all official reports in which the Government is a partner. UN locally based staff indicated that they have a constant struggle in trying to salvage, from MoFA's frequent "edits", a minimum of the principled and/or evidence based content of joint Government and UN reports. It is understood that MoFA's censorship is aimed at removing from such publications, any statistics and/or texts which show or infer negative trends, developments or disparities between socio-economic groups, regions or rural-urban differences in the country. Such edits resulted in the international community largely discrediting Turkmenistan's first MDG report (and possibly tarnishing UNDP's name for association with it) and the UNDP decision not publish further HDRs following the failure of the draft 2001 NHDR to meet minimal quality standards. During the evaluation mission, many UN staff were observed to be struggling to salvage the substantive content of speeches to be made by senior UN staff at a joint conference with the Government on cooperation and achievements since Turkmenistan's Independence, on 13 October.

Another illustration relates to the restricted access to and use of the internet. This clearly limits the dissemination of NISSI's outputs. It also makes capacity building more inefficient and reduces its quality. Thus for example, any efforts at building the skills and capacity of professional statisticians in NISSI will be limited by them not being allowed to access professional sites on the internet.

3.2.3 Good practices and lessons

Country contexts for building a national statistical system inevitably vary. One size cannot fit all. There is no single correct way to build. National statistical systems have progressed in many different ways. However, a scan of literature on this subject (Annex 5) reveals some lessons that can be derived from experience in other countries.

Most important is the political context. This has to be not just ready, but wanting. There has to be a substantive demand from the Government for reliable and timely statistics that genuinely track real progress or the lack of it... not just data that proves the projection or viewpoints of top leaders.

This demand should be accompanied by incentives, not just for professionalism and quality in the statistical processes of collection, analyses and dissemination, but also for the statistics to be used. Statistics are only useful to the extent that they are actually used. Simply having reliable and timely data does not guarantee their use. To sustain the statistical system, its outputs need to be used by relevant professionals for planning, forming policy, programming, budgeting, monitoring, by civil society and by parliament to enforce accountability through their oversight and by development partners and the international development community.

Elsewhere, help has been provided by a powerful "champion" – a respected minister or senior official who is able and willing to advocate the need for disaggregated data to regularly track the MDGs, and to do so in a way which is consistent with the ten Principles. Ideally, such a champion will set an example in using the resultant statistics.

Another lesson from global experience is that it takes sustained effort over a period of years to build an effective national statistical system. A long-haul effort requires patience, persistence and sustained resources. Particularly time consuming is the creation of an enabling political environment.

To plan programmes to support national statistical systems, it is useful to start with a situation analysis of the current system, its strengths and weaknesses. Specific recommendations on this and other follow-up are made in section 4. In addition to these more general lessons, several more specific good practices relating to each of the UN's ten Principles are cited in the second column of Annex 7 Table1. These were taken from the UNSD's web site which has a [database of good practices](#) categorized by type of activity to implement each Principle and by country. Good practices in monitoring and reporting MDGs are identified in [UNDP's 2005 report](#) (Annex 5).

3.3 UNDP contributions to the outcome

3.3.1 UNDP outputs and the outcome.

The first CP outcome could relate to all the international standards reflected in the ten UN Principles on official statistics. However, in practice the CO has so far largely defined international standards much more narrowly, to cover just the standards relating to data classification. The target has thus become one of aligning official data classification with international classification systems. For example, in reporting progress against this CP outcome, UNDP/Turkmenistan's MYFF report for 2005 (dated 2 May 2006) indicates that a "plan for aligning statistical classification system with international standards has been developed and adopted and included in the annual programme of NISSI..." The implications of this very narrow and partial interpretation of "international standards" have been commented upon in section 3.1.3. It is sufficient to point out here that there remains scope for UNDP/Turkmenistan, in its continuing pursuit of this outcome in the remainder of the CP period (i.e. up to December 2009) to define international standards more broadly. Such definition would be more reflective of both the original intention behind the outcome as articulated in the CCA as well as all that the UN stands for. In particular, a broader definition of international standards should more closely reflect the UN's ten Principles and relate to Turkmenistan's commitments with respect to the MDGs. Such a definition will be far more challenging given the current political context. Recommendations for pursuit of this, or the other option of reducing the outcome so that it is more achievable, are made in section 4.

The above findings should not be construed as nullifying recognition of real progress that has been made in moving Turkmenistan's data classification systems closer to international classification systems. The evaluation team verified several changes to the ways in which official data are classified and in the definitions used for statistical terms.⁶ These changes, recommended by consultants, recruited under the UNDP funded project(s), appear to be in line with international classification standards. NISSI staff indicated that the process of changing data classification systems to international classifications would have been much slower without UNDP support.

Annex 7 Table 9 lists Government follow-up to the recommendations of an international consultant on changing official data classifications to meet international standards. The verified follow-up shows that, for most part, action has already been taken or is currently incorporated in approved work-plans of NISSI. The main exceptions relate to:

- Data on occupations including employment/unemployment data, for which approval from the Cabinet of Ministers was requested on 16.09.2005 and is still pending,
- classification of sectors of the economy (verified as being in NISSI's current work-plan for the transition of classification standards to the EU's NACE system),
- Foreign trade, for which a (project?) proposal was submitted to EUROSTAT). The evaluation team tried to ascertain the status of this through the local EU/TACIS office, and,
- Questions concerning the longer term sustainability of new classifications. NISSI indicated that it is now maintaining two parallel classification systems – the old and the new. It does this because not all suppliers have converted to the new system and some users prefer the old system. If the latter prevail, the new systems will presumably be discarded. In any case, NISSI has not the resources to run two parallel classification systems indefinitely.

The same consultant made several other recommendations to improve indicators and the presentation of statistical data as well as the capacity of NISSI. Annex 7 Table 10 lists follow-up to some of these other recommendations. With the exception of the recommendation to reduce the size of font used in the Statistical Yearbook, these recommendations have not yet been implemented. However, presentational and classification improvements in the NISSI's "Flagship" Yearbook publication have undoubtedly been made as a result of the project's recommendations. Moreover, the project assisted NISSI in preparing the first electronic version, on CD, of the 2005 Statistical Yearbook. The NISSI staff responsible for preparing the next editions of the Statistical Yearbook expressed confidence, in group discussion with the evaluation team, that these improvements would be sustained in the future. This is already being tested as the 2006 Yearbook, including a CD version of it, is now being prepared without the help of the project. The NISSI staff saw, as the major project achievement, the integration of previously separate databases into a single coherent electronic database which, according to them, they are now capable of maintaining and updating without project help.

⁶ This finding relates primarily to the Statistical Capacity project. The Finance Statistics project is also expected to contribute in this area, but at the time of the evaluation, the consultant's report was still awaited. Changes in the classification of financial statistics will depend on acceptance and implementation of any recommendations of the consultant in this area.

Notwithstanding these improvements, there remains further scope for improving the content of the Statistical Yearbook. For example, Annex 7 Table 12 gives some examples of data discrepancies or inconsistencies (UN Principle # 8) observed in latest official Statistical Yearbooks, based on quick casual observations during unofficial access to the Yearbooks by the evaluation team.

A much bigger challenge relates to access of civil society and others to official statistics (UN Principle # 1). The national evaluation consultant was unable to find recent editions of the Yearbook in public libraries and staff of both UN and development partners in Turkmenistan indicated that in practice, access to official statistics is largely confined to the Government. With the first electronic version of the Statistical Yearbook now available on CD, the costs of making it widely available to the public should no longer be an issue. However, as concluded in section 3.2, the constraint is more political than financial or technical. If advocacy by the UN and development partners is able to support NISSI in addressing these much bigger challenges relating to meeting international standards and commitments, the contributions of UN/UNDP projects to the outcome would be greatly enhanced.

Perhaps unintentionally, the project several times tried to raise the accessibility issue. At least two of the project's international consultants, at different times, recommended (Rauch in March 2005 and Digby in December 2004) that NISSI open a web site for public access in Turkmen, Russian and English. NISSI presently has an intranet site restricted to Government use. These consultants also recommended more access to the internet within NISSI, but an order from the Director in mid 2005 limited internet access to the 25 heads of departments. That order remains in force.

3.3.2 Relevance of UNDP outputs

Delivery of the training, equipment and other outputs from the statistical projects will probably strengthen NISSI's overall capacity to operate the national statistical system. The attrition rate of professionals from NISSI is low, not least as scope for alternative employment in the private sector is very limited and there are continuing restrictions on the travel of national professionals outside the country. EBRD's public letter of 5 July 2004 to the President indicates: "The lifting of exit visas, while welcome, did not remove all restrictions on travel".

For the reasons stated in section 3.2, improvements in NISSI's capacity are not yet reflected in its outputs, with the exception of those relating to data classification. It is largely through NISSI's outputs that progress can be made towards the outcome. Thus, the outputs delivered and in some cases still expected from these projects to generally build NISSI capacity are unlikely to contribute significantly to the outcome, unless they are more directly related to NISSI outputs which regularly monitor (not just "report" on) progress towards the MDGs and are more fully aligned with international standards over and above data classification systems.

It is for basically similar reasons that NISSI's performance in reporting statistics to UN agencies has deteriorated in the past two years (section 3.1.1) despite the support provided by the UNDP funded projects as well as those funded by the European Union. Real progress towards the ten Principles and MDG related commitments has been constrained by the political context limiting the extent to which NISSI can use its professional capacity. The UNDP projects have probably increased and improved NISSI's capacity, but the real developmental results from that improved capacity have so far been largely denied.

Outputs from the statistical projects which may have contributed to improve NISSI capacity include the following:

- a. 15 workshops trained over 200 NISSI staff in practices relating to the new classification systems for financial and trade statistics and in using new data processing software. The evaluation team organized a focus group discussion with six trainees on 4 October 2006. The trainees indicated that they had acquired new skills in the workshops and that they were using these in their day to day work. Drawing attention to their lack of access to the internet, they called for more such workshops, especially in more distant districts, as their only means of updating and acquiring new professional skills. They also asked for more opportunities to participate in international workshops and conferences and for training in the English language.
- b. The provision of computer equipment to modernize NISSI's district level (Etrap) offices. A project consultant recommended that, at the minimum, the district level offices should be able to run the latest versions of Microsoft Office applications and "communicate" with NISSI headquarters. (Rauch March 2005). The evaluation verified that 30 computers were subsequently purchased by the project and distributed to the 5 NISSI regional offices for onward distribution to some of the 64 Etrap offices.
- c. The technical integration of statistical databases which were previously inconsistent with each other into a single consistent database. This was achieved in several areas including in financial statistics.
- d. A massive (the first draft was 700 pages) guide to the statistical system in Turkmenistan. The aim here is to bring everything about the system, including legislation, mandate and structure of NISSI, methodologies and

guidelines into one volume, to serve as a working tool for statisticians and a study book for students. An April 2006 workshop on the draft recommended, amongst other things, that the guide include statements on the status of the intended transition to international classification standards and that the guide use standard international indicators including those of the WB for national accounts and of ILO for employment. The evaluation team questions the utility of producing such a massive guide, particularly as a hard copy book. It is likely to become out of date quickly and require constant updating if it is to be useful. A computer based user guide would be much more user-friendly and easier, quicker and less costly to update. Moreover, NISSI has an intranet on which such a guide could be readily accessed by NISSI staff.

- e. A survey of 3250 enterprises, including some households, on their access and use of ICT. Initial findings are that despite a six-fold increase in the number of computers from 2000 to 2006, mainly in urban areas, computer usage at only 4 per 1000 employees is still low (the level in Russia is 10) and largely confined to government enterprises. To encourage more computer use, it was suggested the Government lower taxation on the private importation and sale of computers.

3.3.3 Potential UNDP contributions

UNDP's potential contributions to the outcome were reduced by political considerations. This prompted a very narrow interpretation of the outcome and limited definition of outputs. There was some progress in meeting international standards in data classification.

The UN/UNDP has comparative advantages and substantial experience in this area that could be harnessed to make a real difference with NISSI for Turkmenistan. But even the most skillfully designed and implemented interventions designed to help NISSI meet international standards and reporting commitments will not make much real difference if NISSI is not allowed to output to its full potential. To achieve this potential, a political dialogue is required at the highest level. Some specific aims for this dialogue and a related 'readiness assessment' are proposed in section 4.

3.3.4 Quantity, quality and timeliness of outputs

NISSI professional staff indicated satisfaction with the quality of the outputs so far delivered by the projects. Indeed they were emphatic in their appreciation and gratitude for the support provided by the UNDP projects.

However, NISSI managers drew attention to delays in the implementation of all the projects. Scheduled start dates slipped on average by between three and six months, with longer delays arising during implementation. This is common both for other UN/UNDP projects as well as for projects funded by other development partners. Indeed both NISSI and the EU/Tacis representatives indicated that the EU projects with NISSI were delayed even more than those of the UN. The biggest factor in the delays is Government bureaucracy. The approval of the MoFA is required not just for entry visas for consultants, but for their in country travel, meetings with Government staff and access to official documentation (see also 3.2.2). The culture of fear and secrecy that pervades this system means that approvals are sometimes 'lost' or referred up to the Cabinet of Ministers or higher. NISSI suggested that UNDP be more stringent in following up deadlines.

NISSI managers also drew attention to some reluctance in parts of Government to accept change and a lack of receptivity to new ways of doing business as major constraints affecting progress on some of the projects. They drew attention to the difficulties in monetizing some indicators, to the need for other ministries to also adjust their way of collecting and using data, e.g. taxation, customs and to particular challenges within the national context. For such reasons, they indicated that more time than was originally anticipated would be needed to complete all the proposed changes in data classification. More informally, the evaluation team heard that as top levels of Government are familiar with the data as it has been presented and classified for years, there were very real fears that any major changes in data classification and presentation might not be agreed. Certainly for now, NISSI confirmed that it was maintaining two parallel data classification systems. NISSI management expressed the hope that this would be just transitional.

Other constraints are not specific to the statistical projects but more generally affect most support interventions by other UN agencies and development partners in Turkmenistan. Such constraints include restrictions on the overseas travel of professionals, the rigorous censorship of joint development partner-Government reports and access to the internet. As these factors directly impact on the achievement of the outcome, they were reviewed in section 3.2.

3.3.5 Efficiency

UNDP's interventions to support NISSI have probably operated continuously, in one form or another since Turkmenistan's independence. Thus UNDP's Country Cooperation Framework for 1997 to 1999 provided for

assistance to the then Department of Statistics to conduct living conditions surveys, with the WB, and the establishment of a network linking the Department of Statistics with the Ministry of Finance and the Presidency. UNFPA and UNICEF have similarly provided periodic assistance to NISSI and its predecessor organizations over the years. Other development partners with a long history of support to NISSI include the WB, IMF and the EU while others such as the AsDB have provided occasional support. The point here is that the national statistics system has been a recipient of more or less continuous support from development partners in the last 15 years. Some partners, such as the AsDB, have deliberately withdrawn from providing further assistance to NISSI because of the political factors constraining its performance.

Within the period so far covered by the ongoing CP, UNDP's expenditures (all funded from core resources) aimed at contributing to this outcome have totaled around US\$ 410,000. As detailed in Annex 7 Table 14, this expenditure was channeled through 5 projects, all with NISSI. The CO indicated that the projects resulted from a series of ad hoc demands from NISSI rather than any systematic needs assessment.

All five projects relate in one way or another to each other and all are intended to contribute to the same outcome. All are nationally executed with NISSI as the implementing partner. The mission heard some reports that the different departments concerned within NISSI did not always know what each was doing with respect to the UNDP funded projects. An example relates to the Guidelines project and the statistical capacity project. The first draft of the Guidelines did not reflect the data classification and terminology changes approved following recommendations of the statistical capacity project. Consequently, one of the recommendations of the April 2006 national seminar on the guidelines was that the status of NISSI's transition to new classifications and use of new terminology should be clearly stated in each relevant section of the Guidelines.

Each project inevitably has managerial and administrative requirements and a consequent workload on both NISSI (e.g. designation of a NPC, preparing annual budget and work plans, progress reporting etc.) and UNDP (recruitment of Project Managers and/or assistants, AWP's etc). To both synergize and maximize complementarities between UNDP's interventions as well as to keep the incremental burden of project management and administration to the minimum, it would have been more cost effective to channel all the support to NISSI through a single and substantively integrated intervention or project. Having a single intervention covering a longer time span would also avoid what otherwise looks to be a somewhat fragmented approach resulting from a series of loosely connected mini projects. NISSI also, in meeting with the evaluation, expressed the hope that support could be provided through a longer term and more integrated programme.

UNFPA and UNICEF have also been involved in providing extensive assistance to NISSI in the same period. Given that all the UN agencies committed themselves to pursuit of the same outcome and are working with the same implementing partner in Government, namely NISSI, not to mention sharing similar challenges, it is not surprising that the mid 2006 annual review of the UNDAF concluded "There is potential for a joint programme to be implemented by UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP in the area of statistical data collection and analysis". Some suggestions for taking this forward are made in section 4.

The very limited effectiveness of the outputs from the UNDP projects in contributing to the outcome (section 3.3.2), including the earlier finding that NISSI's performance in respect to at least some of the ten UN Principles has deteriorated in the last two years (section 3.1.1) when UN and EU projects were operational has major implications on the nature and extent on future UN support. This is pursued further in section 4.

3.3.6 Reporting and monitoring

The 2004 CP has just one output aligned to the outcome under evaluation: "Improved production, analysis and dissemination of socio-economic data". In discussion with NISSI, this was subsequently divided into two outputs in the April 2005 CPAP: "First, UNDP will support the development of a strategy and action plan for aligning the national statistical system with international standards. Secondly, and on the basis of the strategy and plan, targeted departments of the National Institute of Statistics and Information (NISSI) will be better able to produce relevant and reliable data for decision makers, and for more effectively monitoring economic and social developments, particularly those related to the MDGs." (p4) The CPAP outputs are more precisely defined and more reflective of the original rationale for this outcome, as reflected in the CCA. They also reflect more closely the UN (DP)'s support to countries in their pursuit of the MDGs. Even so, the suggestions made, in section 3.1.3 to improve the scope and definition of the outcome, may also be applied to the identification and definition of outputs and their associated annual targets, baselines and indicators.

