

STATISTICS IN GOVERNMENT AND IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

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The proposed objective of this invited session was to find out the implications for teaching in the training of government statisticians. The session was divided into three blocks: two, of thirty minutes, under 8.A; the third block under 8.B was divided into three parts of twenty minutes each.

The first block included a contribution from such a large and complex country as India, which generally speaking may be considered as a developing country but at the same time is very much developed in statistics, with an impact over the whole world.

The second block included France which is the only European country where government statisticians are receiving their training in a School of Statistics. The influence of the French system is very important not only in Europe but also in other continents.

The third block covered two very different aspects. One was the teaching of Statistics included in the training programme of the Spanish National Statistical Institute for the Latin American and Caribbean countries. The core of this programme consists in two formal courses, one on Sampling with applications and another on National Accounts.

In addition to the main courses, seminars for specific topics were organized. Missions of experts and regional courses have also been established. Since its beginning, more than two hundred fifty statisticians from twenty countries of that region have attended the programme.

With respect to the rest of this block, I should mention the creation, under the Spanish Constitution, of the State of the Autonomies in which a distinction is made between the competences of the Central Government and the Autonomies' Government in the field of statistics. The approaches initiated in the training of statisticians by two Autonomous Government are presented.

The session produced an interesting discussion that contributed to the clarification of the problem of how and from whom the governments statisticians should receive the knowledge that they really need. Some light was thrown on aspects such as the functions of government statisticians and consequently the formation they need; the balance between theory and practice as far as teaching is concerned; the role of the Administration and the links of statistics with other fields such as economy, demography, and computers.

From the discussion, some conclusions were obtained about the points mentioned, as well as concrete programmes, curricula, number of courses and content, etc.

For the true impact, of course we will need to wait until ICOTS III.