

National Statistical Society of China and Our Perspective Toward Asian Statistical Forum

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The National Statistical Society of China (NSSC) was founded in 1979 and became an affiliate organization of the ISI at its 42 Session in the same year. As an academic and non-profit-making organization consisting of collective and individual members, NSSC aims at improving the science of statistics and promoting the reform and development of statistical work through studies and researches on theoretical, methodological and practical issues in statistics. NSSC is willing to make its due contribution to the Asian Statistical Forum.

I. Organization

At present, NSSC has 73 branches and collective members and over 5000 individual members. The president, vice presidents, secretary general and council members are elected at its national conference of representatives, which is held every 4 years. The organizational chart is shown in the Annex.

II. Major Functions

Major functions of NSSC include the following:

- 1) To organize, provide guidance and promote active participation of members in academic activities in the field of statistics;
- 2) To sum up, exchange and disseminate results of statistical researches and experience on statistical work;
- 3) To conduct seminars and symposiums on statistics and to organize compilation or translation of statistical literature and to recommend for their publication;
- 4) To promote the awareness of knowledge on statistics and to organize statistical training;
- 5) To conduct investigations and studies on problems in statistical work, to make proposals for improvement and to provide statistical consultation;
- 6) To promote international academic exchange in statistics, and to study and introduce from abroad new research results in statistical science and new development in statistical work;
- 7) To assess and present awards to institutions or individuals who have made important academic contribution to the development of statistics; and
- 8) To engage in other activities related with the objectives of the Society.

III. Important Activities

1) Organization of domestic academic exchanges

a) “National Symposium on Statistical Science”. Started in 1979, this biannual symposium has been in sessions for over 20 years. The symposium always tries to focus on key issues in the reform of Chinese statistical system and in the development of statistical science. Participated mainly by well-known statisticians and experts, this symposium has become the most important academic gathering of the statistical community in China.

b) “National Seminar for Young Statisticians”. As an important forum for young statisticians, seven seminars have been held (also biannually) so far. Participants to the seminar are mainly statisticians aged 45 or below who have made noted academic contribution in statistics.

c) Other statistical academic exchanges in diversified forms. NSSC frequently organizes lectures and seminars of various forms. Its local or subject branches also host academic exchanges that best suit their needs and features. While promoting the academic exchanges, such activities also serve as useful channel for continued communications among members of the societies.

d) Academic exchanges with statisticians from Hong Kong and Taiwan of China. This is achieved through joint seminars that involve participation of statisticians from the mainland, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

2) Publication of statistical journals

Statistical Research, the academic journal by the NSSC, highlights the most recent research results in the science of statistics and plays an important role in promoting the development of statistics. Collection of best research papers is also published on a regular basis.

3) Assessing and presenting rewards on excellent research results

Established in 1991 by the National Bureau of Statistics of China the “National Award for Excellent Results in Statistical Research” is the highest academic award in China at present in the field of statistics. NSSC is responsible for assessing candidates and presenting this biannual award which enjoys high reputation in the statistical community in China. Five rounds of assessment have been conducted so far.

4) International academic exchanges

a) Participation in international conferences on statistics. Members of NSSC participated in all 11 sessions of the International Statistical Institute since 1979 when NSSC became the affiliated organization of ISI. In 1995, the 50th Session of the ISI was held in Beijing, China, and NSSC made its due contribution to the international exchanges and development of statistics in the world by its deep involvement in the preparation of the Session. The Session also provided an opportunity to strengthen relations and contacts with international organizations.

b) Strengthening bilateral statistical exchanges. Over the past 2 decades, NSSC has sent delegations to visit and share experience with national statistical offices or societies of over 20 countries. Noted statisticians and experts from abroad were also invited to present lectures or make study tours in China. NSSC collaborates with the Japan Statistical Association in organizing “Sino-Japan Symposium on Statistics”. With the joint efforts from both sides, 7 such symposiums have been conducted so far.

IV. Proposals on the “Asian Statistical Forum”

The world today is undertaking profound changes. Facing with the challenges from the economic globalization, Asian countries have to strengthen regional cooperation. The establishment of a multi-level regional cooperation mechanism that encompasses both governments and NGOs in different subject areas is important to the common development of the whole Asian region. As a regional non-governmental organization, the Asian Statistical Forum could serve as bridge to link government statistical agencies, non-government statistical institutions, corporations and individual statisticians in the region, and as an important forum for exchanges, cooperation, sharing of information, training of human resources and strengthening of friendship. In light of this consideration, we have the following proposals for the future development of the Asian Statistical Forum:

1) Key functions of the Forum

The Forum should serve as:

- a) an important place for statisticians in Asia to present and share new results in statistical research,
- b) an important channel for Asian countries to conduct effective cooperation in statistics,
- c) an important network for sharing statistical information among Asian countries,
- d) a center for high-level training in statistics, especially for promising young statisticians.

2) Institutional development of the Forum

In order to bring the functions of the Forum into full play, efforts should be made to accelerate its institutional development for the efficient operation of the Forum:

- a) A permanent office should be set up to take care of the routine work of the Forum, which include, among other things, communicating and coordinating among its members, and facilitating preparations by the host country for the conference of the Forum.
- b) Key activities of the Forum should be the regular conferences. Each conference should focus on 1 - 2 clearly defined themes of common interest that are decided through a process of multilateral discussions.
- c) The Forum should have its official publication to present activities of the Forum and to disseminate research results. The publication could be of *ad hoc* nature at its beginning, and gradually develop into a regular publication when it becomes mature.
- d) A special Forum Prize of Honor could be established as an Asian award in statistics, to be presented to the outstanding persons who have made significant contribution to promoting academic statistics in Asia. The prize should be awarded regularly to several best candidates.

3) Seeking for solutions to issues in statistical development in Asia with a realistic view

Asian countries are characterized by the diversity in the level of social and economic development, and in the statistical survey practice and research capacities as well. However, we are facing many common problems such as environment statistics, financial and banking statistics, the role of official statistics in meeting the diversified needs of the society, improvement in the quality of statistical data, application of sampling in social/economic surveys, etc. Some issues have special regional implications like the financial statistics. The Asian financial crisis in 1997 has demonstrated how closely the Asian economies are inter-related. The Forum could pool together statisticians to study problems met in Asian countries, to promote the exchange and cooperation among Asian statisticians and to contribute to the sustained prosperity of the Asian economy.

4) Development of the website of the Forum by using modern IT technology

Internet has become an important source of information. The forum should establish its own website to provide service to a wide range of professional statisticians. The proposed permanent office of the Forum could take care of the establishment and maintenance of the website, and members could get access to the website to share information.

5) Exchange opportunities for young statisticians

Young statisticians are the future of statistical science. Effort should be made to provide more assistance to young statisticians by offering opportunities to them for international exchange programs so that they can keep abreast of the recent development of both theoretical and applied statistics and develop outstanding skills for statistics.

6) Financial support to the Forum

Members should provide financial support to the Forum for its future development. At the same time,

the Forum, through its reputation and publicity, should seek support from governments, international organizations, corporations and other institutions.

As a member of the Asian region, China has maintained good momentum in social and economic development over the past years. On the other hand, higher requirement for statistics and new issues were brought about by such development. We hope to seek solutions to these problems through increased international exchanges. We hope the Forum could take a long-term view in exploring the trend of change and development of statistics in Asia on basis of extensive and in-depth exchange program, and make its due contribution to improving the level of statistics in the Asian region and to realizing the overall social, economic and environment development. NSSC and Chinese statisticians are willing to support and participate in the development of the Asian Statistical Forum.

National Statistical Society of China