For example, for the original CP output of "improved production, analyses and dissemination of socio-economic data", the indicator given was "number of NISSI staff trained" with a baseline of "limited knowledge and use of international standards for macro-economic and financial statistics by NISSI." The 2006 target was "core NISSI staff trained by 2006". The output could be more closely aligned to the outcome, and most especially those aspects of the outcome that reflect UNDP's niche. For output targets and indicators, if possible, the CO might try to think of something tangible that is more closely aligned to achievement of the output. The CO has already used an improved indicator in the CPAP's results and resources framework: "quality of analyses/report using international standards for socio-economic statistics". This may be made even more precise. For example, an output might be worded along the following lines: "NISSI is publishing quarterly data relating to progress towards the MDGs and that data is generally accepted by the international community as meeting international standards (defined by the ten UN Principles). Targets for December 2007 might be 1) that NISSI is publishing quarterly data for at least 2 MDGs, and 2) that this data is regarded as relevant, timely and impartial by the international development community. The baseline is that no such data is presently published. Indicators might be: 1) NISSI's quarterly bulletin of statistics has this data (and is readily available in public libraries, on the Government's statistics web site and/or is at least accessible to donors) and 2) comments made by development partners on the statistics in these bulletins.

The CO requested the evaluation team to comment on the use of UNDP's "drivers". UNDP's MYFF defines six cross cutting issues, known as "drivers", which are intended to affect the way in which UNDP approaches all its outputs. These relate to the promotion of national capacity, national ownership, an enabling policy environment, south-south cooperation, gender equality and partnerships for development results. The questions that are asked for COs to address when reporting on progress provide insights into the key concepts inherent in these "drivers". These are listed, together with the CO's 2005 reporting on each driver and evaluation comments in Table 5.

Table 5. Progress in using UNDP's six "drivers".

Driver	Key concepts behind the drivers	CO 2005 "answer"	Evaluation comment
National capacity	Improved services to the poor; MDG targets locally used; civil society monitoring development results; policies more pro-poor.	Some to significant effort	Poverty not officially recognized. Civil society disempowered. NISSI capacity increased but do its outputs make a pro-poor difference? CO could use MDG entry points more effectively.
National ownership	Reduced transaction costs, Government aid coordination	Little or no effort	Government relies on UNDP to coordinate among donors. Limited evidence of reduced transaction costs (e.g. electronic database & Yearbook).
Enabling policies	Increase access to information by civil society & private sector. Public dialogue on development targets	Some to significant effort	International standards on information access clearly not met. Public dialogue discouraged.
South-South	Using good practices, Sub-regional/regional initiatives	Little or no effort	The Czech Trust fund agreed to UNDP/T request to finance international consultant on finance statistics....still awaited
Gender equality	Women influencing national policy & budget. Gender reflected in policy processes & outputs?	No to some effort	Suggest cite tangible results that will make a real difference for women.
Partnerships	Is UNDP linking with civil society & others to advocate changes to Government policy?	No to significant effort	New UNDP management establishing partnerships and launch-pad for more active advocacy from 1/2007

For an organization striving to be driven by results, the amount of effort that is reported is almost immaterial. More relevant to outcomes are any tangible results from those efforts. The evaluation team's cryptic comments in the last column of Table 5 might provide the CO with some pointers for more substantive targeting and reporting of "drivers". The drivers should also be systematically raised in the CO's meetings of the project appraisal committee to review new proposals or substantive revisions of ongoing programmes or projects.

3.3.7 Soft assistance

The annual report of the CO in 2000 has the statement: "In the context of highly centralized decision making, policy dialogue and advocacy is extremely difficult. Line Ministries and other government agencies have limited power to develop even the most minor of policies" (2000 ROAR). If anything, the situation has deteriorated since 2000, with the widespread restrictions and effective disempowerment imposed in the aftermath of the alleged 2002 coup attempt. Thus for example, the CO has not produced a NHDR since 2001. The 2001 NHDR was rejected on quality grounds by the Human Development Office: its data were regarded as impartial and politically influenced. For similar reasons, the CO has not prepared policy positioning, advisory or advocacy papers.

UNDP's current top management team has been in the country since January 2006. The RR and DRR mentioned that they have deliberately adopted, in their first few months in the country, a cautious approach of building rapport and relationships which they hope will be viewed by their Government counterparts as trusting and constructive. They expressed their intention of using this relationship as a platform on which to become gradually more assertive. The findings and recommendations from this evaluation provide some substantive content for such advocacy and policy dialogue (section 4).

3.4 UNDP partnership strategy

3.4.1 What, with whom and how effective?

The CO's strategy with its main partner, the Government, has basically been one of low profile engagement, primarily at the technical level. This has been characterized by pushing ahead with the statistics projects in ways which are unlikely to be contentious, at least with Government, in the difficult context. This has meant interpreting the UNDAF and CP outcomes very narrowly, especially by confining their targeting of international standards to data classification and by not emphasizing the broader and more rights based standards associated with other UN statistical Principles and more rigorous pursuit of the MDGs. Thus the statistical Principles of relevance (to regular monitoring of progress towards the MDGs in particular), political impartiality and equal access have not so far been given practical attention.

This low profile technical approach has been coupled with the CO's new top management seeking, in early interactions with the Government, to establish rapport and constructive and mutually trusting relationships. The top managers hope that such relationships will provide a solid platform for more assertive policy dialogue and advocacy in the future. This would then give the CO a more solid basis on which to pursue the more difficult challenges arising from more focused pursuit of the MDGs and adherence to the other more rights based Principles of statistics.

Partly to further strengthen its potential platform for policy dialogue and advocacy, as well as for cost efficiency and UN reform reasons, the UNCT decided, in mid 2006, in principle to combine its present separate interventions in the statistics area, into a single joint programme, from January 2007 onwards. The CO has also been reaching out to other development partners with a view to further strengthening its platform for dialogue and advocacy as well as in response to the Government's call for support in aid coordination. Thus the CO organized two meetings of development partners in 2006, the second specifically for the evaluation mission to hear views and concerns regarding the national statistical system and official statistics (Annex 8).

EU supported NISSI during the period covered by the current UNDP projects. The EU's projects aimed to improve the quality of statistical data, so that it meets European standards. The EU specifically focussed on statistics relating to agriculture, finance and prices. Despite the obvious overlap with the UNDP projects, there was no formal partnership between the EU and UNDP. Instead, some informal and perhaps coincidental synergies were obtained. At least one of the UNDP project consultants (Rauch) was also hired by the EU. Co-operation between the UN and EU could have been closer at the technical level, perhaps through reciprocal arrangements whereby each organizations programme officers are invited to progress and consultant debriefing meetings. One officer working with the projects commented that at times it looked as if the same NISSI survey in the same area was being funded by both the UN and the EU. Both NISSI and the EU indicated that if the EU continues its interventions in this area, they would gain from closer relationship with UN interventions to support NISSI. Proposals for a more formal partnership are made in section 4.

It is clearly too early to draw conclusions on how effective the CO's partnership strategy with Government has been. Certainly the initial focus on the more technical and more readily actionable international standard concerned with data classification has effectively engaged NISSI managers and staff. They were emphatic in their appreciation of UNDP's support through the projects. Whether this will provide an effective entry point from which more meaningful progress towards the outcome can be made, remains to be seen. Much will depend on the extent to which the CO can now utilize its platform for more assertive dialogue and advocacy to pave the way for interventions aimed at making more of a difference in the actual tracking (as opposed to reporting) of progress towards the MDGs and in ways which more fully reflect adherence to the UN's ten Principles of statistics. The development partners are getting impatient, perhaps seeing competition for their resources from countries which are more visibly trying to show their results in progressing towards the MDGs than is Turkmenistan. They are now calling for the UN to take a relatively tough stance towards the Government at the highest political level: put official statistics which effectively track the MDGs into the public domain or do without UN and other partner assistance. This call is pursued in section 4.

3.4.2 Participation

The way in which Government, the UN and other development partners have participated has already been described. What has not been described is the obvious missing partner, namely civil society.

The CCA clearly describes how civil society has been effectively disempowered. Some symptoms such as the lack of any public dialogue on national strategy and policy, the absence of alternative viewpoints, the lack of a free press, lack of access to and the use of the internet and restrictions on travel of professionals outside the country have been referred to earlier. The evaluation team had initially hoped to meet with representatives of civil society, but as the mission proceeded, it became clear that the only non governmental entity, apart from development partners, with whom the mission might have met was the Union of Economists. Even then some partners were dismissive, indicating that this Union was unofficially sponsored by the Government and that practically all its members were Government employees. In any event, the person in the Union whom the evaluation team was suggested to meet was not in Ashgabat during the mission. No meeting took place with civil society representatives.

While this was regrettably seen, by staff in local UN and development partner offices, as being reflective of the local situation, it also underscores the more or less complete absence of civil society in accessing and using the national statistical system. The only statistics which are in the public domain relate to those confirming achievement of the latest projections of economic growth, such as those shown on the Government's web site.

Regrettably, this evaluation has not found any evidence that suggests that the context as described in the CCA has improved, especially as it relates to the achievement of the outcome. On the contrary, most of the information collected and analyses carried out by the evaluation suggest that if anything, the context has probably deteriorated further. This has implications for the recommendations made below.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Should UNDP stay engaged?

The evaluation (section 3.1.2) concluded that the outcome remains relevant to development in Turkmenistan and to the vision, mission and comparative advantages of the UN (DP)'s in the country. But is this sufficient reason for continuing the policy of engagement that the CO has so far pursued? The counter argument is that such engagement has so far produced no real development results and might even have been counter productive, in distracting attention and resources from the more underlying needs for change. Doubts along these lines have been expressed, both within the UN and amongst development partners. Development partners criticize the outputs so far achieved from such engagement, particularly the non-availability and impartiality of official statistics. Such criticism already led to the 2005 withdrawal of the AsDB from further assistance to the national statistical system: "TMH (NISSI) should not be the recipient of any other TA project which involves the collection and analysis of data unless it can be ensured that data analysis can be carried out in an open and scientific manner." (AsDB's TA completion report, 2002-2005). Other donors may have already withdrawn (the WB office in Ashgabat was not professionally staffed during this evaluation) or are now seriously reviewing their involvement in this area.

The findings from this evaluation are mixed. No real development results have so far been achieved. The main area of progress to date relates to data classification. At best, this is marginal to the challenges faced by the national statistical system in addressing Turkmenistan's commitments vis-à-vis the MDGs (WHAT statistics should be produced) and in meeting the international standards set by the UN's ten Principles (HOW to produce and disseminate those statistics). However, it has been an entry point and a block on which a constructive relationship with NISSI has been built.

At the meeting of donors on 5 October 2006 (Annex 8) several partners thought that the UN should remain engaged in supporting capacity in the national statistical system only if the Government agrees to make official statistics equally accessible to all (UN Principle # 1). Other partners put the probability of the Government agreeing to this condition, at least in the next year or so, at near zero. From the ensuing discussion amongst partners, a consensus emerged: that the UN/UNDP initiate a dialogue at the highest political level to secure agreement that, at the minimum:

- 1) Official statistics be developed to more effectively monitor progress towards the internationally agreed MDGs, and
- 2) These official MDG related statistics, including the raw survey data on which they are based, (with safeguards to protect the confidentiality of individual respondents), be equally accessible to civil society and development partners as well as Government.

This evaluation confirmed that progress towards the outcome has been constrained much more by political factors than technical considerations. This and lessons from experience both support the donors call. The political context has to be addressed to achieve real and sustainable progress in building a national statistical system that regularly tracks

progress towards the MDGs in a manner consistent with the ten UN Principles. Without progress in addressing the political constraints, little if any real progress can be made towards this outcome.

Evaluation recommendation

- # 1: The UN in Turkmenistan should initiate a dialogue to seek agreement at the highest political level that:***
- a) Future UN support to the national statistical system be used to produce official statistics which effectively monitor progress of different socio-economic groups and areas of the country towards the internationally agreed MDGs, and*
 - b) These official MDG related statistics, including the raw survey data on which they are based, should be equally accessible to civil society and development partners as well as to Government.*

4.2 Engaged in what and how?

The UN (DP) has to engage first and foremost politically. This has to be strategically planned and executed with careful consideration given to possible consequences all around, not least on NISSI and its management. Political engagement can be initiated in various ways. For example the RC could raise the above issues on behalf of all development partners, including UN agencies, with the head of state and/or the office of the Secretary General might write officially and/or a delegation of donors including the UN might raise the issue collectively. The President of the EBRD wrote to the Turkmenistan's President in July 2004 to express "grave concerns at the continuing lack of progress with regard to democratic and economic reform.." That letter was made publicly available "as a sign of its (EBRD's) concern." The UN typically follows a more discrete approach. The UNCT might explore tactics through MoFA. Clearly, the UNCT and donors should strategize, using the national talent at their disposal, to decide on how best the desired outcome(s) from such a political dialogue is/are most likely to be achieved and any consequent fine tuning of the above suggested message and its mode of delivery.

Evaluation recommendation

- # 2: The RC should convene a joint UNCT-donor meeting to specifically discuss tactics for the above political dialogue, perhaps circulating this evaluation report as additional background. Thereafter, the RC should keep the international community fully and regularly informed of progress in this dialogue.***

Complete disengagement of the UN from all interventions in the statistical area would make it difficult if not impossible to monitor and report on many of the UN's other ongoing programmes as well as track compliance with international commitments. Instead, a minimalist approach is suggested. Until there is political agreement that official statistics are needed to meaningfully and regularly track the progress, towards the international MDGs, of different socio-groups and areas of the country and until those statistics are in the public domain, the UN(DP)'s support to the national statistical system should be reduced and kept to the absolute minimum. This minimum should be limited to producing data that provide credible "snapshot" readings of the current situation of more vulnerable groups and parts of the country with respect to those MDGs which are considered by the UNCT and partners to be most relevant in the current context.

It is far easier to expand a support programme as and when political conditions allow it than to design an ambitious programme and then have to downsize it to reflect political realities. The UNCT is currently preparing a joint support programme to start in January 2007. The scope and scale of that programme should reflect the current political realities. It is therefore recommended that the joint UN programme be kept to the barest minimum, as defined above, until visible and tangible progress emerges from the suggested political dialogue. Political dialogue should be the main component of the minimalist approach. The utility of technical inputs is likely to be severely limited and probably wasteful until political dialogue makes genuine progress. The minimalist approach should be strictly confined to extracting key data snapshots of progress towards the MDGs by more vulnerable groups. These snapshots should be sufficient for targeting and monitoring the UN's other interventions in Turkmenistan.

Consistent with this minimalist approach, none of UNDP's current statistical projects should be extended beyond their scheduled termination in December 2006. Instead, the CO should direct its efforts and resources to pursue the above mentioned political dialogue and to design a joint minimalist UN intervention until the political dialogue has produced tangible results. For similar reasons, the UN(DP) should not agree to support the preparation of another MDG report for Turkmenistan unless a) the UNCT is given equal access to the raw survey data required for such reporting, and b) the UNCT retains the right to participate equally in the data collection, analyses and dissemination of the report. Several countries have already prepared second MDG reports and given the widespread condemnation of Turkmenistan's first MDG report, the pressure is on to prepare a new one. NISSI has already made informal requests for UN support in this. However, without substantial changes in the political context, it is unlikely that an "officially edited" second report

will be any more credible than the first. Hence, the suggested conditions attached to any UN support for the preparation of a second report.

Building capacity should not be an objective of this minimal intervention. Such capacity is neither likely to be utilized nor sustained without an enabling political environment. Instead, the minimalist intervention should be limited to one off direct support aimed solely at getting reliable "snapshots" of critical MDG indicators for target vulnerable groups. To provide the basis for analyses of changes over time, second snapshots might be planned a year or so later.

Evaluation recommendations

3: Until tangible progress from the political dialogue is visible to the UNCT and development partners, the UN(DP) should adopt a minimalist approach to interventions in the statistical area. None of UNDP's current statistical projects should be extended beyond their scheduled termination in December 2006.

4: The UN(DP) should not agree to support the preparation of another MDG report for Turkmenistan unless a) the UNCT is given equal access to the raw survey data required for such reporting, and b) the UNCT retains the right to participate equally in the data collection, analyses and dissemination of the report.

If and when a political dialogue leads to agreement to develop official statistics for regular and meaningful use in monitoring progress of different groups/areas of the country towards the internationally agreed MDGs, and to put such statistics into the public domain, a much more substantial intervention should be planned. In this case, the outcome and its associated targets and indicators, should be articulated in ways which better reflect the global mission of the UN ('s DP), and the UNCT's vision of that mission in Turkmenistan as justified in the CCA and projected in the UNDAF. More specifically, they should:

- a) focus directly on the international MDGs (preferably specifying which),
- b) reflect the UN's human rights based approach (e.g. clearly indicating which disadvantaged groups the UN would try to target) and cross referring to those of the ten UN Principles (i.e. # 1 in particular) which are most significant in terms of the development context of Turkmenistan as analyzed in the CCA, and
- c) Be more results orientated in using measurable targets and indicators which relate directly and meaningfully to the revised UNDAF outcome.

With respect to the latter recommendation, the CO's reporting of progress towards the outcome should be improved by setting more meaningful annual targets, more directly related to achievement of the outcome, and more substantive reporting, including that on the CO's use of corporate MYFF "drivers". The latter might focus on actual results achieved rather than the level of effort input. The substantive principles behind the MYFF drivers could also be routinely raised in the CO's programme meetings and in meetings of the project appraisal committee to review new proposals or substantive revisions of ongoing programmes or projects. Thus instead of the CP's current outcome target: "By 2007, 30% of all indicators in the annual statistical bulletins are based on international classification targets" a target that is more meaningfully related to the CP and UNDAF outcomes and UN (DP)'s niche might be: "By 2008, 30% of all the indicators in the annual statistical bulletins reliably reflect changes in MDG indicators for different socio-economic groups and areas of the country". Instead of the CP's current output target "Core staff of NISSI trained", more relevant targets in the current context might be: "By 2007, 1) NISSI's official statistics that track changes in MDG indicators by socio-economic group and by area of the country are readily available on the internet and in public libraries and 2) these official statistics are widely respected as being relevant, accurate and timely by the international community". An indicator of the latter might be the number of MDG related data series that development partners question as being impartial, irrelevant and/or untimely. Other examples of ways to improve annual targets and indicators were given in 3.3.6.

Evaluation recommendations

5: If current political constraints to achievement of the UNDAF and CP outcomes remain, the outcomes should be made much more modest so as to be more realistically achievable by 2009. This should be completed during the mid term UNDAF review planned for mid 2007. If, on the other hand, by then there are tangible results from the political dialogue, then this outcome should be reformulated to a) focus exclusively on the MDGs to indicate WHAT statistics will be supported by the UN, b) clearly indicate which disadvantaged groups (WHO) will be covered by these statistics, c) indicate HOW the statistics will be collected, analyzed and disseminated by relating to the ten UN Principles and d) be more results orientated.

6: Because of the obvious concerns of development partners in this outcome, they should be invited to play an active role in the mid term review of the UNDAF.

