

**Sixth Meeting of the Heads of SAARC Statistical Organisations (SAARCSTAT)  
Kathmandu, 12-13 June 2014.**

The Sixth Meeting of the Heads of SAARC Statistical Organisations (SAARCSTAT) was held in Kathmandu on 12-13 June 2014 under the Chairmanship of Mr. Bikash Bista, Director-General, Central Bureau of Statistics, Government of Nepal with Agriculture and Agricultural Statistics as its Theme. The previous five Meetings of SAARCSTAT were held as per details given below:

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Venue and Dates</b>
First	Kolkata, 26-27 May 2005
Second	Dhaka, 17 April 2008
Third	Paro, Bhutan, 18-19 November 2010
Fourth	Islamabad, 24-25 October 2011
Fifth	Maldives, 4-5 November 2012

The Hon'ble Vice Chairman of National Planning Commission of Nepal, Prof. Govind Raj Pokhrel inaugurated the Sixth Meeting of SAARCSTAT and officially **launched the SAARCSTAT Web Portal** which may be accessed at [www.saarcstat.org](http://www.saarcstat.org) for all information relating to statistical matters. In his inaugural address, he emphasised the importance of accurate statistical data based on which scarce resources available with the Member Governments are allocated for developmental projects. He appreciated the work of National Statistical Organisations of all SAARC Member Governments which produce dependable statistical data, facts and figures which encourage foreign direct investments in the countries. He, therefore, emphasized that collaboration among National Statistical Organisations of Member States is very important in order to learn from one another and follow the best practices being implemented in other countries.

The SAARCSTAT Web Portal has been designed by Pakistan as the Coordinator of SAARCSTAT Technical Sub-Group on Web Portal in consultation with Dr. S.K. Nath, Lead Consultant for the Web Portal. The financial and technical assistance for this was provided by Asian Development Bank. In order to ensure that the Web Portal continues to remain a useful platform for latest statistical information of SAARC Member Countries, for its maintenance and continuous updating of its contents, the Meeting recommended as follows:

- i. Pakistan will continue to host the Web Portal and provide all required hardware and manpower for its smooth running;
- ii. Member States will designate dedicated Focal Point(s) to update the contents directly on the website through username and passwords to be provided by Pakistan. The contact details (tel/cell/fax/e-mail) of such Focal Points will be circulated through the SAARC Secretariat **by 31 July 2014**;

- iii. The Focal Point (s) will also be responsible for providing data by e-mail to Pakistan and for coordinating all work pertaining to updating the contents on the website concerning their country;
- iv. More than one Focal Point may be designated by the Member States to cover and update data in respect of various sectors of the economy;
- v. Usernames and Passwords will be provided by Pakistan direct to the designated Focal Points;
- vi. Uniformity and consistency of data provided on Web Portal and other SAARCSTAT publications should be maintained;
- vii. SAARC Secretariat may approach Asian Development Bank to continue to provide financial and technical support for maintenance and updating of the Web Portal; and
- viii. All SAARC related Web Portals should be connected with SAARCSTAT Web Portal or share hyperlinks on one another.

The representatives of the Secretariat of PARIS21 (Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century), based in the OECD Secretariat, Paris, were invited to make a presentation on their activities in strengthening the statistical systems of various countries. PARIS21 is a global partnership of national, regional and international statistics experts and policy makers seeking to improve evidence based decision making in developing countries. The Meeting felt that it would be useful for SAARC to collaborate with PARIS21 for development of a SAARC Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (SAARC RSDS).

The Meeting reviewed the progress in SAARC Statistical Yearbook; Capacity Building; Informal Sector; Catalogue of Statistical Publications; Directory of Statistical Experts; System of National Accounts (SNA); Leaflet “SAARC in Figures ”; and Manual of Statistical Systems of Member States. The Meeting noted with appreciation that (i) Bangladesh as the Coordinating Country for SAARC Statistical Yearbook has brought out the updated version of SAARC Statistical Yearbook 2012; (b) Nepal as Coordinating Country has brought out the Leaflet “SAARC-in-Figures 2014”; (c) Maldives has brought out updated Directory of Statistical Experts and Catalogue of Statistical Publications; and (d) One-week Training Programme on Data Editing, Analysis and Processing (New Delhi, 10-14 December 2012); and Training Programme on Wholesale/Producer Price Index & Index of Industrial Production (New Delhi, 3 - 7 February 2014) were organized by India; and one-week Training Course on Labour Market Analysis through Labour Force Statistics (Islamabad, 24 February – 1 March 2014) was organized by Pakistan.

The Meeting also noted that Training Programme on Health and Demographic Statistics and Workshop on Use of Models in Crop Yield Estimation are expected to be held in India; and Workshop on Updating the SAARCSTAT Website is expected to be held in Islamabad.

The Seventh Meeting of SAARCSTAT is expected to be held in Sri Lanka in the first quarter of 2015.