
Meeting of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Finance Statistics
IMF Headquarters, Washington, D.C.
April 3-4, 2008

World Bank Occasional Report on Activities Relating to External Debt Statistics
March 2007-March 2008

Prepared by The World Bank

World Bank Occasional Report on Activities Relating to External Debt Statistics

I. Data and Publications

Global Development Finance 2008. The *Global Development Finance 2008* country and summary data were disseminated through an online advance release in January. Country tables include comprehensive data on external debt stocks and flows for 134 countries that report debt under the World Bank Debtor Reporting System. Data by regions and income groups are also available. The online database presents historical time series indicators (country-level) from 1970 to 2006. The book and CD-ROM, with regional estimates for 2007, will be available in June 2008.

Little Book of External Debt 2008. The ‘Little Book’ is a pocket version of the GDF, and it was first introduced in 2006. It provides a quick reference for users interested in external debt stocks and flows, major economic aggregates, key debt ratios, and the currency composition of long-term debt for all countries reporting through the DRS. It contains statistical tables for 134 countries as well as summary tables for regional and income groups.

Quarterly External Debt Database. The Quarterly External Debt (QEDS) database, jointly developed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, brings together detailed external debt data of countries that subscribe to the IMF’s Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) and a selected number of countries that participate in the IMF’s General Data Dissemination System (GDDS). The benefit of bringing together comparable external debt data is to facilitate macroeconomic analysis and cross-country data comparison.

In December 2005, selected non-SDDS subscribers were invited to join the Quarterly External Debt Database. The eventual goal is to extend participation to all countries where external debt data can be disseminated according to the SDDS requirements.

In February 2008, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank released the new enhanced version of the Quarterly External Debt Statistics (QEDS), which provides data of low income countries that subscribe to the General Data Dissemination System. These Low Income Countries report a simplified quarterly set of data focusing on the external debt of the public sector. Up to today, fourteen countries have accepted the invitation, and nine of them have already started providing the requested data.

The Quarterly External Debt Database, which is maintained by the World Bank, can be accessed through the Bank’s web site at: <http://www.worldbank.org/qeds>. The website displays two separate headings: “SDDS/QEDS,” and “GDDS/QEDS.”

Joint External Debt Hub. The World Bank has actively contributed to the development and maintenance of the Joint External Debt Hub. The JEDH provides a one-stop source of comprehensive external debt statistics compiled from international creditor/market sources and

national debtor sources, namely QEDS (see above). It replaced the Joint BIS-IMF-OECD-World Bank External Debt tables and expanded the available range of information.

The JEDH uses the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) standards, which the World Bank has been involved in advancing, and the World Bank's latest generation of web service, the Development Data Platform.

The Joint External Debt Hub can be currently accessed through the Bank's web site at: <http://www.jedh.org>.

II. New Initiatives

The DeMPA is a methodology for assessing public debt management performance through a comprehensive set of performance indicators spanning the full range of government debt management functions. It is based on the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) methodology for public financial management and represents an internationally recognized methodology for assessing debt management performance. It is a set of 15 performance indicators across 35 dimensions covering six core areas: governance and strategy development; coordination with macroeconomic policies; borrowing and related financing activities; cash flow forecasting and cash balance management; operational risk management; and debt records and reporting.

The DeMPA highlights strengths and weaknesses in government debt management practices in the respective country. A DeMPA assessment report is useful in: (i) guiding the design of actionable reform programs, (ii) facilitating the monitoring of performance over time, and (iii) enhancing donor harmonization based on common understanding of priorities.

DeMPA has been field-tested in five low-income countries (The Gambia, Malawi, Nicaragua, Guyana, and Albania). The indicators have been applied in 7 LICs as of March 2008 – Togo, Zambia, Bangladesh, Sao Tome and Principe, Central African Republic, Mozambique and Ghana. DeMPA Assessment reports have been used in Albania and Bangladesh to facilitate the design of reform plans. Several assessments are planned for FY 2008.