To facilitate redefinition of the UNDAF outcome and the preparation of a joint UN programme to achieve it, tangible progress from the political dialogue should trigger a systematic readiness and needs assessment. The political context of Turkmenistan warrants a special focus on readiness as opposed to the more usual focus of such assessments just on needs. The assessment should be confined to the statistics required to monitor the MDGs (WHAT statistics) and implementation of the ten UN Principles (HOW to collect, analyze and disseminate those statistics). Areas of statistics not directly relating to the MDGs such as national accounts, trade and production data should not be covered as the MDG related challenges are more than enough to occupy the likely resources of the UN and more reflective of the UN's right based approach and mission. However, readiness and needs in areas common to all statistics could be assessed: e.g. readiness to revise the Statistical law to align it more closely with the ten UN Principles.

The readiness assessment should identify the areas in which political considerations would be least likely to constrain progress towards the MDG related outcome. It would assess the extent and nature of genuine demand by Government and others for official statistics to regularly monitor MDG indicators for different socio-economic groups and areas of the country, at local incentives to do this accurately and meaningfully and in accordance with the ten Principles. The assessment should inter-relate demand and supply factors, ascertaining the extent to which statistical capacities are likely to be actually used, including the extent to which the ten Principles are likely to be followed, especially in tracking MDGs. The readiness assessment would ascertain what further conditions need to be put in place to increase the probability of the outcome being achieved. It might also identify possible champions. The readiness dimension of the assessment would define the largely political limits within which the needs assessment should focus.

The needs assessment should systematically scan needs for the national statistical system to produce official statistics that meaningfully monitor MDG indicators for different socio-economic groups/areas and in a manner consistent with the ten UN Principles. It should focus on requirements to build and utilize capacity in NISSI and in other areas so that demand as well as supply factors are addressed. It should prioritize identified needs to match them to the resources available in the time frame for achievement of the outcome by December 2009. This will probably imply a substantial refocusing of UNDP support away from its current emphasis on lower level and more tangential deliverables to areas more directly and more substantively linked to the tracking of MDGs for more vulnerable groups and doing this in a manner consistent with the ten UN Principles, particularly those Principles which currently pose rights based challenges. This will also provide for greater synergy in a joint UN programme. It will however require significantly more strategic involvement of the CO's top management.

Evaluation recommendation

7: If the UNCT and development partners are satisfied with results from the political dialogue, a full statistical support programme should be prepared. This should be systematically formulated by a readiness and needs assessment.

The WB has a Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building ([TFSCB](#)) which, with a multi-donor funding, aims to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of national statistical systems in developing countries. The CO might wish to explore applying to this source for the proposed readiness and needs assessment. An application to TFSCB has to show how major constraints will be addressed. Positive results from the recommended political dialogue could well be pivotal in this regard. Click on the [Guidelines and Procedures](#) to learn more about possible application.

4.3 Engaged with whom?

The evaluation team fully supports the proposal for a single integrated UN statistical programme to replace the current parallel interventions by UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF. Ongoing UN reforms call for and facilitate such initiatives. The common UNDAF outcome, clearly linked to the UN's primary and common focus area of MDGs, makes a joint approach feasible. The case for integration is further strengthened by the need for all three UN agencies to interact with the single national entity NISSI. The enormity of the challenges faced by the UN's past and ongoing projects in this area and the recognition that these have to be addressed more by political dialogue than by technical inputs, reinforces the need for and potential gains from an integrated approach and a single voice. The total incremental overheads of project management and administration should also be reduced both for the UN and for Government.

There are clearly substantive differences in the content and targeting of each UN agency's ongoing programmes with NISSI, but together, they have far more in common, than in difference. The tendency during the evaluation mission seemed to be for each agency to prepare its own draft for a new UN intervention, reflecting its ongoing activities. This risks encouraging a somewhat defensive, turf and process orientated dialogue. While this might result in gains from greater complementarities achieved through more explicitly linked parallel assistance, it is unlikely to result in an optimal integration of the UN's potential contribution to the UNDAF outcome. For the latter, it is recommended that each agency sets aside its current projects and instead joins an inter-agency team which jointly derives a new

integrated UN programme from the UNDAF's expected outcome by 2009. Until the above recommended political agreement has been secured, it is recommended that the UN pursue a minimalist approach to its statistical interventions. To design this, the UNCT might wish to use a results based logical framework approach such as ZOPP. Using such an approach, a one day workshop with all the key UN players should be sufficient to map out an outline UN programme owned by the three UN agencies.

Ideally NISSI and the EU should also be invited to participate in the above proposed programme design workshop. However, the perceived sensitivity of the discussions might constrain or distort NISSI's involvement, especially if it is focused on a minimalist approach. The UNCT will be better able to decide on this at the time.

Both NISSI and the EU indicated that they would welcome closer collaboration between UN and EU interventions. From NISSI's perspective, the UN is less bureaucratic and is able to carry over unspent funds from one year to the next – NISSI complained that large parts of its support from the EU were lost because unspent balances could not be carried forward to the next year. It should not be difficult for the UN to use a delivery modality which could address this problem. More important for achievement of the outcome, would be the greater chances of a successful outcome from the required political dialogue if the UN and the EU are seen to be clearly speaking the same message. This will be considerably easier and the message that much more convincing if the UN and EU share a common programme than if each continues as in the past, with parallel and overlapping programmes, only partially aware of what each other is doing. It is strongly recommended that the UNCT invite the EU to participate fully in a joint programme from January 2007 onwards. However, this might be already too late. It is understood that the EU has already budgeted for a Euro 750,000 programme ("Statistics 11") to start in January 2007 but that EU member countries are already questioning whether this programme should proceed given the political constraints in Turkmenistan and their wish to place EU support in countries which are more visibly trying to reform. If, the EU does continue its programme in 2007 and because of its long lead-in time, it is not feasible to join with the UN from January 2007, it is recommended that a joint UN-EU programme still be pursued, with the earliest feasible start date.

Evaluation recommendation

8: The UNCT should invite the EU to join in a single integrated statistical support programme, irrespective of whether that programme follows the minimalist approach or expands, because of verified political readiness, into a full programme.

4.4 Other recommendations

If present travel restrictions on NISSI professionals continue, future interventions could try to increase exposure of NISSI to international statistical developments and good practices by bringing top specialists to Turkmenistan for in-country briefings and training. One might prepare a programme of such visits linked to the MDGs and the ten Principles. Managed media coverage of such a programme might also help in addressing the political challenges. Similarly, UN in country staff and their counterparts from Government, civil society and other development partners might gain from periodic exposure on briefings with respect to recent UN reforms, for example the system wide adoption of the rights based approach to development, the centrality of the MDGs to mission and mandate of the UN and its agencies in development etc.

Evaluation recommendation

9: As part of a full statistical support programme, if present travel restrictions on NISSI professionals continue, the UN should finance briefing visits of globally recognized statistical experts to Turkmenistan in order to brief NISSI staff and other concerned Government users on new professional developments, best practices related to MDG monitoring and the ten UN Principles.

A key lesson (section 3.2.3) is that it takes considerable time to establish an enabling political environment for the national statistical system to operate in accordance with international standards and commitments. Periodic progress reviews, evaluations and audits should ascertain the need for changes to plans in the light of progress or the lack of it, most especially on the political side. This will require amongst other things, periodic review of the extent to which official MDG related statistics are actually being used with confidence by Government, civil society, development partners and the international development community. It may also require repeated advocacy and examples of the UN's own visible use of those official statistics, providing they are credible, in the management and monitoring of it operations in Turkmenistan.

Recommendations 1 to 9 are intended to be actionable within Turkmenistan, possibly with the initial involvement of the

office of the UN Secretary General for starting the proposed political dialogue. The enormity of the political challenge, the likelihood that it will require sustained effort and advocacy over a number of years and the fact that similar challenges may be faced by some neighbouring countries prompts the suggestion that an inter-agency sub-regional initiative be considered. Both UNDP and UNICEF already have regional or/and sub-regional programmes and/or publications which indirectly relate to, and/or are affected by the statistical challenges faced by Turkmenistan. Could a more direct sub-regional intervention be aimed at providing support in areas where it might be difficult for national programmes to progress? If for example, one Government in the region is resistant to publishing accurate data relating to the incidence of HIV/AIDS, could UN agencies get together at the regional level to fill the vacuum by publishing best estimates of HIV/AIDS in that country as well as in neighbouring countries? Is there a need for sustained and more aggressive advocacy on the right to information, freedom of expression and other rights that the UN stands for? If this is not under the direct management of the local UN Representatives, their relationships with the Governments concerned may not be jeopardized, while informed and relevant data are put into the public domain and possibly accompanied by a sustained campaign for change supported by the relevant regional directors of the UN.

Evaluation recommendation

10: UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA should explore a joint UN initiative at the sub-regional level aimed at:
a) Putting into the public domain the UN's best estimates of progress by vulnerable groups/parts of countries towards the MDGs, in cases where official data are either not available or considered impartial, and
b) To continually and more assertively advocate for change where current conditions constrain progress towards the MDGs.

Annex 1

Acronyms

ADB – Asian Development Bank
AWP- Annual Work Plan
CAS – Country Assistance Strategy of the World Bank
CCA - Common Country Assessment
CO – Country Office of UNDP in Turkmenistan
CP- Country Programme of UNDP in Turkmenistan
CPI – Consumer Price Index
CIS- Commonwealth of Independent States
CPAP- Country Programme Action Plan
DRR – Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP
EBRD- European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EU – European Union
GDP – Gross Domestic Product
HIV/AIDS - Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acute Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ICT - Information and Communications Technology
MYFF Multi-Year Funding Framework of UNDP
MDG - Millennium Development Goal
MoFA –Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MYFF – Multi Year Funding Framework of UNDP
NISSI - National Institute of State Statistics and Information
NACE - National accounting classifications for Europe
NHDR – National Human Development Report
NPC – National Project Coordinator
PRSP – Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme
RBEC – Regional Bureau for European and CIS countries in UNDP
RC – Resident Coordinator of the UN System in Turkmenistan
ROAR – Results Orientated Annual Report of the Country Office
RR - Resident Representative of UNDP
TMH – Turkmenmillihasabat, the Turkmen name for NISSI
ToR –Terms of Reference
UNCT- United Nations Country Team
UNDAF United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP- United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA- United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF- United Nations Children's Fund
UNRC- United Nations Resident Coordinator
UNSD- United Nations Statistical Division
USAID- United States Agency for International Development
WB- World Bank
ZOPP – A German acronym referring to a particular technique of goal orientated project planning.

Annex 2 TERMS OF REFERENCE

UNDP Turkmenistan Country Programme Outcome:

“National capacity for socio-economic data collection, analysis and reporting aligned with international standards and commitments, including MDGs”

Background

According to evaluation plan of the UNDP Country Office in Turkmenistan (hereinafter UNDP Turkmenistan), outcome evaluation is to be conducted in the third quarter of 2006 for the following Country Programme outcome - “National capacity for socio-economic data collection, analysis and reporting aligned with international standards and commitments, including MDGs”. This Country Programme outcome aims to contribute to the achievement of UNDAF outcome 1 “ By the end of 2009, policies to promote social well-being and human security are strengthened and expanded in accordance with national goals and the nationalized MDGs”. The National Institute of State Statistics and Information (NISSI) of Turkmenistan implements a number of UNDP-supported projects aimed to support the achievement abovementioned Country Programme Outcome.

Objective

The main objective of this assignment is to:

- provide appraisal on the validity/relevance of the outcome for UNDP assisted interventions, and the extent to which the set objectives and envisaged outcomes have been achieved;
- identify gaps and weaknesses of current programme, and what could be recommended regarding the achievement of the envisaged outcomes;
- identify lessons learnt from previous and ongoing interventions in this area with a view to ascertaining suitability of such interventions for continuation, discontinuation, refining and adoption in future work;

Expected outputs

The consultant is expected to produce an Outcome Evaluation Report that highlights the findings, recommendations and lessons learnt, and give a rating of performance. This report should follow the Outcome Evaluation Report Template and include all sections recommended therein (see attached template).

Key issues

The outcome evaluation is expected to address the following issues:

Outcome analysis

- What is the current situation and possible trend in the near future with regard to the outcome?
- Whether sufficient progress has been achieved vis-à-vis the outcome as measured by the outcome indicator?
- What are the main factors (positive and negative) that affect the achievement of the outcome?
- Whether the outcome indicators chosen are sufficient to measure the outcomes?
- To what extent synergies in programming such as partnerships among various UNDP programmes are related to outcome?

Output analysis

- Are the UNDP outputs still relevant to the outcome?
- Has sufficient progress been made in relation to the UNDP outputs?
- What are the factors (positive and negative) that affect the accomplishment of the outputs?
- Assess whether statistical capacity development concerns have been considered in the national development planning.
- Assess UNDP's ability to advocate best practices, and influence integration of international standards into national policies and plans.

Output-outcome link

- Whether UNDP's outputs or other interventions can be credibly linked to the achievement of the outcome (including the key outputs, projects, and soft assistance);
- What are the key contributions that UNDP has made/is making to the outcome?
- With the current planned interventions in partnership with other actors and stakeholders, will UNDP be able to achieve the outcome within the set timeframe and inputs – or whether additional resources are required and new or changed interventions are needed?

- Whether UNDP's partnership strategy has been appropriate and effective. Has UNDP been able to bring together various partners across sectoral lines to address relevant concerns in a holistic manner?
- Assess UNDP's ability to develop national capacity in a sustainable manner (through exposure to best practices in other countries, holistic and participatory approach). Has UNDP been able to respond to changing circumstances and requirements in capacity development?
- What is the prospect of the sustainability of UNDP interventions related to the outcome?

Suggested methodology

Information on the methodologies is given in Guidelines for Evaluators (see hyperlink in the attached Outcome Evaluation Report Template), issued by Evaluation Office, UNDP. The evaluators are expected to use all relevant methods to obtain data and information for their analysis and drawing up of findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations. These include:

- a) Documentation review: Begin with the Common Country Assessment/ United Nations Development Assistance Framework (CCA/UNDAF) for a description of the intended outcome, the baseline for the outcome and the indicators and benchmarks used. Examine contextual information and baselines contained in corresponding project documents, their evaluation reports and other sources;
- b) Use interviews, field visits, questionnaires and meetings to validate information about the status of the outcome; also use to the extent possible and appropriate the data collected and analysis undertaken by the country office prior to the outcome evaluation; and examine local sources of knowledge about factors influencing the outcome;
- c) Identify the major contributing factors that "drive" change. Do not identify or elaborate all conceivable factors;
- d) Probe the pre-selected outcome indicators, go beyond these to explore other possible outcome indicators, and determine whether the indicators have actually been continuously tracked;
- e) Undertake a constructive critique of the outcome formulation itself; determine whether or not individual outputs are effective in contributing to outcomes, drawing the link between UNDP outputs and outcomes.
- f) Analysis of intended or unintended effects of the interventions.
- g) Determine whether or not the UNDP strategy and management of overall country operations appears to be coherently focused on change at the outcome level. Examine whether UNDP's in-house planning and management of different interventions has been aligned to exploit synergies in contributing to outcomes.
- h) Determine whether or not there is consensus among UNDP actors, stakeholders and partners that the partnership strategy designed was the best one to achieve the outcome; Look at how the partnerships were formed and how they performed; Look at how the partnership strategy affected the achievement of or progress towards the outcome.

Reporting

At the end of the mission period, the draft Outcome Evaluation Report will be shared with UNDP Country Office, National Institute of State Statistics and Information of Turkmenistan, and other key stakeholders for comments. Draft report comprising especially the findings, outline lessons, conclusions and recommendations should be made available one working week prior to the scheduled completion date of the evaluation mission. This draft report will be discussed with stakeholders and UNDP management to validate findings, lessons and recommendations.

A wrap up meeting will be held two working days prior to the scheduled completion date of the evaluation mission. Final Outcome Evaluation Report and any other associated documents should be submitted to the Resident Representative, UNDP Turkmenistan within two weeks of completion of the evaluation mission.

Duration and timing

The mission will commence in September-October, 2006. The duration of the mission is three weeks.

Inception Report

for the

Evaluation of an Outcome
expected from the Government's Country Programme for UNDP
in Turkmenistan:

National capacity for socio-economic data collection, analysis and
reporting aligned with international standards and commitments, including
MDGs

Michael Constable and Olga Nazarova

Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, 2 October 2002

Introduction

This Inception Report briefly describes HOW the evaluation team proposes to carry out its terms of reference (ToR). Its purpose is to ensure that the team, comprising Michael Constable and Olga Nazarova, has correctly understood expectations and that their proposed programme of work, methodology and schedule of deliverables are agreed by stakeholders. For this purpose, a draft Inception Report was submitted, at the beginning of the evaluation, to the Evaluation Working Group (EWG) which the UNDP Country Office (CO) established to oversee and steer the evaluation, for decision(s) on the way forward. This finalized version incorporates comments made.

Objectives

The ToR require the evaluation to assess progress towards a key outcome expected from the Government's Country Programme (CP) for UNDP: **"National capacity for socio-economic data collection, analysis and reporting aligned with international standards and commitments, including MDGs"**. Progress towards this CP outcome is intended to contribute to expected achievements from UN assistance in Turkmenistan as indicated in the UNDAF (2005-2009) outcome: "By the end of 2009, policies to promote social well-being and human security are strengthened and expanded in accordance with national goals and the nationalized MDGs".

Drawing from UNDP's "Guidelines for Outcome Evaluations" (2002), the ToR elaborate on expectations from the evaluation, namely to assess how and why the outcome is (not) being achieved, UNDP's role and partnership strategy in pursuit of the outcome, to generate lessons and make recommendations to improve performance. The ToR indicate that the UNDP-funded projects to support this CP outcome are scheduled to close by the end of 2006 and, in follow-up, the CO is already discussing with the National Institute of State Statistics and Information (NISSI), UNFPA and UNICEF a possible joint UN programme in statistical data collection, analysis, reporting and building capacity. The European Union/TACIS has also supported NISSI in these areas and is now preparing a new programme, expected to commence in 2007, in statistical capacity development. NISSI indicated, in its initial briefing of the evaluation team, that there should be full coordination between the UN and the EU to ensure maximum complementarity in their assistance.

The CO's management, in early discussions with the evaluation team, emphasized their **primary expectation that the evaluation input into the strategic positioning of the UNDP CO: should UNDP continue its interventions in this area? If so, where can UNDP add most value, taking into account lessons from past experience and likely interventions from UNICEF, UNFPA and the EU.** UNDP has to make key decisions on future interventions in this area with the UN Country Team and NISSI during the annual review of the UNDAF and UN CPs in December 2006.

How we propose to carry out the evaluation: methodology

The methodology described in UNDP's "Guidelines for Outcome Evaluations" (2002) will be followed to the extent feasible with the data available during the mission: official statistics, even data collected with the help of the UNDP and other UN projects, can only be accessed with the prior approval of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). The Guidelines envisage four inter-connecting analyses starting with 1) ascertaining the extent to which the outcome has been achieved and continuing with 2) identifying influencing factors, 3) assessing UNDP contributions to the outcome and 4) reviewing UNDP's partnership strategy.

