

Comments of paper – Paving New Direction in Official Statistics: The Role of Heads of NSOs – by Adelheid Burg-Schmelz, Director, Statistics Department, IMF

By

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1. As rightly mention by the author, the heads of NSOs play many roles of which one of them is to lead the national statistical system. However, he has limited capacity because of limited power. In the case of Malaysia, the current Statistics Act is under redrafting which among others, is to empower the Chief Statistician to coordinate data collection activities across the Government agencies, introducing common codes and concept used. The new law will also provide the power to the Chief Statistician to tap data from Government agencies for statistical purposes. As a temporary measure, while the law is being prepared and to be proved by Parliament, the Department has signed memorandum of understanding with the various Government agencies to hasten data sharing with them.
2. During 2009 global financial crisis, the Department of Statistics Malaysia also feels the heat. The policy maker needs timely data as well as new data sets to enable policy makers to monitor the economic situation and to adjust the necessary policies. Given the situation, the heads of NSOs must be creative and innovative to produce data with shortest possible time. Taking Malaysia's experience, the release of the GDP data has brought forward from 8 weeks to 7 weeks after the reference period.
3. Thus, I fully agree with the author that as heads of NSOs, we have to work hand in hand with the policy makers, so as the planning will be guided with accurate and relevance data sets.