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SECRETARY'S CIRCULAR NO. 87/29

To: Members of the Executive Board

From: The Secretary

Subject: Report on IMF-World Bank Regional Seminar on Local  
Government Statistics held in Bangkok, Thailand

Attached for the information of the Executive Directors is a report on the IMF-World Bank regional seminar on local government statistics held in Bangkok, Thailand from January 19 to 23, 1987.

Att: (1)

Other Distribution:  
Department Heads

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

Report on IMF-World Bank Regional Seminar on Local  
Government Statistics held in Bangkok, Thailand 1/

January 19-23, 1987

Prepared by the Bureau of Statistics

(In Consultation with the IMF Institute)

Approved by Werner Dannemann and Gérard M. Teyssier

March 26, 1987

Introduction

As a part of the joint Fund-Bank program for the compilation of statistics on local government, a regional seminar on local government statistics for 15 Asian countries was conducted in Bangkok, Thailand, during January 19-23, 1987 under the joint auspices of the Fund and the World Bank. The seminar was conducted by a Fund mission consisting of Messrs. Levin and Ortiz of the Bureau of Statistics and one consultant, Mr. Hill of the U.S. Department of Commerce, with the participation of Mr. Blazic-Metzner of the World Bank. Participants included 30 officials from 15 countries, the Asian Development Bank, and the United Nations Economic and Social Council for Asia and the Pacific. The Bank of Thailand provided valuable assistance both at the preparatory stage and during the seminar.

Participants, who were generally officials involved in either the compilation of statistics on local governments or in their use, came from Bangladesh, Burma, the People's Republic of China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Viet Nam (see Appendix I for list of participants). A large group of Thai participants was included, as Thai authorities took the occasion to initiate a coordinated effort for the improvement of local government statistics with representation of all agencies involved. Air fare and per diem were paid for one participant from each country. To avoid daily transportation problems, participants were housed in a single hotel, where the seminar sessions and group lunches were held.

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1/ The seminar was conducted as part of the Fund's external training program coordinated by the IMF Institute.

### Materials Used

All basic documentation for the seminar was prepared, with the assistance of the consultant, by the Government Finance Division of the Bureau of Statistics, sent to Thailand in advance, and distributed at the beginning of the seminar (see Appendix II for list of materials). Among these materials were A Manual on Government Finance Statistics and an extract from the 1986 Government Finance Statistics Yearbook covering the world tables and the presentations for countries attending the seminar. Five case studies were distributed sequentially as needed during the seminar. Participants were requested to complete in advance of the seminar an extensive questionnaire on local government statistics in their country, and responses were subsequently summarized for distribution to participants during the seminar.

### Organization of the Seminar

Following an opening lecture on the Fund's government finance statistics system and its application to local governments, the seminar was organized around five case studies covering successive stages in the process of establishing a program for the collection of statistics on local government operations (see Appendix III for the seminar program).

All case studies were based on a description and narrative of a hypothetical country Z, where a sequence of events in the establishment of a system for compilation of local government statistics posed a series of issues participants were called upon to resolve, first for country Z, then for their own countries, and finally, with a generally applicable statement of principles.

Each case study was introduced by a brief lecture by a member of the staff team, after which participants separated into six balanced working groups of about five persons each. Following working group discussions leading to consensus on questions posed in the case study, participants serving in turn as group coordinators reported each group's findings and recommendations to reassembled plenary sessions. A committee composed of the coordinators met early on the morning following completion of each case study to prepare written conclusions on the issues covered, which were then typed and distributed to participants.

The case studies were supplemented by participants' presentations to plenary sessions on the structure of local government and data collection procedures in their countries. In addition, staff team members met with individual country delegations to discuss possible improvements in the collection of local government data and reporting to the Fund.

At the conclusion of the seminar, participants prepared a document containing the conclusions and recommendations emerging from the week of discussions for transmittal to the governments of participating countries. A summary is shown in Appendix IV.

#### Other Activities

The Fund and World Bank hosted a reception for participants and Thai officials on Monday evening and provided a city tour and river trip on Wednesday afternoon. The Bank of Thailand invited participants to a dinner on Thursday evening.