Reflecting the primary expectations from the evaluation, as summarised above, the fact that the current projects to pursue this CP outcome only started in late 2004 and likely difficulties and delays in obtaining official statistics which would be required to more fully ascertain the status of the outcome, the evaluation team proposes to focus primarily, but not exclusively, on analyses relating to 2) "factors affecting the outcome" and 4) "partnership strategy". Analyses under 1) "ascertaining the extent to which the outcome has been achieved" and 3) assessing UNDP contributions to the outcome will be covered more lightly. Even so, lessons will be drawn from both analyses of the status of the outcome as well as from UNDP's experience with the NISSI projects. Overall, this approach will add a forward looking dimension to the evaluation, thereby increasing its likely utility.

To contribute to the analyses for both 1) and 2), an attempt will be made to benchmark NISSI's data collection, analysis and reporting against each of the ten "Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics" endorsed by the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) in 1994. "The UNSC is the paramount

authority on statistical policy for member states (of the United Nations). It agrees statistical standards and nomenclature and sets out methodological best practice. As well as its normative function, it is responsible for championing statistics in the UN system, for coordinating the international statistical system and for promoting the development of national statistical systems worldwide".⁷ The Fundamental Principles set standards which "codify the manner in which national statistical offices operate....By publishing these principles the UNSC has set out an objective and ethical standard against which national statistical systems can be judged". "These ten Principles are a now a universally agreed framework for the mission of national statistical offices."⁸

The UNSC carried out a survey on implementation of the Principles in 2003 and Turkmenistan participated in that survey (UNSC emails to evaluation team on 27/9/06). If the evaluation team is able to obtain a copy of NISSI's survey response (UNSC is unable to release it without NISSI authorisation, reflecting the sixth Principle of confidentiality) it could provide a valuable baseline against which to assess any subsequent changes in meeting international standards as reflected in the "Fundamental Principles". Data from the UN, the World Bank and the CIS Yearbook(s) will be used to fill gaps arising from the non-accessibility of NISSI's data and/or to comment on the standards and reporting of NISSI. Quantitative analysis of whatever relevant data are obtained will be supplemented by qualitative analyses and anecdotal evidence.

The analyses will constructively critique the definition of the outcome and outputs and (3) their linkages and probe both the selection and use of indicators to track progress in their achievement and the pursuit of UNDP's cross-cutting "drivers". Reference will also be made to the recommendations for building statistical capacity made by an Inter-Agency and Expert Group on the MDG Indicators⁹ and elaborated upon in a report of the UN Secretary General on Statistical Capacity Building in December 2005 (E/cn.3/2006/27). The evaluation team will try to meet some project trainees, preferably in a focus group, to discuss their views on the training, what they learnt, how this affects their work and any difference that this is making to the resultant statistics.

The evaluation will pay particular attention to UNDP's overall strategy in pursuit of the outcome and most especially on (4) what partnerships were developed, with whom and how they performed. Throughout all these analyses, an attempt will be made to draw lessons from UNDP's experience and good or interesting practices both in Turkmenistan and elsewhere.

Where possible, the evaluation team will triangulate. This involves obtaining information and perceptions from different sources and by varying methods to corroborate reliability. Sources of information will include documents, websites, interviews and (e-) correspondence. Documents to be reviewed will include any available official statements of national policy, planning and progress relevant to statistical capacity and practices in Turkmenistan, the Turkmenistan MDG Report (2003), UN programming documents (CCA, UNDAF, CP, CPAP, Results matrices, ROARs, prodocs, AWP, programme and project monitoring and evaluation reports), statistical publications and web sites on Government statistics (NISSI does not have a separate website), and of the UN and other international bodies of which Turkmenistan is a member.

Interviews will be held with members of the Government, ideally both NISSI and key users of NISSI data. However, MoFA indicated on 29 September that it cannot approve the latter meetings unless the officials concerned are already hosting a UNDP project. A meeting will be sought with the Union of Economists. The evaluation team will also try to follow-up on any leads for possible relevant meetings in civil society, but early indications suggest that these may be unlikely. Meetings will also be held with the country offices of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and the European Union. The only in-country professional of the World Bank will unfortunately be absent for the duration of the evaluation, but the Country Office is hosting, on 5 October, a Round Table discussion of development partners to discuss the country's current challenges in official statistics and to propose ways forward. The latter will hopefully suggest concrete targets and benchmarks for each of the Ten Principles, which might be integrated into any future UN/UNDP assistance in this area. The evaluation team leader already met the UN Statistics Office in New York and this is being followed up with e-communications.

Reports

⁷ Models of Statistical Systems, Roger Edmonds, October 2005

⁸ How are we doing? Performance indicators for national statistical systems. Willem F.M. de Vries, Deputy Director-General of Statistics Netherlands.

To maximize the utility of the evaluation, the Country Office requested two reports: a 2 to 3 page debriefing summary suitable for circulation to NISSI and other stakeholders on 10 October and the full draft (see below) evaluation report by 24 October.

The debriefing summary can only be very tentative as analyses will not have been completed by 10 October. However, it will provide pointers to likely findings and recommendations and be worded diplomatically so as not to compromise the national team member with respect to local sensitivities and not jeopardize official relations, while still reflecting the substance of the evaluation as developed by then. It will provide an opportunity for stakeholders to react and provide feedback on tentative findings and recommendations so that the evaluation team leader can take these into account in finalizing the full evaluation report.

The Country Office indicated its likely preference to keep the full evaluation report as an internal UNDP document. To be as brief as possible, it will summarize findings, lessons learnt and recommendations with a major focus on interventions from 2007 on. The recommendations will be prioritized in the form of a proposed Action List. A first draft outline is annexed.

Schedule

The schedule indicated in the ToR assumed that the evaluation team would spend 3 weeks in Turkmenistan. The reduced duration of 2 weeks necessitates compressing the work schedule, as shown schematically in the annexed time chart. The Country Office will convene the EWG to review the draft debriefing summary on 10 October, in time for it to be finalized and circulated that day to key stakeholders. A meeting of stakeholders will be hosted by UNDP in the morning of Wednesday, 11 October. This will enable the evaluation team to hold any final discussions triggered by points made by stakeholders in the afternoon of 11 October.

The consultancy contract proposed to prepare a draft report in the form of an annotated outline before the evaluation team leader leaves Turkmenistan on 12 October. At the Country Office's request, this annotated outline will be replaced by the above mentioned debriefing summary. The team leader will subsequently email a full draft report to the CO before 22 October for correction of any factual errors and clarification of ambiguities. The CO will email any comments and corrections to the team leader no later than 25 October so that he can finalize and email the completed evaluation report to the CO by 31 October.

It is recommended that the EWG already plan for follow-up to the evaluation. This might include a documented management response of the CO to the outcome evaluation taking into account reactions and comments from NISSI and other partners, a learning event to disseminate lessons from the evaluation (the national consultant might be a useful resource person for this), translation and distribution of an expanded summary and the preparation of any follow-up programme interventions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (*max 5 pages*)

- Context and purpose of the outcome evaluation
- Focus on up to 5 main findings and related (lessons and) recommendations
- Prioritized action plan with suggested timelines and responsible staff/agency

1. INTRODUCTION (*target 1 page*)

- 1.6 Why this outcome? (refer to rationale in the evaluation plan at outset of CP)
- 1.7 Purpose of this outcome evaluation? Why now?
- 1.8 Expectations from the evaluation...refer back to approved Inception Report
- 1.9 Methodology used: ...refer back to approved Inception Report
- 1.10 Brief description of structure/organization of the evaluation report

2. THE DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT (*target 1-2 pages*)

- 2.4 When and why UNDP focused on this outcome? What problems will be addressed by its achievement?
- 2.5 Identify key partners, main stakeholders and expected beneficiaries in pursuit of this outcome
- 2.6 Describe any major constraints arising from context

3. FINDINGS (*target max 15 pages with any detailed supporting analyses in annexes*)

3.1 Status of the outcome

- 3.1.1 Extent of progress towards achievement of the outcome (*limited coverage*)
- 3.1.2 Relevance of outcome to Turkmenistan's context and needs, the UNDAF and UNDP's niche?
- 3.1.3 Comment on scope and definition of outcome, baseline, indicator and target. Lessons?

3.2 Factors affecting the outcome (*Relatively more emphasis*)

- 3.2.1 What factors affect progress towards the outcome?
- 3.2.2 How?
- 3.2.3 Good and interesting practices and lessons

3.3 UNDP contributions to the outcome (*limited coverage*)

- 3.3.8 Key outputs produced by UNDP that should/could and/or did contribute to the outcome.
- 3.3.9 Were UNDP outputs relevant to the outcome? Lessons?
- 3.3.10 Were potential contributions to the outcome covered by UNDP outputs? Lessons?
- 3.3.11 The quantity, quality and timeliness of outputs. Constraints and facilitating factors. Lessons?
- 3.3.12 (Efficiency of UNDP resources use – *may not be covered*)
- 3.3.13 Reporting and monitoring..... indicators, scope, timeliness, lessons
- 3.3.14 Any "soft" assistance (e.g., policy advice, dialogue, advocacy and brokerage)? Lessons?

3.4 UNDP partnership strategy (*Relatively more emphasis*)

- 3.4.3 What was it? With whom? When and how? Was it effective? Lessons?
- 3.4.4 How did partners/stakeholders/beneficiaries participate? If not, why not? Lessons?

4. RECOMMENDATIONS (*drawing from above lessons, challenges/opportunities: target max 5 pages*)

- 4.5 Should UNDP stay engaged?
- 4.6 If so, in what?
- 4.7 How and with whom? Complementing UN, EU and other partners
- 4.8and more

Annexes

- 1 TOR
- 2 Inception Report
- 3 List of persons interviewed
- 4 List of documents, web sites and any other relevant material reviewed
- 5 Extract of main lessons and good/interesting practices that could have generic application

¹⁰ This outline is likely to change significantly as work proceeds
Evaluation of CP outcome for UNDP/Turkmenistan

Timelines for the Outcome Evaluation in Turkmenistan (September-October 2006)

[illegible]

Annex 4

People interviewed and/or who provided information electronically

Government and project staff

Ms. Ludmila Amanniyasova, Deputy Director, NISSI
Ms. Mahym Atdaeva, Head of International Department, NISSI and NPC for "Assessment of Access to ICTs" project
Mr. Murat Babakuliev, Chief Engineer, NISSI and NPC, Statistical Capacity Development Project
Ms. Merjen Gurbanova, Project Assistant, Statistical Guide project
Mr. Ashirkuli Kurbankuliev, Head of Statistics and Finance Department, NISSI and NPC for "Advisory Services on Government Finance Statistics" and "Consumer Market Survey" projects.
Ms. Olga Kakadjanova, Project Assistant, "Advisory Services on Government Finance Statistics" project
Ms Maral Kakabayeva, Head of Transport and Communications Department, NISSI
Mr. Ivan Stanchin, Assistant to Director of NISSI and Head of Working Group, Statistical Guide Project

Project Trainees

Ms. A. Annayeva, Head of Finance Department, Central Office of NISSI
Ms. B. Annamuhamedova, Head of Department, Municipal Statistical Office
Ms. L. Kuliyeva, Senior Staff, Statistics and Trade Department, Central Office of NISSI
Ms. N. Hanmammedova, Senior Staff, Finance and Credit Department, Central Office of NISSI
Mr. M. Hudayarov, Deputy Head of Office, Ahal Regional Office of NISSI
Ms. G. Saparova, Head of Analyses of Collected Data Department, Municipal Statistical Office.

Development partners

Ms. Ayna Kekiliya, AsDB
Mr. Tony Myron, EBRD
Mr. Ashley Moretz, USAID
Mr. Danielius Pivoriunas, OSCE
Mr. Michael Wilson, EU

UN partners and UNDP

Mr. Richard Young, UN RC and UNDP RR.
Mr. Mahboob Shareef, UNICEF Representative.
Mr. Ezizgelgy Khellenov, Assistant Resident Representative, UNFPA
Ms. Jennet Appova, Programme Officer, UNFPA
Ms. Maria Martinho, Statistician, Statistics Division, UN, New York
Mr. Brian Pozun, Statistician, Statistics Division, UN, New York
Mr. Jeremy Webb, Statistician, Statistics Division, UN, New York
Ms. Fabia Yazaki, Statistician, Statistics Division, UN, New York
Mr. Keping Yao, Statistician, Statistics Division, UN, New York
Ms. Adriana Skenderi, Statistician, Statistics Division, UN, New York
Mr. Muhammad Usman Akram, Evaluation Adviser, UNDP Regional Centre, Bratislava.
Ms. Nane Avetisyan, UN Coordination Officer.
Ms. Marta Ruedas, Deputy Director, RBEC, UNDP
Ms. Inita Paulovica, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP
Mr. Serdar Bayriyev, National Programme Analyst, UNDP
Ms. Mary Rizaeva, Head of Programme Support Unit, UNDP
Ms. Shemshat Redjepova, Communications Associate, UNDP
Ms. Aysenem Tuyliyeva, Administrative Associate, UNDP (former Project Manager, Statistical Capacity Project).

Documents, web sites and any other relevant material consulted.

- Badykova, Najia: Regional Cooperation for Human Security in Central Asia, UNDP, 2005
- CIS Statistical Yearbook of Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Statcommittee of the CIS, 2001
- CIS Statistical Yearbook of Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Statcommittee of the CIS, 2003
- Digby, Peter K. Wingfield. Consultant report "Improving the System of Socio-economic Indicators and Classifications at Turkmenistan's National Institute of State Statistics and Information", December, 2004, UNDP Ashgabat,
- Edmunds, Rodger: Model of Statistical Systems, Paris 21, October 2005
- EU Reform of Official Statistics- 8. Partner Countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Progress report for reporting period: 15 March –30 June 2006, British Council
- EU Statistics 8 Progress Report (June 2006) Draft Report prepared by Luca Pappalardo
- Government of Turkmenistan: Statistical Law of Turkmenistan. Official English translation, April 2002
- Government of Turkmenistan: Millennium Development Goals Report: Turkmenistan, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, 2003
- Kusek and Rist 2004: Ten Steps to a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System: A Handbook for Development Practitioners, 2004
- Ministry of Health and Medical Industry: Demographic and Health Survey 2000, Gurbansoltan Eje Clinical Research Center for Maternal and Child Health, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, September, 2001
- NISSI: Monthly Bulletin of Social and Economic Indicators of Developing of Turkmenistan, Turkmenmillihasabat, Ashgabat, 2006
- NISSI Statistical Bulletin "Migration in Turkmenistan", Turkmenmillihasabat, Ashgabat, 2002
- NISSI Statistical Yearbook of Turkmenistan 2000-2003, Turkmenmillihasabat, Ashgabat, 2004
- NISSI Statistical Yearbook of Turkmenistan 2000-2004, Turkmenmillihasabat, Ashgabat, 2005
- NISSI Statistical Yearbook of Social and Economic Indicators of Turkmenistan in 2005, Turkmenmillihasabat, Ashgabat, 2006
- NISSI- Assessment of Access to Information and Communication Technologies in Turkmenistan, Progress Report of NISSI for reporting period 1 October 2005-31 December 2005
- NISSI Statistical Bulletin "Migration in Turkmenistan", Turkmenmillihasabat, Ashgabat, 2002
- NISSI- Assessment of Access to Information and Communication Technologies in Turkmenistan, Progress Report of NISSI for reporting period April-June 2006
- Rauch, Bjorn: Assessment and Recommendations for Statistical Data Collection, Reports to UNDP, Ashgabat, 12-22 September 2005 and March 2005
- UN Development Indicators. Report of the Secretary-General to UN Statistical Commission thirty-seventh session, 7-10 March 2006
- UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, United Nations Statistical Commission, Special Session 11-15 April, 1994
- UN Handbook of Statistical Organization, Third Edition, UNSD, New York, 2003
- UN Implementation of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. Report of the Secretary-General to UN Statistical Commission, Thirty-fifth session, 2-5 March 2004
- UN Monthly Bulletin of Statistics, No 8, United Nations, New York, August, 2006
- UN Principles governing international statistical activities. Report of the Secretary-General to UN Statistical Commission, thirty-seventh session, 7-10 March 2006
- UN Report on the Implementation of the UNECE Statistical Programme 2004-beginning of 2005, Conference of European Statisticians, Geneva, 13-15 June 2005
- UN The World Women 2005. Progress in Statistics, United Nations, New York, 2006
- UN Statistical Capacity Building, Report of Secretary General, 22 December 2005
- UN Statistics Division/DESA, Background Document for Statistics Commission in March 2006
- UNCT Common Country Assessment, The United Nations System in Turkmenistan, February 2004
- UNDP National Millennium Development Goals: A framework for action, Europe and CIS Regional MDG Report, Bratislava, Slovakia, 2006
- UNDP Central Asia Human Development Report. Bringing down barriers: Regional cooperation for human development and human security, UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States, Bratislava, Slovakia, 2005

UNDP Second country cooperation framework for Turkmenistan (2000- 2004), Executive Board of the United Nations
 UNDP: MDG Monitoring and Reporting: A Review of Good Practices (UNDP, August 2005).
 UNDP First Country Cooperation Framework for Turkmenistan (1997-1999), Executive Board of United Nations
 UNDP Minutes of donor meeting on 6 June, Turkmenistan, UNDP
 UNDP. Report on the State of IT Development in Turkmenistan. 2000
 UNFPA Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund, Annual session, Geneva 13-23 June 2000
 UNFPA Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund, Third regular session, 15-19 September 1997
 UNICEF Concluding Observations, Forty-second Session: Turkmenistan. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 44 of the Convention, unedited version, 2006
 UNICEF Data, Indicators and Features on the situation of children in CEE/CIS and Baltic States, UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and CIS, Trans Monee 2005
 UNICEF Support in collection, analyses and management of data to achieve MDGs (2007-2009), Joint Programme Vries de Willem F. M. How are we doing? Performance indicators for national statistical systems. Deputy Director-General of Statistics Netherlands, 2005
 World Bank Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building. Guidelines and Procedures. Development Data Group. The World Bank, Washington DC, USA, August, 2005

In addition to the above sources, the evaluation team made use of 1) the large amounts of data on the [web site of the UN Statistics Division](#), [WB web site on statistical capacity by country](#) and the [web site of the Government of Turkmenistan](#), 2) other statistical reports, memoranda and documents of NISSI and 3) other UN country programming documents for Turkmenistan such as the UNDP and country programmes of UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA, their Country Programme Action Plans, programme review documents, project documents and annual work plans.

