ABSTRACT. Sub-national social reporting is presented as playing an active but supporting role in a built-in social policy and social planning decision-making framework. The relationship of such a framework to the political process and its interaction with the national level is noted. The effective use of a social reporting network on the sub-national level implies that the outputs of such a network are continuous, and is available at decision points of the social planning and social policy process. The relationship between various data sources and the policy, planning and programming processes is illustrated.

Even in an ideal situation, sub-national social reporting plays only an auxiliary role in social policy formation and social planning. Sub-national social reporting is used in an important supporting role in policy and planning decisions made on the basis of political judgements and/or national values. This limited role of sub-national social reporting must be recognized if it is to be used effectively.

Sub-national social reporting functions in three ways:
1. It reports on the consequences of decisions already made — It demonstrates that what is true for the country may not be true for a sub-national area. Since, problems start somewhere, it can provide indications of future national trends. It may even provide an indication as to the success or failure of present national policies.
2. It supports or does not support a decision under consideration — It provides data so that the national planner may more objectively set priorities in the sub-national area.
3. It presents alternative policy formulations or plans to the decision maker. By consistently assigning sub-national social reporting this function, the planner demonstrates that social reporting is not a passive system, but an active one, which provides the policy maker with alternatives not merely on request, but as an inherent part of the system.

An important factor in the relationship between sub-national social reporting to social policy formation and social planning is that sub-national social reporting does not make a decision as to which policy is best or which plan...
should be carried out. It does not give us a value judgement. Social policy formulation and social planning are inherently based on some presupposed judgement on what is best. This dichotomy between the two systems may lead to indecision on the one hand or outright abuse on the other.

An example of how such a system worked was demonstrated in Israel when a decision was made to choose thirty neighborhoods to be included in an urban renewal project. The Social Analysis Unit of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, through the use of sub-national social reporting network which included data on all neighborhoods in Israel, chose 45 neighborhoods to be included for consideration for urban renewal by an interministerial committee. The members of the committee chose 25 neighborhoods from the submitted list; another five neighborhoods from the numerous lists each committee member submitted (these five neighborhoods were added, partly on the basis of data of the sub-national social reporting network); and added for future consideration another five neighborhoods which included a few from the original list (neighborhoods not politically viable, but considered as a result of the objective data), and a few from the committee members lists (neighborhoods politically viable, but not included among the first thirty for objective reasons).

Another example: a town council with a small population, characterized by high welfare rates, low education levels, etc. wanted to increase its population at a rapid rate. On the one hand, experience demonstrated that small towns will not grow unless the growth is rapid. It was the large towns (over 25 000 population) that attracted population, industry and services (Berler, 1970). On the other hand, juvenile delinquency in Israel was found to be related to migration rates (Berman, 1981). When internal migration for small towns (under 15 000 population) were above certain rates juvenile delinquency soon followed. The planners in the town found itself in a conflict. If it increased its population quickly social problems related to juvenile delinquency and social breakdown would follow. If it did not increase its population at a rapid rate the small town would not grow and receive the social benefits of growth. The sub-national social reporting network provided the data which made the planners aware of the problem, but could not provide the answer to the planning problem. The ultimate decision had to be based on a value system arrived at by each town council.

A sub-national social reporting network to be complete must include all data regarding the specific social area — economic, fiscal, social and physical