#### Conclusion

As an integral part of the overall effort to improve the compilation of local government statistics, the regional seminar appears to have played an important role in calling attention to the need and generating active consideration of the means by which improved collection may be carried out. Contributing to the seminar's success were: (1) exclusive concentration on the subject as the focus of the meeting; (2) the series of stimulating case studies which held participants' attention and moved discussion from stage to stage of the compilation process; (3) the working group format, which fostered cooperation and discussion with peers from other countries in reaching applicable solutions on the basis of varied country experience; (4) participants' enhanced readiness resulting from prior completion of the country questionnaire and preparation of the oral presentation on each country; (5) participants' intensive involvement resulting from the small working groups, oral presentations, and one-on-one meetings with seminar staff; (6) the favorable physical and social setting, resulting from residence and seminar sessions held in the same hotel, group lunches, the Fund-Bank reception, the Bank of Thailand dinner, and the mid-week outing; and (7) the outstanding preparatory and administrative assistance provided by the Bank of Thailand. If the seminar is to have a lasting effect, however, in raising the level of available local government data in the region to a desirable standard, concerted follow-up will be necessary, to sustain participants' interest and encourage persistence toward these objectives in the context of competing national needs. Communication to participants of information on follow-up actions in other participating countries, therefore, is planned as a means of carrying forward the seminar's good effects.

Seminar on Local Government Finance Statistics  
Bangkok, Thailand

(January 19-23, 1987)

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Seminar on Local Government Finance Statistics  
Bangkok, Thailand

(January 19-23, 1987)

Documentation for Participants

1. A Manual on Government Finance Statistics
2. 1986 Government Finance Statistics Yearbook Pamphlet  
  
(Containing front matter, world tables, and presentations of individual country pages for Bangladesh, Burma, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand)
3. Five Case Studies
  - Case Study 1. Uses of Data
  - Case Study 2. Formulating the Questionnaire
  - Case Study 3. Sampling
  - Case Study 4. Collecting Data
  - Case Study 5. Processing Data
4. Three tables containing a summary of questionnaire responses for countries attending Asian Seminar on Local Government Finance Statistics

Seminar on Local Government Finance Statistics

Bangkok, Thailand

January 19-23, 1987

Agenda

Monday, January 19

9:00-9:30 Welcome and Introduction  
9:30-12:00 The Government Finance Statistics System  
12:00-2:00 Lunch  
2:00-5:00 Case Study 1, Uses of Data

Tuesday, January 20

9:00-12:00 Case Study 2, Formulating the Questionnaire  
12:00-2:00 Lunch  
2:00-2:30 Case Study 2 (continued)  
2:30-5:00 Country Presentations

Thailand	Pakistan
Philippines	Bangladesh
Nepal	Burma
India	

Wednesday, January 21

9:00-12:00 Case Study 3, Sampling  
12:00-2:00 Lunch  
Afternoon City Tour and River Trip

Thursday, January 22

9:00-12:00 Case Study 4, Collecting Data  
12:00-2:00 Lunch  
2:00-5:00 Country Presentations

Indonesia	China
Malaysia	Viet Nam
Korea	Fiji
Papua New Guinea	Sri Lanka

Friday, January 23

9:00-12:00 Case Study 5, Processing Data  
12:00-2:00 Lunch  
2:00-5:00 General Recommendations and Conclusions

Notes: - There will be coffee breaks each day at 10:30 and 3:30.

- IMF staff discussions with participants from individual countries will be scheduled for 30 minutes each on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings beginning at 5:00 p.m. as follows:

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Monday	5:00 - 5:30	Thailand	Bangladesh	India
Tuesday	5:00 - 5:30	Burma	Fiji	Indonesia
	5:30 - 6:00	Korea	Nepal	Malaysia
	6:00 - 6:30	Pakistan	Philippines	Papua New Guinea
Thursday	5:00 - 5:30	China	Sri Lanka	Viet Nam

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Summary of Participants' Conclusions and Recommendations

The participants' conclusions and recommendations stressed the importance of improved local government finance statistics for effective, coordinated application of scarce government resources and for the evaluation of overall government impact on the economy. They recommended that central governments play a leading role in organizing collection procedures, initially on an annual basis, using modified IMF questionnaires, employing sampling procedures to overcome cost and time constraints, and providing periodic training for financial managers of local bodies.

The Fund and World Bank were requested to continue their support for these activities including technical assistance. The Fund and World Bank were requested to bring to the attention of national authorities the seminar's conclusions and recommendations, stressing the importance attached to improving local government statistics.