Annex 6

Extract of main lessons and good/interesting practices that could have generic application

Findings and conclusions from this evaluation point to the over-riding importance of political considerations in building a national statistical system. It is much easier to address technical constraints affecting national capacity to collect, analyze and disseminate official statistics than it is to create the political conditions that enable expression of the demand for official statistics. Without the demand for official statistics that are relevant, reliable and timely for tracking MDGs, the data will not be produced or it will be produced badly. More specifically, in the absence of genuine demand, official statistics are likely to be politically influenced and become so impartial as to lack credibility and ultimately, value. Without an enabling political environment, professional statistical capacity will not be evident and its further growth will be stifled. In short, there is little point in building professional capacity (supply factors) without also addressing demand factors, and most especially the enabling political environment.

These lessons are consistent with experience in other countries emerging from the breakup of the Soviet Union. Generally within Eastern Europe and the CIS, political factors have been more important than technical considerations in developing, using and sustaining national statistical systems that meet international standards, at least in their early years. In particular, political conditions in a country have to encourage the growth of transparency, impartiality and accountability.

From the above lessons, another lesson stands out from UNDP's experience in Turkmenistan. The over-riding importance of the enabling political environment requires a carefully considered strategy to influence change. The development programmes and operations of UNDP, and for that matter those of other partners, will not achieve much if they are pursued merely at the technical level by programme officers. Their natural tendency will be to "deliver" where conditions are most favourable. While this may be good for delivery cash flows, it will do little for achievement of higher level goals, and in particular to help in progressing towards the MDGs. For that, more strategic interventions are required. This in turn calls for the political and strategic involvement of the top managers in the office or programme concerned.

An interesting practice used in this evaluation relates to the use of a group "listening session" with donors. Given the sensitivity of the day to day context for development partners, it might have been difficult to use the remarks made in a series of bilateral meetings. The group discussion was made particularly efficient by the use of a pre-planned structure (reflecting the ten UN Principles for official statistics and national commitments to MDGs) and flip charts on which participants were able to stick cards sharing their observation. This resulted in a transparent and participatory process efficiently generating many useful observations which were subject to group discussion and validation from consensus. The process could have been improved by asking the UNDP staff present to participate in a different or parallel process, so that the resultant observations can be categorized more precisely as reflecting the view of partners. However, this was arrived at by group summary amongst the donors present of the core messages emerging from the session. These were validated by immediately emailing the record to the donor participants for their confirmation and/or correction. One relatively minor correction was made as a result. Positive feedback on the process was received from donor participants. The process is worth developing for other potentially sensitive evaluations in difficult environments.

Annex 7

Large and supporting tables

Table #

- 1 Turkmenistan's progress in implementing the ten UN
- 2 Number of data entries supplied by Turkmenistan for the UN Monthly Bulletin of Statistics (August 2006) compared to those by neighbouring CIS countries
- 3 Comparison of UNSD statistical profiles for Turkmenistan and CIS countries: Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan
- 4 Breakdown of WB indicator of statistical capacity for Turkmenistan
- 5 WB indicators of statistical capacity for Turkmenistan and neighbouring CIS countries
- 6 Statistical capacity of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan as % of all countries from 2004 to 2006, as estimated by WB.
- 7 Capacity of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan to produce the MDG indicators: trends analysis
- 8 Capacity of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan to produce the MDG indicators: latest year available analysis
- 9 Follow-up to recommendations of international consultant on changing data classifications
- 10 Follow-up to other recommendations made by consultant on indicators and practices
- 11 Examples of changes in names of titles and indicators in the official statistical Yearbook
- 12 Examples of data discrepancies or inconsistencies observed in latest official Statistical Yearbooks
- 13 Follow up to recommendations of consultant on data collection and reporting
- 14 Approved budget and actual expenditures by project in the statistical area: 2004-2006 (US\$000)

Annex 7. Table 1: Turkmenistan's progress in implementing the ten UN Principles

"The Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics were developed by the Conference of European Statisticians in the early 1990s, a time at which official statistics in various countries, particularly in Central Europe and the former Soviet Union, went through a period of existential crisis. Political and economic systems were transformed and a number of new nation States emerged. As with many other functions of government, official statistics in those countries had to be re-invented. Public trust in official statistics had to be rebuilt and Governments had to learn to understand the place of official statistics in a changed context. To support these processes, it was deemed useful to develop an international document that would set out the role of official statistics, as well as provide some general guidelines for the functioning of statistical systems. The Conference of European Statisticians adopted the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics in 1992 and the United Nations Statistical Commission endorsed them in 1994 (after a few minor amendments to the preamble)." **The UN Secretary-General** in "Implementation of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics" December 2003.

#	The Principle summarized	Good practices ¹¹	The current situation for the national statistical system and official statistics in Turkmenistan
			<p>The evaluation team was unable to obtain a copy of NISSI's response to a 2003 UN questionnaire on this subject. However, the current views of NISSI are stated in red font. Official statistics are not released to civil society, so user views outside Government could not be obtained, with the exception of those from development partners. The team was denied access to Government users. <i>Conclusions emerging from a group meeting of development partners are in italics (see Annex 8 for the record of that meeting).</i></p> <p>Normal black font reflects observations by the evaluation team.</p>
1	Official statistics should be relevant, prepared and presented impartially without political interference and equally accessible to everyone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A user council to advise the national statistics office; - regular surveys of varying users to check if their needs are met, maintaining the flexibility to adapt to changing needs. - Key statistics are a "public good", routinely and freely available to all citizens (e.g. on the internet, in libraries). - The statistical office does not need political approval to publish data. 	<p>Relevance: NISSI has no user council but reports to the Cabinet of Ministers which includes Government users. NISSI shares an advance copy of its annual work plan with all Government users. NISSI carries out user surveys every three years. NISSI stated that Government users were satisfied but those involved in research were least satisfied. A new survey would be scheduled next year.</p> <p>MoFA did not approve the request of the evaluation team to consult users in Government nor its request to review recent official statistical publications. NISSI prepared a report on the MDGs in 2003 in collaboration with the Union of Economists and line Ministries and with support from UNICEF and UNFPA. NISSI carried out a household survey with UNFPA support in 2004 and is currently undertaking another with UNICEF support. Earlier poverty analyses have been conducted with the support of the AsDB and the WB. Government now wants to prepare another MDG report. A UNDP project consultant (#31638, Digby in December 2004) compiled a 100 page list (in English) of indicators prepared by NISSI: "Of the 100 pages, 64 were devoted to economic indicators and 36 to social indicators". The Government's statistics web page focuses almost exclusively on macro-economic indicators. The UN's 2004 CCA has many references to the lack of data e.g. "the statistical and analytical foundations on which a CCA should be based are inadequate in Turkmenistan (p5)...the absence of trusted data hinders judgments about the effectiveness of specific policies (p7)... A key problem in meeting the goal of improved reproductive health is the lack of knowledge (p19)... the main obstacle in identifying the problems or their solutions is once again the availability and reliability of data (p25). A more recent example of the lack of social data: in June 2006, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed "concern at the absence of data in Turkmenistan's report on most of the issues covered by the Convention, including children with disabilities, children belonging to ethnic minority groups and children in conflict with the law. The Committee recommends Turkmenistan develop a system for a comprehensive collection of comparative data on all areas of the Convention in a way that allows for disaggregation and analysis." CRC/C/TKM/CO/1 <i>On balance, partners considered that some official statistics were partially relevant for official use (e.g. data for oil, gas and cotton production). However, partners on the whole have not been given access to any official data showing group and/or regional disparities in livelihoods, health, education and other socio-economic conditions. On the rare occasions that they might get</i></p>

¹¹ Many more good practices are described, in greater depth than above, in the report of the UN Secretary General on "Implementation of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics", 10 December 2003. There is also a database of good practices available on the [web site of the UN Statistics Division](#)

		<p>access, official or informal, it was sometimes apparent that such data had been "adjusted" raising doubts on its credibility. Overall, it was considered that official data were largely irrelevant to partners' programmes of development co-operation in Turkmenistan and even to the official tracking of MDGs. The UNSD analyses of countries capacity to track MDGs (see 3.1.1) put Turkmenistan in the bottom 21% of countries, and behind and behind its CIS country neighbours.</p> <p>Impartial and free of political inference: <i>Statisticians often differ on data interpretation. For example, the WB calculates its poverty and other indicators from the level of cash flows but barter trade and heavily subsidized utilities, bread, salt and rent for Government employees are very significant in Turkmenistan.</i> The statistics on the Government's web site appear remarkably positive, with few negative changes observed. Article 10 of the Statistical Law stipulates: "Major official statistical observations in areas concerning economy, social situation, demography and environmental issues are carried out in accordance with a resolution by the President of Turkmenistan". The UNCT disowned the data presented in the 2003 MDG report and partners shared the view that much of its data were not credible. Examples of UN's doubts on the credibility of official data based on UN funded surveys may be found in various UN documents and web pages, e.g. "the Turkmenistan Demographic Health Survey (DHS, 2000) estimates of IMR significantly exceed those reflected in official government data." UNICEF web site. The UN's 2004 CCA repeatedly questions the reliability of official data, e.g. "the estimates of international financial institutions differ significantly from official data (p9)... (for HIV/AIDS prevalence) unofficial estimates, however, place the numbers much higher (p19)....difficulties in measuring the impact of the policies due to the unreliability of state-generated data (p25)" The CCA gives other examples of data discrepancies on p19 for infant mortality and p45 for child mortality. A partner reported that a 2002-2004 living standards survey funded by the AsDB gave rise to radically different reports from the Government and the AsDB. The AsDB evaluation report of that survey reads: "a more serious issue has been the apparent inability of TMH (NISSI) staff in carrying out unbiased and scientific analysis of data. This inability has been displayed in two ways: i) communication from the international consultants that data analysis was not being carried out in an unbiased and unscientific manner; and ii) data presented in TMH's analytical report which showed what appeared to be unrealistically low estimates of poverty and, especially, inequality. In view of the above, attempts were made to obtain the living survey data and have the data analyzed independently of TMH. These attempts were unsuccessful. However, it was possible to have one of the consultants write an independent analytical report based on a preliminary version of the data that he had obtained during the time of data entry. The analytical report of the consultant is far less sanguine about living standards conditions in Turkmenistan than the official report of TMK". <i>With few exceptions (e.g. data for oil, gas and cotton production where errors may be within 20%), official data are not regarded as impartial by development partners. Without exception, all partners thought that there was frequent and extensive political interference in official statistics.</i></p> <p>Equal access: <i>NISSI lacks the resources to make official statistics available to everyone and therefore gives priority to Government users.</i> The Statistical Law's provisions for public access are qualified by phrases such as "in conformity with the legislation of Turkmenistan", "bodies which are authorized to receive such information" and "Dissemination of official statistical information takes place in conformity with the Turkmen legislation". <i>All partners agreed that access to official statistics is restricted to Government and that neither civil society, nor development partners (with the possible exception of an IMF mission which accessed macro-economic data), have any significant access to official data. Getting access to official data requires MoFA approval and this is usually not forthcoming within the period needed.</i> The evaluation team's request for access had to be made through MoFA and so far has not been approved. UN agencies which finance surveys rarely get official access to the survey data and UNICEF remains concerned that it might not get access the raw data being collected by the ongoing MICS survey. The 2004 CCA notes "this lack of access also restricts Turkmen professors from publishing the results of their work and reduces access to literary or educational materials for all faculties. Although no official data are available....." June 2006 the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed "concern</p>
--	--	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

			about the fact that all sources of information – and the media in particular –are subject to Government's control and do not allow for diversity...that access to foreign media and the internet is very limited. The Committee recommends...(the Government)...ensure the right of the child to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources.....expand access to the internet including by supporting and facilitating projects such as the UNDP project "InfoTuk"...." CRC/C/TKM/CO/1
2	Official data should be compiled and presented in ways which meet professional standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing and using professional codes of conduct. - Systematically promoting professionalism, e.g. by circulating and publishing methodological papers, organizing conferences and by training. - Documenting methodological improvements on the basis of scientific criteria. - Quality assurance mechanisms. 	<p>Professional standards and ethics: NISSI has a programme of development up to 2010. A large proportion of NISSI's 260 staff in Ashgabat have degrees while many of NISSI's 800 staff at regional and district levels are highly qualified, as confirmed by a WB/IMF mission. Training is offered to NISSI staff by development partners. There has been no comprehensive survey of NISSI's capacity nor of its needs and NISSI would welcome this. Methodology is being continuously developed within the NISSI. NISSI has no code of conduct but every employee has approved ToR. NISSI's managers are on 1 year contracts which are renewed subject to satisfactory performance. Similarly, NISSI's most senior managers are appointed by the President. The evaluation team was not allowed access to NISSI's development programme and could not trace the WB/IMF report referred to. The law on statistics stipulates "collection, processing and analysis of statistical information based on a scientifically grounded methodology and international standards, which is designed to satisfy the needs of users". The law also provides for "a council on scientific and methodological matters...acting as an advisory body". AsDB's evaluation of its 2002-2004 TA project in NISSI recommended that "TMH not be the recipient of any other TA project which involves the collection and analysis of data unless it can be ensured that data analysis can be carried out in an open and scientific manner". The record of a donor information sharing meeting on 6 June 2006 indicates that one of the donors present stated "that although statistical practices and standards might have improved, the output is still not adequate". Another major donor at the same meeting indicated "that the overall quality of statistical data is still inadequate". <i>The partners meeting concluded that professional capacity probably existed in NISSI but this was rarely evident. More evident was the fear of NISSI's professionals of the implications of reporting accurate data and/or the probability that they were not allowed to publish accurate data. Partners had not seen any evidence of NISSI using a professional code of conduct, a quality assurance system or of systematically documenting improvements in methodology on the basis of professional criteria. In short, many had seen signs that professionalism was severely compromised.</i></p>
3	Official data are accompanied by explanation of sources and methods. Data limitations, reliability and/or quality are stated.	Information on known sources of error and the concepts, sources and methods behind the statistics is readily accessible to all users	<p>Accountability and transparency: UNDP's 2000 ROAR states "transparency is often limited. Information sharing is good in some areas while poor in others". There are no explanations and/or qualifications of data presented on the Government statistics web site, for which NISSI confirmed that it is the source. The 25 June 2005 completion report for AsDB project (TA 3937-TKM) notes: "there is one area in which TMH's (NISSI) inputs have displayed considerable weakness. In particular, there appears to be a serious lack of a culture of openness at TMH which prevents TMH staff from carrying out an unbiased analysis of data". However, the evaluation team observed that some recommendations of a UNDP consultant in this area have been reflected in the latest Statistics Yearbook. In particular, there are more explanations on methodology and sources in the Statistical Yearbook, in 2005 than in the 2004 version. <i>Partners had not seen any evidence that this Principle was practiced.</i></p>
4	The national statistical office is entitled to comment on misuse of official data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Periodically comments on known cases of erroneous interpretation and misuse, intended or unintended. - Systematic education of key users and the media 	<p>Prevention of misuse: NISSI holds periodic seminars with mass media representatives to brief them on the use official terminology and use of statistics. NISSI also sends notes to international users who misuse official statistics. <i>Partners had not seen any evidence that this Principle was practiced.</i></p>

		to prevent misuse of statistics	
5	Data collection should be cost-effective in selecting sources and methods, balancing timeliness, quality, costs and the burden on respondents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Efficient use of ICT, - regular use of integrated data bases - access to administrative records, - minimizing the number of forms & questionnaires, - simplifying and restricting their content to the minimum - Systematic efforts to reduce the response burden. - Quality assurance. 	Cost-effectiveness: NISSI periodically reviews its statistical reporting formats and templates with a view to modernization and simplification. As a result the number of forms used for reporting has fallen from over 300 in 1998 to 220 in 2006. All the forms currently used are consistent with the national accounts. NISSI is able to access and use administrative records. One UNDP consultant (Digby) commented "NISSI inherited a complex structure of operations from the soviet times, but it is gradually starting to simplify.....222 forms are used for completion by businesses, as well as a further 15 questionnaires.....a substantial drop from the 350 forms that were used in the mid 1990s." <i>Some partners did not see this as a major consideration: when the Government wanted data, it would be collected and presented, regardless of cost. Generally, most partners had seen frequent examples of cost-inefficiency (some specific examples were shared in the meeting) and relatively few examples of efficiency (e.g. oil, gas and cotton data). Several partners thought data collection was duplicative with little regard paid to the burdens placed on respondents.</i>
6	Individual data collected should be confidential and used exclusively for statistical purposes.	Practices to prevent disclosure of information identifiable to individual respondents	Confidentiality: The Statistical Law (Article 13) provides safeguards to persons submitting statistical information: "The confidentiality of all primary statistical data submitted to the NSO is guaranteed to legal and natural persons." <i>However partners noted that in practice 100% confidentiality can never be assured in any country. One partner gave a specific example of district level NISSI staff commendably refusing to hand over survey data to requesting security officials. Other participants thought that this would merely be referred to higher levels and that the security officers would get all the access it wanted.</i>
7	The rights and obligations of statistical offices should be specified in publicly available legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legislation clearly reflecting all 10 "Principles" is readily available to the public - Survey respondents are informed about their rights. 	Legislation: The Statistical Law of Turkmenistan was signed by the President in 1998 while some amendments were made in 2000. An English translation was downloaded by a UN agency in 2002 from http://natstat/institut/laws.shtml . That web site is not accessible and NISSI no longer has a website in the public domain. <i>The Law states the rights and obligations of NISSI, but there are inconsistencies and ambiguities while some phrases in it seem to violate these Principles, at least in the English translation. Some Russian speaking participants in the meeting of partners noted that this was also true for the original Russian version. All partners called for review of the Law against the Principles and removal of inconsistencies, ambiguities and phrases which clearly violate the Principles.</i>
8	Coordination among statistical agencies within countries is	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The national statistical agency is recognized as the custodian of statistical standards - these standards are 	National coordination: NISSI's status as the national statistical agency is indicated in Statistics Law of 1998. NISSI provides detailed guidance on how each statistical indicator is to be prepared and regularly audits the data published by other users. Results of these audits are summarized in NISSI's annual reports. (The team was denied access to NISSI's annual reports). <i>Each Ministry has to sign responsibility for the reliability of its data submissions. Partners recognized that NISSI is the only organization with a mandate for collecting data for official statistics and for setting statistical standards. However, despite the legal provisions, partners</i>

	essential for consistency and efficiency.	followed by all other agencies active in official statistics.	<i>considered that in practice, national coordination in this area was weak. Examples were given of inconsistent data, originating even from within NISSI (e.g. GDP growth given as 20% in the last year while the production from oil, gas and cotton, on which GDP is largely dependent, showed little change in the same period). (UNDP's 2000 ROAR states "statistics often vary considerably between government agencies and even within the same agency". It is not unusual to see major changes in official statistics for the same indicator in different publications (e.g. see table xx on population data) or from year to year in the same publication (e.g. the 2003 Statistical Yearbook gives the 2003 share of food production in total industrial output as 28.5%. This was reduced to 24.5% in the 2004 Yearbook.)</i>
9	Statistical offices should adhere to international statistical standards and best practices to ensure overall quality and to provide internationally comparable statistics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - national statistical systems follow international definitions and classifications - statistical system encourages identification and adoption of global best statistical practices 	<p>International coordination: The Statistical Law (article 7) defines as a principle requirement of official statistics: "comparability of the methodology used for statistical calculations and the system of indicators with international statistical standards and procedures".</p> <p>NISSI indicated that the classification systems used were gradually being aligned to international standards. For example, the classification system used for external trade statistics was being converted to the NACE system with EU support. The adoption of international standards by most COS countries was slow. NISSI's development programme up to 2010 contains specific targets for alignment with international standards. Part of the challenge in Turkmenistan is technical in that one of the requirements is to maintain an up-to-date web site. NISSI lacks capacity in this area and the UN/UNDP might help. NISSI would also welcome UNDP taking a lead in promoting international co-operation amongst partners in the area of statistics as NISSI lacks capacity for this. However, NISSI tries to ensure complementarity and to avoid duplication between the different partner programmes in statistics. Several partners had seen proposals, even official ones, to adopt international definitions and classifications, especially when these had been funded from partners. However, most partners had not yet seen official statistics reflecting new definitions and classifications. The status of proposals to change definitions and classifications was unclear. None had seen any evidence that the national statistical system encouraged the identification and adoption of global best practice.</p>
10	International cooperation is a prerequisite to enhance the overall, world-wide quality of official statistics	Statisticians from the national statistical office regularly participate in international meetings of statisticians	<p>International statistical cooperation: NISSI's main partners were the UN (UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA) and the EU/Tacis programme. NISSI staff recently benefited from a statistical course in Japan while UNFPA has provided substantial support to establish an in-country training centre and for several courses, for example on engendering statistics. UNDP, UNFPA and the EU have also supported the participation of NISSI in international courses. NISSI receives many invitations to participate in international conferences but is unfortunately not able to participate in as many as it would like as they may clash with priority work demands. Also, participants have to be approved by the Deputy Prime Minister for Economy and that post has been vacant for since May 2006. NISSI remains eager to continue statistical cooperation from the UN and EU/TACIS. Partners were aware that several NISSI statisticians were eager to participate in international statistical conferences, and that a few might even have done so. However, such instances were regarded as the exception as prior approval has to be given by the Cabinet of Ministers. Partners indicated that usually such clearance was not given in time. Partners also knew of (more frequent?) cases in which professionals had to take annual leave and travel as a tourist to participate in a professional conference or in a study tour and other cases where the official travel for such events was approved for selected persons as a "holiday". Several specific examples, relating to NISSI professionals who had been offered overseas training or conference opportunities, were subsequently given to the evaluation team by development and UN partners. One former partner of NISSI indicated that NISSI staff had to take annual leave or leave without payment on at least 3 or 4 occasions between 2002-2005 in order to participate in international seminars or training. Another professional in a public organization had to resort to similar measures when offered statistical training opportunities by other UN agencies.</p>

Annex 7. Table 2. Number of data entries supplied by Turkmenistan and other CIS countries for the UN Monthly Bulletin of Statistics (August 2006)

Indicators	Number of observations reported (years +months)	Turkmenistan		Kazakhstan		Tajikistan		Uzbekistan		Total number of countries supplying data
		Up to 2004	Since 2005	Up to 2004	Since 2005	Up to 2004	Since 2005	Up to 2004	Since 2005	
Population	10	2	-	9	-	7	1	7	-	206
Crude birth rates	8	-	-	5	2	-	-	-	-	46
Crude death rates	8	-	-	5	2	-	-	-	-	46
Industrial production indices	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	75
Consumer price indices	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	182
Producer price indices	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	66
Paid employment in non-agricultural activities	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	45
Paid employment in manufacturing	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	43
Unemployment	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	42
Earnings in manufacturing, by sex	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	36
Coal production	8	-	-	5	9	-	-	-	-	24
Lignite production	8	-	-	6	11	-	-	-	-	16
Crude petroleum production	8	-	-	6	15	-	-	-	-	51
Natural gas production	8	-	-	5	11	-	-	-	-	36
Electricity production	8	-	-	6	11	5	4	-	-	65
Iron ore production	8	-	-	6	17	-	-	-	-	20
Wheat flour production	8	-	-	6	17	6	15	-	-	42
Pig iron production	8	-	-	6	18	-	-	-	-	35
Crude steel production	8	-	-	6	18	-	-	-	-	42
Cotton yarn production	8	-	-	6	12	6	13	-	-	36
Woven cotton fabrics production	8	-	-	6	13	6	15	-	-	31
Newsprint production	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	30
Tires production	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	24
Motor vehicles production	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	28
Cement production	8	-	-	6	13	6	15	-	-	58
Construction of new buildings	8	-	-	5	14	-	-	-	-	35
Total imports and exports by regions and countries or areas in US dollars	5	2	-	4	1	3	-	2	-	182
Total imports and exports: value, value and unit value/price	5	2	-	4	1	3	-	-	-	186
Exchange rates	6	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	121
Money supply: money, reserve money	6	-	-	5	1	5	1	-	-	180
International reserves minus gold by components	7	-	-	6	1	-	-	-	-	173
Gold reserves	7	-	-	6	1	6	1	-	-	126
Rates of discount of central banks	5	-	-	4	1	4	1	-	-	77
Short-term interest rates	5	-	-	4	1	-	-	-	-	116
Total:		10	2	131	192	61	68	13	2	2521

Source: UN Monthly Bulletin of Statistics, August 2006

Annex 7. Table 3: Comparison of UNSD statistical profiles for Turkmenistan and other CIS countries: Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan

Indicators	Turkmenistan	Kazakhstan	Tajikistan	Uzbekistan
Main statistical agency name	National Institute of Statistics and Forecasting	National Statistical Agency	State Committee on Statistics	State Department of Statistics of Minmacroeconomstat of the Republic of Uzbekistan
Web address	No information.	http://www.stat.kz/stat/index.aspx?sl=news&l=en	No information.	www.statistics.uz
Legal basis	The law regulates legal statistical issues.	<p>Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan, of 7 May 1997, Nr 98-1, Legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan, "ON STATE STATISTICS" with amendments and addenda, introduced by the RK Law of 15.01.2002 Nr 280-II, Legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan.</p> <p>According to the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On state statistics", the Agency on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan is an authorized body that forms and implements public policy in the field of statistics, develops and carries out programs on improvement of statistics in the Republic of Kazakhstan.</p> <p>According to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan of June 30, 1998 "On further measures of optimization of the public administration authorities", the Agency on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan is a central executive body that is not included in the structure of the Government.</p> <p>The Agency on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan is independent in the field of statistical accounting methodology and technique; it administers the activity of its territorial divisions, co- ordinates the activity of subordinated organizations.</p> <p>The normative legal acts of the authorized statistical management body are obligatory for all natural persons in cases established by the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan as well as for the legal persons.</p>	In the statistical law – one of the principles of statistical information in the limits established by legal documents. Also responsibility of the statistical offices is transparency for all users including mass media, radio and TV.	The State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan is established by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On reorganization of the Ministry of Macroeconomics and statistics of the Republic of Uzbekistan" # UP -3183 dated December 24, 2002 and the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On organization of the activity of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics"#8 dated January 8, 2003. Regulations and organizational structure of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics are approved by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On organization of the activity of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics"#8 dated January 8, 2003.
Position in the government	No information.	The Agency on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan is an independent public office, which is not part of the government structure. The Chief Statistician reports to the Prime-Minister.	No information.	<p>In order to perform its functions the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics is empowered to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - carry out a coordination of activity and functional regulation in the field of implementation of uniform policy on statistics; - approve forms of state statistical observation, filling and submission instructions and to coordinate the forms of departmental statistical observation; - request and to receive state statistical reports, data of the departmental reports and other data, including attached explanatory notes (at any stage of completeness) from financial, customs authorities, tax collection authorities, banks, other departments and agencies, legal persons and their representations and branches, physical persons, including individual entrepreneurs; and to use them for statistical purposes and necessary for perform state statistical operations; - issue in prescribed order normative acts obligatory for general execution by state bodies, legal persons, representations and branches, individual entrepreneurs who submit statistical data; - In prescribed order verify reliability and completeness of the statistical data in the organizations of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In case of deviations, to instruct on their elimination and make appropriate corrections in the statistical data; - carries out a cooperation with international statistical and economic organizations; to hold and participate in seminars and meetings on statistics, including international ones.
Organizational	No information.	System of state statistics bodies in the Republic of Kazakhstan	No information.	Chairman

structure and finance		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Central office of the Agency on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan - Regional statistical departments (14 regional departments of statistics as well as departments of statistics of Almaty and Astana cities) - Republican State Enterprise "Information and Computer Centre" - Republican State Enterprise "Kazstatinform" 		<p>First Deputy Chairman 2 Deputy Chairmen</p>
Multi-annual or annual work programme	Programme for 2000-2005 and till 2010. Annual programmes are also available.	There is a third programme in progress named 'Programme of enhancement of state statistics for 1999-2005'. The programme is approved by the Government and is a basis for forming the budget for the Agency.	Annually the programme of statistical activities is approved by the Government; there is also a multi-year programme.	No information.
Main duties	No information.	<p>The basic tasks of the Agency on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pursuing the public policy and management of state statistics; - ensuring activity and improvement of uniform statistical information system on the basis of scientific methodology and international standards; - assuring integrity, reliability, and sufficiency of statistical data; - Comprehensive and objective studying, generalizing and analyzing economic and social processes and tendencies of the development that occur in the country. <p>The Agency on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan in accordance with the assigned tasks performs the following basic functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - carries out an informational support to the activity of state management bodies and economic entities of the Republic of Kazakhstan with the statistical data; - develops and carries out the programs on improvement of state statistics in the Republic of Kazakhstan; - provides accumulation, maintenance and updating of the informational and statistical databases on socio- economic status of the country and its regions; - determines a minimal set of indicators of state and branch statistical reporting that reflect the socio- economic and demographic processes, carries out population censuses, arranges market study at the enterprises and interrogations on studying of the population living standards, and other special surveys; - presents statistical information to the international organizations in accordance with the obligations under the agreements in force as well as carries out an exchange of statistical information with foreign countries; - publishes and distributes statistical compendiums, bulletins, economic reviews and other statistical materials in accordance with established procedures; - ensures safety of state and commercial secrets, confidentiality of primary statistical information in accordance with current legislation. 	No information.	<p>According to the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "on State Statistics " dated December 12, 2002 and the Decree of the PRESIDENT of the REPUBLIC UZBEKISTAN " On reorganization of the Ministry of Macroeconomics and statistics of the Republic of Uzbekistan " dated December 24, 2002, the main tasks of the Committee are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - development and realization of uniform policy in the field of statistics, ensuring an effective system of statistics organization in conformity with the modern international requirements and standards; - development and introduction of scientifically grounded and based on basic principles of a market economy, a uniform statistical methodology and system of parameters that ensure the composition of the national accounts and are in conformity with the international statistical standards; - insurance of efficiency, reliability and objectivity of statistical and reported indices, which describe in depth the processes of economic and social life; - development of a system of national accounts in conformity with appropriate international methodology of National Accounts, formation of a informational support system for composing the national accounts taking into account the international statistical standards and rules; - preparation and fulfillment of state statistics orders; <p>development of the state statistics work programs on the basis of a study of needs of the state bodies and administration and demand of statistical information users, and organization of an implementation of such programs;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - insuring a coordination of the activity of the ministries, agencies and organizations on realization of uniform policy in the field of statistics; - providing a system of economical and statistical classifiers necessary for organization of statistical works, and United State Register of enterprises and organizations; - maintenance on a system basis of improvement of professional skill and retraining of the staff of bodies of statistics of all levels. <p>Main functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensures an observance of principles of state statistics and unity of statistical methodology and its correspondence with the international standards and rules; - determines priority directions of state statistics development, and provides scientific - methodological, organizational,

				<p>technical, personnel, and financial support;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - develops and approves the statistical observation programs, ensures their effective realization, processing, accumulation, maintenance and distribution of the statistical information; - develops and approves in prescribed order forms of the state statistical reporting and filling instructions and coordinates the forms of the departmental statistical reporting; - forms an information system of statistical indices for comprehensive analysis of republican and regional social and economic processes; - carries out preliminary statistical analysis of major economic and social processes and events; - in prescribed order provides users with information on nationwide classifiers and their changes and updates; - ensures a further development of the Uniform State Register of Enterprises and Organizations provided that it serves as a main methodological mechanism ensuring a completeness of reporting and registration of all undertakings and compatibility of informational resources; - develops, coordinates and presents in prescribed order the drafts of normative - legal acts concerning statistics, as well as creation and maintaining state information systems and resources.
Other producers of official statistics	Banking statistics	Large number of the state entities have a right to conduct statistical observations: National bank, tax and customs committees, ministry of education, health, culture and sports, agriculture, transport and communication etc.	Ministries of health, education, water resources, internal affairs, finance, nature, Nat. Bank	No information.
Statistical advisory bodies	No information	There is an Inter-agency Council on Statistics headed by the First Deputy Prime-Minister.	No information.	No information.
Most recent population census	1999	26 February 1999	20 January 2000	No information.
Access to administrative data	No information.	There is a provision in the Statistical Law. However there is a big problem to obtain data from tax authorities. Administrative sources are not very well developed.	No information.	No information.
Data confidentiality	No information.	No information	No information	No information.
Release calendar (existence, when and how published)	There is no catalogue but the programme of publications is available in the Institute. The programme was sent to predetermined users.	No information.	A calendar of forthcoming publications is published in a catalog.	No information.

Main publications	No information.	Report "Socio-economic development of the Republic of Kazakhstan" (Monthly) Pocket hand-book "Socio-economic development of the Republic of Kazakhstan" (Monthly) Economics and Statistics (Quarterly) Statistical review of Kazakhstan (Quarterly) Kazakhstan and CIS countries (Quarterly) CIS countries (Quarterly) Kazakhstan and it's regions (in official and Russian language) (Quarterly) Statistical abstract of Kazakhstan (Annual) Statistical Yearbook of Kazakhstan (in Russian and English language) (Annual) Regional Statistical Yearbook (Annual) Kazakhstan in figures (in official and Russian language) (Annual) Statistical Bulletin (in English and Russian language) (Quarterly) Statistical press-bulletin (Quarterly) Industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan and regions 1998-2001 (Annual) Construction in Kazakhstan for 1998-2001 (Annual) Investment Activity of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 1998-2001 (Annual) Agriculture, forestry and fishery in Kazakhstan for 1998-2001 National Accounts of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Annual) Finances of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 1998-1999 (Annual) Fixed assets (funds) of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Annual) External trade and joint business of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Annual) Labor and employment of the population in Kazakhstan (Annual) Demographic yearbook of Kazakhstan	No information.	No information.
Languages of main publications	Turkmen, Russian, English	Kazakh, Russian, English	Tadjik, Russian, English	No information.
How are data disseminated (Paper, CD Rom, Website, online databases, databanks)?	No information.	On the web-site there are presented electronic versions of all statistical compendiums, which are issued by the Agency on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan on paper carriers by all branches of statistics from 1998-2001. Pages of the bulletins are represented in the form of output tables in HTML format, and these might be easily downloaded into Word or Excel for further using. The pages of compendiums and magazines are placed in PDF format, which is convenient for quick review and printing. A site has a hierarchical structure, which let easily and quickly to find necessary information. For convenience of users all bulletins contain archival quality files; this will let for users to save time of work in INTERNET. There are annual and operative data by months as well as totals of population census in the base. Information on the site is supplemented every day in accordance with approved schedule of publication of the Agency on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan statistical materials.	No information.	No information.
Availability of microdata for research purposes	No information.	This question is not solved. There is a determined procedure for scientific purposes.	No information.	No information.
	Last updated: 13 Oct 2005	Last updated: 15 Feb 2006	Last updated: 13 Oct 2005	Last updated: 13 Oct 2005

Source: Country Profile of Statistical System, UNSD, United Nations 2006

Annex 7 Table 4: Breakdown of WB indicator of statistical capacity for Turkmenistan

Statistical Practice (2006)	Status	Value	Weight	Score
National accounts base year	Base year older than 10 years	0	10	0
Balance of payments manual in use	Using BPM5	1	10	10
External debt reporting status	Estimate	0	10	0
Consumer price index base year	Base year older than 10 years	0	10	0
Industrial production index	Not available monthly	0	10	0
Import and export price indexes	Not available monthly	0	10	0
Government finance accounting	Accounts not consolidated	0	10	0
UNESCO reporting	Less than 3 times in last 4 years	0	10	0
National immunization coverage	Consistent with WHO/UNICEF	1	10	10
Special Data Dissemination Standard	Does not subscribe	0	10	0
TOTAL Statistical Practice (All Countries=59)				20
Data Collection (2006)	Status	Value	Weight	Score
Population census	Periodicity of 10 years or less	2	10	20
Agricultural census	Periodicity longer than 10 years	0	10	0
Poverty survey	Periodicity longer than 5 years	0	10	0
Health survey	Periodicity of 3 years or less	2	10	20
Vital registration system coverage	Complete	2	10	20
TOTAL Data Collection (All Countries=64)				60
Indicator Availability (2006)	Status	Value	Weight	Score
Income poverty	Periodicity longer than 5 years	1	5	5
Child malnutrition	Periodicity longer than 5 years	1	5	5
Child mortality	Available	1	5	5
Immunization	Annual	1	5	5
HIV/AIDS	Not available	0	5	0
Maternal health	Periodicity between 3 and 5 years	2	5	10
Gender equality	Not available	0	5	0
Primary completion	Not observed in last 5 years	0	5	0
Access to water	Available	1	5	5
Per capita GDP growth	Periodicity between 1 and 1.5 years	2	5	10
TOTAL Indicator Availability (All Countries=75)				50

*** All countries include low- and middle-income IDA/IBRD countries with a population of over 1 million.*

Source: [WB web site on statistical capacity by country](#)

Annex 7. Table 5 World Bank indicators of statistical capacity for Turkmenistan and neighbouring CIS countries

		Kazakhstan	Turkmenistan	Uzbekistan	Tajikistan
Legal Framework	Statistical Law	Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan, of 7 May 1997, Nr 98-1, Legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan, On State Statistics	0	0	0
	NSDS/Statistical Master Plan	0	0	0	0
Statistical practice	National accounts methodology	SNA93	SNA93	SNA68	SNA68
	National accounts base year	Annual chain linking	1987	Annual chain linking	Annual chain linking
	Balance of payments manual in use	BPM5	BPM5	BPM5	BPM5
	External debt reporting status	Actual		Actual	Actual
	Govt finance accounting concept	Consolidated	0	0	0
	CPI base year	Annual chain linking	0	0	0
	SDDS/GDDS subscription	SDDS	0	0	0
	UNESCO reporting	At least 3 times in last 4 years	Less than 3 times in last 4 years	At least 3 times in last 4 years	At least 3 times in last 4 years
	National immunization coverage	Consistent with WHO/UNICEF	Consistent with WHO/UNICEF	Consistent with WHO/UNICEF	Consistent with WHO/UNICEF
Data Collection	Population census(es)	1999 - Population and Housing Census	1999 - Micro census 1995 - Population and Housing Census	2001 - Census (2001)	2001 - Census (2001)
	Vital registration system coverage	Complete	-	Complete	Complete
	Agricultural census(es)	0	0	0	0
	Household survey(s) (since 1995)	2004 - Survey of Conflict Prevention and Cooperation	2000 - Demographic and Health Survey	2004 - Survey of Conflict Prevention and Coop	2004 - Survey of Conflict Prevent & Coop
		2003 - Household Budget Survey	1998 - Living Standards Measurement Survey	2003 - Household Budget Survey	2003 - Household Budget Survey
		2002 - Household Budget Survey		2002 - Demographic and Health Survey+, Special	2002 - Demographic and Health Survey+, Special
		2002 - World Health Survey		2000 - Household Budget Survey	2000 - Household Budget Survey
		2001 - Survey of the living standard of poor families		2000 - Multiple Clusters Indicator Survey	2000 - Multiple Clusters Indicator Survey
		2001 - Household Budget Survey		1996 - Demographic and Health Survey	1996 - Demographic and Health Survey
		2001 - Random survey of employment			
		2000 - Living condition survey of young families			
		2000 - Survey of the living conditions of poor families			
		1999 - Demographic and Health Survey			
		1997 - Households budget survey			
		1996 - Living Standards Measurement Survey			

		1995 - Demographic and Health Survey			
	Poverty survey	<u>Periodicity of 3 years or less</u>	Periodicity longer than 5 years	Periodicity between 3 and 5 years	Periodicity between 3 and 5 years
	Health survey	<u>Periodicity of 3 years or less</u>	Periodicity of 3 years or less	Periodicity of 3 years or less	Periodicity of 3 years or less
Indicators	Income poverty	<u>Periodicity of 3 years or less</u>	Periodicity longer than 5 years	Periodicity between 3 and 5 years	Periodicity between 3 and 5 years
	Child malnutrition	<u>Periodicity between 3 and 5 years</u>	Periodicity longer than 5 years	Periodicity between 3 and 5 years	Periodicity between 3 and 5 years
	Child mortality	<u>Available</u>	Available	Available	Available
	Immunization	<u>Annual</u>	Annual	Annual	Annual
	HIV/AIDS	<u>Available</u>	Not available	Available	Available
	Maternal health	<u>Periodicity between 3 and 5 years</u>	Periodicity between 3 and 5 years	Periodicity between 3 and 5 years	Periodicity between 3 and 5 years
	Gender equality	<u>Periodicity of 3 years or less</u>	Not available	Periodicity longer than 5 years	Periodicity longer than 5 years
	Primary school completion	<u>Observed in last 5 years</u>	Not observed in last 5 years	Observed in last 5 years	Observed in last 5 years
	Access to water	<u>Available</u>	Available	Available	Available
	Per capita GDP growth	<u>Periodicity of 1 year</u>	Periodicity between 1 and 1.5 years	Periodicity of 1 year	Periodicity of 1 year
Statistical publications	Statistical publications	Catalog and online publications are available at CSO's website	0	Catalog is available at CSO's website	Catalog is available at CSO's website
Relevant documents	PRSP	0	0	Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2005)	Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2005)
	CAS	2004	0	Interim Strategy Note (2006)	Interim Strategy Note (2006)
	MDG report (UNDP)	2005	2004	0	0

Source: the World Bank (2004-2006)

Statistical capacity of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan as % of all countries from 2004 to 2006, as estimated by WB.

a) Statistical capacity of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan from 2004 to 2006, as estimated by WB.

Country	2004				2005				2006			
	Overall	Statistical Practice	Data Collection	Indicator Availability	Overall	Statistical Practice	Data Collection	Indicator Availability	Overall	Statistical Practice	Data Collection	Indicator Availability
Kazakhstan	87	90	80	90	87	90	80	90	87	90	80	90
Turkmenistan	47	20	70	50	45	20	70	45	43	20	60	50
Uzbekistan	63	50	60	80	62	50	60	75	58	50	50	75
Tajikistan	63	40	90	60	72	40	100	75	75	50	100	75
Aggregate	Overall	Statistical Practice	Data Collection	Indicator Availability	Overall	Statistical Practice	Data Collection	Indicator Availability	Overall	Statistical Practice	Data Collection	Indicator Availability
All countries	64	56	62	74	65	58	61	76	66	59	64	75
Europe and Central Asia	75	73	80	72	77	75	80	77	78	77	80	77

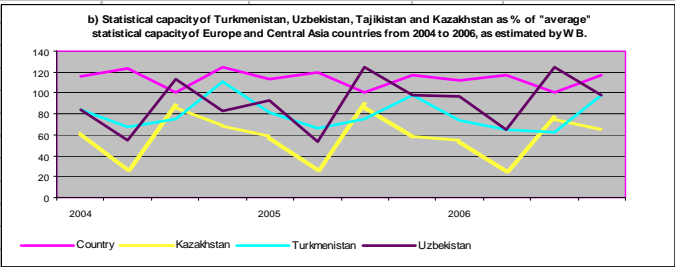
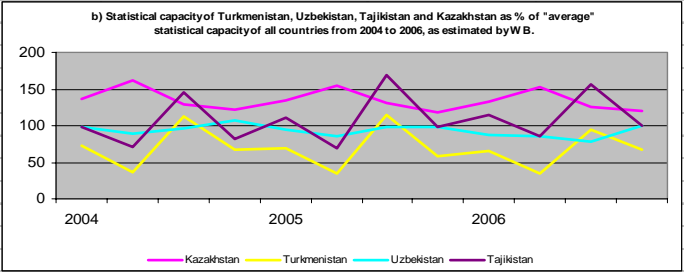
b) Statistical capacity of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan as % of "average" statistical capacity of all countries from 2004 to 2006, as estimated by WB.

Country	2004				2005				2006			
	Overall	Statistical Practice	Data Collection	Indicator Availability	Overall	Statistical Practice	Data Collection	Indicator Availability	Overall	Statistical Practice	Data Collection	Indicator Availability
Kazakhstan	136	161	129	122	134	155	131	118	132	153	125	120
Turkmenistan	73	36	113	68	69	34	115	59	65	34	94	67
Uzbekistan	98	89	97	108	95	86	98	99	88	85	78	100
Tajikistan	98	71	145	81	111	69	169	99	114	85	156	100

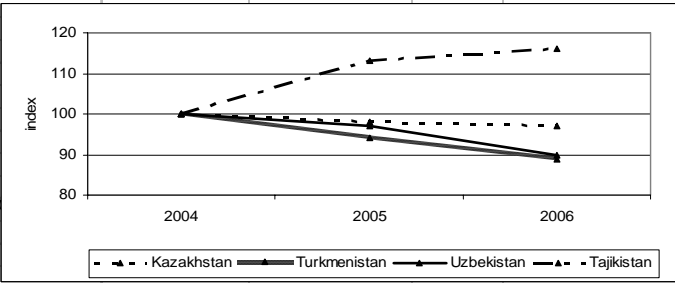
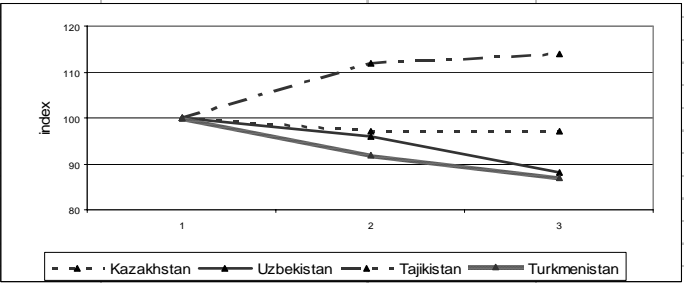
b) Statistical capacity of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan as % of "average" statistical capacity of Europe and Central Asia countries from 2004 to 2006, as estimated by WB.

Country	2004				2005				2006			
	Overall	Statistical Practice	Data Collection	Indicator Availability	Overall	Statistical Practice	Data Collection	Indicator Availability	Overall	Statistical Practice	Data Collection	Indicator Availability
Kazakhstan	116	124	100	125	113	120	100	117	112	117	100	117
Turkmenistan	63	27	87	69	58	27	88	58	55	26	75	65
Uzbekistan	84	68	75	111	81	67	75	97	74	65	63	97
Tajikistan	84	55	113	83	94	53	125	97	96	65	125	97

Source:the World Bank



Indexes (2004=100)



Evaluation of CP index

October 2006

Annex 7. Table 7: Capacity of Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to produce the MDG indicators: trends analysis.
Number of available country data points since 1990

Number of available country data points since 1999																				
Target Indicator	Goal 1					Goal 2				Goal 3										
	T1			T2		T3				T4										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7a	7b	8	9a	9b	9c	10	11	12					
Kazakhstan	4	4	1	1	2	2	.	2	2	4	4	4	2	5	9					
Tajikistan	2	2	1	.	2	2	.	4	2	4	4	4	2	6	9					
Turkmenistan	2	2	1	1	2	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	2	.	9					
Uzbekistan	3	3	1	1	2	1	.	2	0	3	3	2	0	5	9					
Maximum (all countries)	8	8	1	3	3	6	5	4	2	6	6	6	2	14	10					
Minimum (all countries)	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1					
Total number of countries with data	98	98	124	127	119	178	122	144	74	178	173	148	74	175	187					
Total universe	156	156	192	192	164	192	192	192	192	192	192	192	192	192	192					
% countries with data	63	63	65	66	73	93	64	75	39	93	90	77	39	91	97					
Countries with more than 1 data points	79	79	0	57	119	143	90	122	74	164	148	112	74	122	184					
% countries with > 1 data point out of universe	51	51	0	30	73	74	47	64	39	85	77	58	39	64	96					
	Goal 4			Goal 5		Goal 6														
Target	T5			T6		T7						T8								
Indicator	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	19a	19b	19c	20	21a	21b	22a	22b	23a	23b	23c	24a	24b
Kazakhstan	4	4	12	2	1	1	2	1	.	2	2	1	1	.	.	14	.	7	6	5
Tajikistan	4	4	12	2	1	.	1	.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	14	.	4	1	1
Turkmenistan	4	4	12	1	1	.	1	.	1	1	1	1	1	.	.	13	.	4	4	3
Uzbekistan	4	4	12	2	1	.	3	1	2	3	2	1	1	.	.	13	.	6	6	5
Maximum	4	4	14	3	1	4	7	2	2	7	3	1	1	2	3	14	2	8	9	9
Minimum	2	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	0	0
Total number of countries with data	192	192	189	135	134	67	139	32	50	140	58	106	114	42	41	160	5	87	174	170
Total universe	192	192	192	192	192	192	192	192	192	192	192	115	115	115	115	192	192	192	192	192
% countries with data	100	100	98	70	70	35	72	17	26	73	30	92	99	37	36	83	3	45	91	89
Countries with more than 1 data points	192	192	189	111	0	37	63	1	2	63	25	0	0	3	5	160	2	78	169	165
% countries with > 1 data point out of universe	100	100	98	58	0	19	33	1	1	33	13	0	0	3	4	83	1	41	88	86

		Goal 7								
Target Indicator	T9					T10				T11
	25	27	28a	28b	29	30a	30b	31a	31b	32
Kazakhstan	2	11	0	8	1	2	2	2	2	0
Tajikistan	2	11	0	8	1	1	1	1	1	0
Turkmenistan	2	11	0	10	1	1	1	1	1	0
Uzbekistan	2	11	0	7	0	2	2	2	2	0
Maximum	2	13	13	12	1	2	2	2	2	2
Minimum	0	8	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0
Total number of countries with data	181	120	39	155	93	174	166	162	158	22
Total universe	192	192	192	192	149	192	192	192	192	192
% countries with data	94	63	20	81	62	91	86	84	82	11
Countries with more than 1 data points	180	120	39	154	0	152	120	126	113	22
% countries with > 1 data point out of universe	94	63	20	80	0	79	63	66	59	11

Goal 8																	No. indicators with data	No. indicators with min. 2 points
Target Indicator	Targets 12-15											T16	T18				60	
	33a	33b	34	35	36	37	40	41	42	43	44	45	47a	47b	48a	48b		
Kazakhstan	na	na	na	na	.	na	na	na	na	na	9	.	14	13	.	10	42	34
Tajikistan	na	na	na	na	.	na	na	na	na	na	12	.	14	14	.	6	41	24
Turkmenistan	na	na	na	na	.	na	na	na	na	na	13	.	14	12	.	4	35	20
Uzbekistan	na	na	na	na	.	na	na	na	na	na	9	.	12	14	.	10	34	28
Maximum	14	14	4	14	14	14	14	3	na	0	14	13	14	14	14	14		
Minimum	8	8	2	3	8	8	11	1	na	0	2	1	3	0	0	0		
Total number of countries with data	22	22	22	21	22	22	15	21	0	0	131	89	190	188	90	188		
Total universe	22	22	22	22	52	56	30	22	na	38	153	192	192	192	192	192		
% countries with data	100	100	100	95	42	39	50	95	#####	0	86	46	99	98	47	98		
Countries with more than 1 data points	22	22	22	21	22	22	15	18	na	0	131	81	190	187	86	187		
% countries with > 1 data point out of universe	100	100	100	95	42	39	50	82	#####	0	86	42	99	97	45	97		

Explanations: Goal refers to MDGs goals. T 1, 2, 3,...18 stands for the targets adopted for each MDGs in the Millennium Declaration
Source: UNSD database, New York, 2006

Annex 7. Table 8: Capacity of Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to produce the MDG indicators: latest year available analysis

Target Indicator	Goal 1					Goal 2				Goal 3					
	T1			T2		T3				T4					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7a	7b	8	9a	9b	9c	10	11	12
Kazakhstan	2003	2003	2003	1999	2001	2001		2001	2004	2001	2001	2001	2004	2003	2005
Tajikistan	2003	2003	2003		2001	1998		2001	2004	2001	2001	2001	2004	2003	2005
Turkmenistan	2001	2001	1998	2000	2001				2004				2004		2004
Uzbekistan	2001	2001	2000	2002	2001	1990		2001	2004	2001	2001		2004	2003	2005

	Goal 4			Goal 5		Goal 6														
Target	T5			T6		T7						T8								
	Indicator	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	19a	19b	19c	20	21a	21b	22a	22b	23a	23b	23c	24a
Kazakhstan	2003	2003	2003	2000	1999		1999	1999		1999	1999	2000	2000				2003	2003	2003	2003
Tajikistan	2003	2003	2003	2000	2000		2000		2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000		2003	2003	2002	2003
Turkmenistan	2003	2003	2003	2000	2000		2000		2000	2000	2000	2000	2000				2003	2003	2003	2003
Uzbekistan	2003	2003	2003	2000	2000		2002	2002	2002	2002	2000	2000	2000				2003	2003	2003	2003

Target Indicator	Goal 7									
	T9					T10				T11
	25	27	28a	28b	29	30a	30b	31a	31b	32
Kazakhstan	2000	2002	2000	2002	2003	2002	2002	2002	2002	2001
Tajikistan	2000	2002	2001	2002	1999	2002	2002	2002	2002	2001
Turkmenistan	2000	2002	1999	2002	2000	2002	2002	2002	2002	2001
Uzbekistan	2000	2002	1999	2002	2003	2002	2002	2002	2002	2001

Goal 8																
Target	Targets 12-15											T16	T18			
Indicator	33a	33b	34	35	36	37	40	41	42	43	44	45	47a	47b	48a	48b
Kazakhstan					2003						2003		2003	2002		2002
Tajikistan					2003						2003		2003	2003		2003
Turkmenistan					2003						2003		2003	2002		2002
Uzbekistan					2003						2003		2003	2003		2003

Explanations: Goal refers to MDGs goals. T 1,2,3,...18 stands for the targets adopted for each MDGs in the Millennium Declaration
Source: UNSD database, New York, 2006

Annex 7. Table 9 Follow-up to recommendations of international consultant on changing data classifications

Area in which the consultant proposed changes to the classification system	Recommendation of consultant (source consultancy report)	NISSI reaction (source progress report/ROAR, discussions with NISSI)	Status in October 2006, as reported by NISSI for evaluation	Verification by evaluation team
Types of enterprises	Drop and replace by different size classification	NISSI is still using the old classification.	No changes	Statistical Yearbook for 2000-2004 (the latest publication).
Categories of economic activity	Move over to NACE classification	At NISSI's request, several enterprises in different economic activities, when developing their business Charters for registration or re-registration, are now using the new classification. Charters are submitted to the Minister of Economy and Finance for registration or re-registration. The Ministry submits each new Charter to NISSI to verify that it reflects the new classification standards before approving the Charter.	Partly used	Agricultural, industrial and private enterprises are now widely using the NACE classification in questionnaires for reporting to NISSI. Services, trade and other sectors still have to implement the proposal
Products (goods and services)	Remove the three extra digits in order to simplify the structure of coding	The extra digits were removed from the structure of coding after agreement from 30 different Ministries, despite pending approval of the relevant body.	Widely used	Verified for the statistical questionnaires seen by the evaluation team.
Occupation	Need to get classification approved as soon as possible.	Classifier and relevant Guide were twice submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers.	Approval awaited from the Cabinet of Ministers	NISSI letters to the Cabinet of Ministers: No 19-201 dated 16.09.2005 and No 19-210 dated 16.12.2005
Foreign trade classification	Need to establish cooperation with Customs Service in order to move forward 2002 version of the classification.	In the middle of 2005 the written request on improving foreign trade statistics by transition to the new NACE classification was submitted to EUROSTAT via the Cabinet of Ministers.	Awaiting approval of EUROSTAT.	Letter of NISSI submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers: No 9-4-10 dated 18.04.2005
Branches of national economy	Drop and replace by NACE	NISSI's plans to transition to NACE classification in 2003-2006. This foresees gradual implementation as it depends how fast other government agencies switch to the new classification. Since 2005 all enterprises have being registered and re-registered according to the NACE classification. This enables NISSI to collect statistical data on number of enterprises with different types of economic activities.	Partly used	Verified as being in NISSI's plan for transition to NACE.

Source: Consultant report "Improving the System of Socio-economic Indicators and Classifications at Turkmenistan's National Institute of State Statistics and Information", Peter K. Wingfield Digby December, 2004, UNDP Ashgabat, Turkmenistan and for data on NISSI, actual observations of evaluation team.

Annex 7. Table 10 Follow up to other recommendations made by consultant on indicators and practices

Recommendation (page of consultant's report)	NISSI reaction (source progress report/ROAR/ interviews with NISSI)	Status in October, 2006, as reported by NISSI	Verification by evaluation team
List of recommended minimum economic and social indicators (pp.5-6)	The list of recommended minimum economic and social indicators was incorporated into NISSI's data base and software for use by all NISSI departments. The proposed list of indicators widened the total number of indicators to more than 310.	All departments use NISSI's new User Guide, developed in 2005.	The evaluation team confirmed that the new list is included in the 2005 User Guide
Increase NISSI staff access to Internet (p9)	Only the 25 heads of departments have access to Internet.	Only heads of NISSI's departments have access to Internet.	Special Director's Order No 39 dated 19.05.2005
Conform to international practice by subtracting 100 in reporting percentages and use index number (p10)	NISSI and all Government users of statistics are accustomed to including the 100. It needs time to change. At present time NISSI submits statistical reports using both the habitual and the proposed approach of presenting statistical data.	NISSI will continue to use both, usual and proposed approach of presenting statistical data.	"The latest statistical data provided by NISSI is another vivid evidence of rapid national economic growth. In January-April 2006 the growth output made up 120 per cent as compared with the same period of 2005. Several other percentages quoted on the same site also appear to include the 100 baseline. Government statistic web site.
NISSI's library doesn't meet requirements.	NISSI agreed with the consultant's proposal but they were not actioned because funding was not covered by the project.	No change.	
Lack of Labor Statistics of Turkmenistan in UN Statistical Yearbook.	No comments on this issue	There are some labor statistics in Annual Yearbooks, published in Turkmenistan, but no indicators of unemployment.	No change was observed in the Statistical Yearbook for 2000-2004 (the latest publication), "Turkmenmillihasabat", 2005
Reduce font size in Statistical Yearbook to Arial size 8; All numbers should be right-aligned; Remove all horizontal lines from the tables. Change titles.	This proposal was agreed	The New Statistical Yearbooks for 2000-20004 and 2000-2005 were printed in Arial size 8, all numbers were right-aligned. Horizontal lines remain due to technical problems. Some statistical titles have been changed in the latest Yearbook compared to the earlier one (see Table xx below). Presentation was also improved by greater use of diagrams.	Verified by comparison of Statistical Yearbook for 2000-2004 (the latest publication), "Turkmenmillihasabat" 2005 with earlier editions of the same Yearbook.

Source: Consultant recommendations taken from report "Improving the System of Socio-economic Indicators and Classifications at Turkmenistan's National Institute of State Statistics and Information", Peter K. Wingfield Digby December, 2004, UNDP Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.
NISSI data reflect actual observations of evaluation team.

Annex 7 Table 11 Examples of changes in names of titles and indicators in the official statistical Yearbook

Statistical Yearbook of Turkmenistan 2000-2003	Statistical Yearbook of Turkmenistan 2000-2004
Trade and services	Internal trade
Foreign trade	External trade
Share of selected industries in total industrial output	Branch structure of industrial production
Oil	Petroleum
Oil processing	Petroleum refinery
Indexes of productivity of transactions by industry branches	Indexes of labor productivity by industry branches
Production of oil and gas	Production of crude petroleum and gas

Sources: Statistical Yearbook of Turkmenistan 2000-2003, Turkmenmillihasabat, 2004
Statistical Yearbook of Turkmenistan 2000-2004, Turkmenmillihasabat, 2005

Annex 7 Table 12. Examples of data discrepancies or inconsistencies observed in latest official Statistical Yearbooks

(Based on quick casual observations during unofficial access to the Yearbooks by the evaluation team)

Indicators	Statistical Yearbook of Turkmenistan 2000-2004	Statistical Yearbook of CIS countries	Statistic bulletin "Migration in Turkmenistan"	UN Population Division
Population in 2000 (000)	5369	4790	5200	4737
Indicators	Statistical Yearbook of Turkmenistan 2000-2003		Statistical Yearbook of Turkmenistan 2000-2004	
Value of food production in 2003 as % of total industrial output	28,5		24,5	
Light industry in 2003 as % of total industrial output	21,5		24,5	

Sources: Statistical Yearbook of Turkmenistan 2000-2003, Turkmenmillihasabat, 2004
Statistical Yearbook of Turkmenistan 2000-2004, Turkmenmillihasabat, 2005

Annex 7. Table 13: Follow up to recommendations of consultant on data collection and reporting

Recommendations	NISSI's reaction	Status in October, 2006, reported by NISSI	Verification
Paper questionnaires should be replaced by electronic questionnaires.	NISSI accepted this recommendation.	To be implemented from the last quarter of 2006	Verified as being in NISSI's work plan for the last quarter of 2006.
Data transfer between regional offices and NISSI should be improved.	The project supplied 30 modems. All will be installed in the regional offices.	To be implemented from the last quarter of 2006	Verified as being in NISSI's work plan for the last quarter of 2006.
Establish a NISSI web site for public access	This is outside NISSI's authority.	A NISSI web site is available only for internal NISSI use.	The internal site was observed on NISSI computers
NISSI should recruit more IT staff	Accepted by NISSI	One additional IT staff was employed in 2005	2005 list of staff titles compared to 2004 list observed by evaluation team

Source: Consultant recommendations taken from report Statistical Data Collection and Reporting, Mr. Lars Rauch, March, 2005, UNDP, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.

Annex 7. Table 14: Approved budgets and actual expenditures by project in the statistical area: 2004 -2006 (US\$)

Project	2004		2005		2006	
	Budget	Expenditure	Budget	Expenditure	Budget	Expenditure
Advisory services to improve government finance statistics	56,000	13,000	97,000	83,000	40,000	28,000
Statistical Capacity Development	106,000	64,000	155,000	104,000	68,086	44,000
Statistical Guide	-	-	29,000	4,000	41,000	5,000
Assessment of Access to ICTs	-	-	51,550	26,000	50,500	25,000
Consumer Market Survey	-	-	46,500	11,000	37,000	3,000

Source: Serdar Bairiev., UNDP

Annex 8

Summary record of meeting of development partners in Turkmenistan on official statistics and the national statistical system.

Organized by UNDP/Turkmenistan for the outcome evaluation team.
Ashgabat, UN Building, 5 October, 2006.

Participants:

Development Partners

EBRD – Mr. Tony Myron

myront@ebrd.com

ADB – Ms. Ayna Kekiliva

adb@untuk.org

USAID – Mr. Ashley Moretz

amoretz@usaid.gov

OSCE – Mr. Danielius Pivoriunas

danielius.pivoriunas@osce.org

EU/Tacis – Mr. Michael Wilson

UN partners

UN - Richard Young

richard.young@undp.org

UNICEF – Mr. Mahboob Sharif

msharif@unicef.org

UNICEF – Mr. Shohrat Orazov

sorazov@unicef.org

UNFPA – Ms. Jennet Appova

appova@unfpa.org

UN/RC Office – Mr. Begench Yazliyev

begench.yazlyev@undp.org

UNDP

Ms. Inita Paulovica

inita.paulovica@undp.org

Mr. Serdar Bayriyev

Serdar.Bairiev@undp.org

Ms. Shemshat Redjepova

shemshat.redjepova@undp.org

Evaluation team

Mr. Michael Constable, International consultant michaelconstable@yahoo.com

Ms. Olga Nazarova, National consultant

Purpose of the meeting:

1. Share and hear the experiences of different development partners in relating to national statistical systems.
2. Consensus on major challenges facing the national statistical system
3. Hear suggestions of different partners for addressing the challenges
4. Hear views of development partners on top priorities for the UN/UNDP to address the challenges with the next 3 or so years.

Discussion

At the beginning of the meeting UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Richard Young introduced the international consultant Mr. Michael Constable to development partner representatives. He then summarized the main purposes of the meeting, as indicated above. The UNDP Deputy Resident Representative (Inita Paulovica) drew attention to the importance of the expected outcome from the UNDP Country Programme: – “ National capacity for socio-economic data collection, analyses and reporting aligned with international standards and commitments, including MDGs”. She then indicated why this outcome had been selected by UNDP for evaluation.

Mr. Michael Constable briefly outlined the nature of the outcome evaluation. He indicated that the evaluation team was trying to benchmark Turkmenistan's progress towards reaching international standards against the UN's 10 Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. In 2003, the UN sent

a questionnaire to member states asking them to report on their progress in implementing the Fundamental Principles. Turkmenistan completed this questionnaire and this could provide a useful baseline against which to assess progress since 2003. However, the UN Statistical Division was unable to release the completed questionnaire to the evaluation team without NISSI's approval (protection of respondent's confidentiality = Principle # 6). The evaluation team then asked NISSI for a copy of the questionnaire. As this was not forthcoming, UNDP had sent an official request for this as well as for other documentation to the MoFA. The difficulty that the evaluation team was having in accessing official statistics and documentation underscored the importance of this meeting, which would hopefully generate more information on the current situation with respect to the national statistical system and official statistics.

Representatives of development partners were invited to stick cards, reflecting their experiences in relating to the national statistical system and in using official statistics, on flip charts. There was one flip chart for each of the ten Fundamental Principles, except for Principle #1 for which there were 3 flip charts relating respectively to the three key standards inherent in that Principle. Each flip chart was headed by a question relating to the Principle concerned. The questions are attached in Annex 1 together with a listing of the notes posted on the corresponding flip chart.

There followed a discussion on experiences and the current situation in Turkmenistan with respect to each of the 10 Principles. The main points made are summarized in the matrix attached as Annex 2 on the Fundamental Principles. Time did not permit discussion on possible ways to address the challenges faced by implementation of each of the 10 Principles. Instead, the meeting focused on reaching some conclusions and recommendations regarding future UN/UNDP interventions in this area in Turkmenistan.

Overall conclusion and recommendations

Several partners thought that the UN should remain engaged in supporting capacity in the national statistical system only if the Government agrees to make official statistics equally accessible to all (the first UN Principle). Other partners put the probability of the Government agreeing to this condition, at least in the next year or so, at near zero. From the ensuing discussion amongst partners, a consensus emerged: that the UN/UNDP initiate a dialogue at the highest political level to secure agreement that, at the minimum:

- 1) official statistics be developed so that they more effectively track progress towards the internationally agreed MDGs, and
- 2) these official MDG related statistics, including the raw survey data on which they are based, (with safeguards to protect the confidentiality of individual respondents), be equally accessible to all in civil society and to all development partners as well as in Government.

If this minimal condition was met, partners indicated that they would support continued involvement of the UN/UNDP in building national statistical capacity. If that materializes, partners suggested that the top two areas meriting support from the UN/UNDP should be:

- Fuller adherence to international standards for national statistical systems and for official statistics as reflected in the UN's ten Fundamental Principles, and giving top priority to adherence to the principle of equal access, and
- Further professionalization of NISSI, not so much its capacity, but rather in its everyday practice in the collection, analysis and dissemination of official statistics.

Annex A: Questions relating to each UN Principle and the comments posted on the respective flip charts

(comments were posted by the development partners as well as by the UN and UNDP staff present)

1a) How **relevant** are official statistics?

- Relevant to public relations purposes
- The statistics collected may be relevant, but (not?) necessarily complete or disaggregated
- Actual collected data is likely relevant but released data???
- Not relevant for economic analyses. Stats reflect political aims.

1b) Are official statistics **impartial** and **free from political influence**?

- Officially released data heavily influenced politically
- The official statistics cannot be free from political influence in the centralized system
- The statistics are not free of political interference. The Government constantly "fixes" the statistical data
- No
- No

1c) Does everyone get **equal access** to official statistics?

- Main Government agencies –Yes, Public-No
- No access for public and international organization to data
- No
- No

2 Are official statistics collected, analyzed and disseminated in a **professional** manner?

- No evident standards or QA
- No data available even financed by project. Only analytical part (Quality???)
- No dissemination
- NISSI could be singled out as one of the few institutions which retained knowledgeable staff
- NISSI governed to national policy and restricted and influenced by Government by Decree
- Yes
- Yes

3) **Transparency and accountability:** Are official statistics accompanied by explanatory notes on methods, sources and data limitations?

- None
- No info on sources and methods
- No transparency
- Only by Decree of Government

4) **Prevention of misuse:** Does NISSI periodically draw attention to erroneous interpretation or misuse of official statistics?

- No
- No
- No

5) Is the collection of data **cost effective** in selecting sources, methods and minimizing the burden on respondents?

- Lots of raw data collected. What happens to it?
- Recent automation helped to improve process
- NISSI uses outdated systems, most of the work is manual and costly
- Cost is not a prime consideration-but as little as possible observed.

6) Are respondents protected by the **confidentiality** of their individual survey returns?

- There is such provision in the Law
 - Confidentiality is paramount role of NISSI
 - No public confidence in confidentiality. Health tax, family.....
- 7) Are the rights and obligations of NISSI clearly specified in publicly available **legislation**?
- Legislation?
 - the Law on statistics should be revised as it poses as a barrier for transparency and free dissemination of data
 - Not that we know. The general information is that NISSI serves the need of the President
- 8) Are official statistics **co-coordinated nationally** so that they are **consistent and similar standards** are practiced?
- NISSI is the only statistical agency, setting statistical standards
 - Coordination among ministries/agencies weak
 - No coordination. E.g. Growth-20 % but components, oil, gas and cotton- no change
 - Yes. According to the Government Decree
 - Weak coordination among ministries and government agencies.
 - No. Data collected by ministries often contradict data collected by the NISSI
- 9) Do official statistics follow **international definitions and classifications**?
- Due to "No" to question 1c) hard to say
 - Not necessarily. However statistics supported by international agencies do follow international definition and classification
 - Not formally accepted for all institutions
 - Only education and ecology related area
 - SNA 1993, NACE
 - Only to attract Donor Funding
- 10) **International cooperation**: do NISSI's statisticians regularly participate in international statistical meetings?
- Not regularly, but participate
 - No cooperation= no contribution
 - They are willing to participate, but the official procedures do not allow it regularly
 - The NISSI staff are keen but do not receive clearance from the Cabinet of Ministers
 - Yes, but limited.

Annex 9. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Goals and Targets	Indicators for monitoring progress
Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	
Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than less than one dollar a day	1. Proportion of population below \$1 (PPP) per day 2. Poverty gap ratio [incidence x depth of poverty] 3. Share of poorest quintile in national consumption
Target 2: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	4. Prevalence of underweight children under-five years of age 5. Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education	
Target 3: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling	6. Net enrolment ratio in primary education 7a. Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5 7b. Primary completion rate 8. Literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women	
Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015	9a. Ratio of girls to boys in primary education 9b. Ratio of girls to boys in secondary education 9c. Ratio of girls to boys in tertiary education 10. Ratio of literate women to men, 15-24 years old 11. Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector 12. Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality	
Target 5: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate	13. Under-five mortality rate 14. Infant mortality rate 15. Proportion of 1 year-old children immunized against measles
Goal 5: Improve maternal health	
Target 6: Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio	16. Maternal mortality ratio 17. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	
Target 7: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS	18. HIV prevalence among pregnant women aged 15-24 years 19. Condom use rate of the contraceptive prevalence rate[a] 19a. Condom use at last high-risk sex

	<p>19b. Percentage of population aged 15-24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS</p> <p>19c. Contraceptive prevalence rate</p> <p>20. Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10-14 years</p>
Target 8: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases	<p>21a. Malaria prevalence, notified cases per 100,000 population</p> <p>21b. Malaria death rate per 100,000, ages 0-4</p> <p>22a. Proportion of population in malaria-risk areas using effective malaria prevention measures</p> <p>22b. Proportion of population in malaria-risk areas using effective malaria treatment measures.</p> <p>23a. Tuberculosis incidence rates.</p> <p>23b. Tuberculosis prevalence rate per 100,000 population.</p> <p>23c. Death rate associated with tuberculosis per 100,000 population.</p> <p>24a. Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected under DOTS (internationally recommended TB control strategy)</p> <p>24b. Proportion of tuberculosis cases successfully treated under DOTS (internationally recommended TB control strategy).</p>
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability	
Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources	<p>25. Proportion of land area covered by forest</p> <p>26. Ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area</p> <p>27. Energy use (kg oil equivalent) per \$1 GDP (PPP)</p> <p>28. Consumption of ozone-depleting CFCs (ODP tons)</p> <p>29. Proportion of population using solid fuels</p>
Target 10: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation	<p>30a. Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source, urban</p> <p>30b. Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source, rural.</p> <p>31a. Proportion of population with access to improved sanitation, urban</p> <p>31b. Proportion of population with access to improved sanitation, rural</p>
Target 11: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers	<p>32. Proportion of households with access to secure tenure</p>
Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development	
Target 12: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system Includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally	<p>Some of the indicators listed below are monitored separately for the least developed countries (LDCs), Africa, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.</p> <p>33a. ODA, net, as a percentage of OECD/DAC donors' GNI</p>
Target 13: Address the special needs of the least	<p>33b. ODA to LDCs, net, as a percentage of OECD/DAC donors' gross national income.</p>

<p>developed countries</p> <p>Includes: tariff and quota free access for the least developed countries' exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction</p> <p>Target 14: Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States (through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly)</p> <p>Target 15: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term</p> <p>Target 16: In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth</p>	<p>34. Proportion of total ODA to basic social services</p> <p>35. Proportion of bilateral official development assistance of OECD/DAC donors that is untied</p> <p>36. ODA received in landlocked developing countries as a proportion of their gross national incomes</p> <p>37. ODA received in small island developing States as a proportion of their gross national incomes</p> <p>38. Proportion of total developed country imports (by value and excluding arms) from developing countries and least developed countries, admitted free of duty</p> <p>39. Average tariffs imposed by developed countries on agricultural products and textiles and clothing from developing countries</p> <p>40. Agricultural support estimate for OECD countries as a percentage of their gross domestic product</p> <p>41. Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity</p> <p>42. Total number of countries that have reached their HIPC decision points and number that have reached their HIPC completion points (cumulative)</p> <p>43. Debt relief committed under HIPC Initiative</p> <p>44. Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services</p> <p>45. Unemployment rate of young people aged 15-24 years, each sex and total</p>
<p>Target 17: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries</p>	<p>46. Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis</p>
<p>Target 18: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications</p>	<p>47a. Telephone lines per 100 population</p> <p>47b. Cellular subscribers per 100 population</p> <p>48a. Personal computers in use per 100 population</p> <p>48b. Internet users per 100 population</p>
<p>Source: The Millennium Development Goals and targets come from the Millennium Declaration, signed by 189 countries, including 147 heads of State and Government, in September 2000 (http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm).</p>	

