



SPECIAL FOCUS:

- 57th Session of the International Statistical Institute (ISI), Durban 2009, p47
- Africa Symposium on Statistical Development (ASSD), Accra 2007, p49



Staff members of the African Centre for Statistics in front of the United Nations Conference Centre, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

African Statistical Newsletter

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

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ATTENTION PARTICULIÈRE:

- 57eme Session de l'institut statistique international (ISI), Durban 2009, p47
- Symposium Africain sur le développement de la statistique (ASSD), Accra 2007, p49



Le personnel du Centre africain pour la Statistique (CAS) en face du Centre de Conférence des Nations Unies, Addis Abeba, Éthiopie

Bulletin d'information Statistique africain

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FROM THE DIRECTOR, ACS

Ben Kiregyera (PhD),
Director, ACS



During its hey days, the Statistics Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) used to publish a Statistical Newsletter. The last newsletter was published in 1995. As part of a major exercise to restructure and reposition UNECA to serve Africa better, knowledge

management and statistics were identified as special programme priorities of the organization. The African Center for Statistics (ACS) was established in August 2006 to implement UNECA's statistical programme. I am happy to inform you that Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, the Executive Secretary of UNECA, is championing statistics at UNECA and in important fora such as Councils of Ministers. It is with a heavy sense of duty that the Centre is reviving this newsletter.

National Statistical Systems (NSSs) in Africa are challenged to get familiar with and provide adequate support to national, regional and international development processes that focus on achievement of development outcomes/results. These NSSs are at different stages of statistical development and are using different approaches and innovations to build statistical capacity and to meet the ever-increasing demand for statistical data and information. Many interesting statistical activities are taking place in countries. The same goes for regional economic communities (RECs) in different parts of Africa, which aim to foster economic integration and regional development. Unfortunately, there has been no broad forum for sharing knowledge, practical experiences and best practice on the said activities for purposes of peer learning. This newsletter aims to provide such a forum to countries, RECs and development partners to highlight various statistical activities taking place in the African region. It will also provide an avenue for networking among statisticians in and beyond Africa.

It is important to stress that this newsletter in no way aims to replace the African Statistical Journal (a refereed journal), which was launched in 2005 to promote the understanding of statistical development in Africa. The African Development Bank funds the printing and distribution of the journal, and UNECA is represented on the Editorial

Board of the journal. Rather, the newsletter aims to supplement the efforts of the journal to share knowledge and information about statistical methodologies and their application to solve practical problems in Africa.

The newsletter will be published on a quarterly basis. It will cover all activities deemed to be of interest to the African statistical community, ranging from statistical advocacy to institutional development including capacity building and technical assistance, to specific statistical activities like censuses and surveys. We, therefore, encourage statisticians in Africa to periodically write short articles (2-3 pages) for publication in the newsletter. As the dictum goes, "a little information when shared can go a long way".

This maiden issue of the newsletter has articles on Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa, Statistical Advocacy, Statistical capacity building, Statistical association, Statistical information management and new focus on statistics in Africa.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed articles for publication in this issue and the staff of the African Centre for Statistics (Members of the Editorial Team) who have worked so hard and in a short order to produce this issue. I have no doubt that you will find the newsletter informative on statistical development in Africa and related issues. Please send us articles and feedbacks so that we can improve the quality of future issues of the newsletter.

□

REFERENCE REGIONAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK (RRSF)

RRSF Coordination Secretariat

Michel Mouyelo-Katoula, ADB

Background

Following the successful design of the Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa (RRSF), major regional institutions namely the African Development Bank (AfDB), the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) have agreed that their respective statistical activities must be in line with it. This was emphasized during both the first and the second meetings on the coordination of statistical activities in Africa held in Tunis, Tunisia, in September 2006 and 2007 respectively.

During the second meeting held in Tunis, an African Statistics Coordination Committee with AfDB and UNECA as co-chair was established. The meeting also set up a Working Group on the RRSF coordination mechanisms. This Group is expected to put in place a functional structure for the coordination of the RRSF. This coordination mechanism is expected to be supported by a Secretariat based at the UNECA.

This note presents the mandate and the functions of the RRSF Coordination Secretariat. The note is presented in three parts. The first consists of this background information. The second deals with the mandate of the Secretariat while the third presents the functions and roles that the Secretariat will be undertaking to fulfill its mandate.

Mandate

The mandate of the RRSF Coordination Secretariat is to support the RRSF Coordination Committee by overseeing the smooth implementation of coordination mechanisms especially the coordination tasks as depicted in the RRSF document and re-emphasized during the first coordination meeting.

Functions

The functions of the RRSF Coordination Secretariat include:

- Ensuring the nomination of regional, sub regional and national RRSF coordinators;
- Preparing reporting formats and ensuring timely reporting by regional, sub regional, and national coordinators;
- Ensuring the development of monitoring tools including an African Statistical Development Index (ASDI);
- Ensuring the design and wide dissemination of advocacy materials around the RRSF;
- Liaising with sub-regional coordinators to receive monitoring information on their activities and support to countries;

- Undertaking supervision missions to countries and sub-regional organizations;
- Reporting on progress on framework implementation for discussion at different levels including the RRSF Coordination Committee;
- Establishing and regularly updating a web page to post information about framework implementation; and
- Convening meetings of the RRSF Coordination Committee. □

La coordination des activités statistiques en Afrique : Un pas dans la bonne direction

Dimitri Sanga (PhD), ACS, UNECA

L'Hôtel Abou Nawas de Tunis a été le théâtre de la tenue d'une réunion sur la coordination des activités statistiques sur le continent africain du 23 au 25 septembre 2007. Cette réunion a regroupé les principaux acteurs de la scène statistique continentale notamment la Banque africaine de développement (BAD), la Fondation africaine pour le renforcement des capacités (FARC), la Commission de l'Union africaine (CUA) et la Commission économique des Nations Unies pour l'Afrique (CEA). Ont aussi pris part à la réunion en tant qu'observateurs, deux représentants des pays africains : le Statisticien général du Bureau statistique de l'Afrique du Sud et le Directeur général du Bureau national de la statistique du Nigeria.

Un besoin de coordination des activités statistiques en Afrique

L'objectif principal de cette réunion convoquée conjointement par la CEA et la BAD était de mettre en place un mécanisme de coordination permettant d'atteindre plus de synergies dans la mise en œuvre des programmes d'activités statistiques des différentes organisations dans le contexte du Cadre stratégique de référence régional pour le renforcement des capacités statistiques en Afrique (CSRR). Ainsi, les participants ont-ils discuté, entre autres, les sujets suivants : le renforcement des capacités statistiques, l'échange d'information sur leurs activités respectives reliées au développement de la statistique sur le continent, les mécanismes de coordination des activités statistiques, l'harmonisation des bases de données statistiques ainsi que le renforcement des capacités des bureaux/instituts nationaux de la statistique (INS) africains afin de les rendre plus aptes à répondre aux besoins des utilisateurs dans le processus de prise de décisions et dans le suivi et la mise en œuvre des objectifs et plans de développement.

Mise en place des quelques groupes de travail

Les discussions qui ont fait suite aux présentations et propositions faites par les organisations présentes lors de la réunion ont abouti

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à la mise en place de bon nombre de groupes de travail chargés de proposer des stratégies dans la mise en œuvre des activités conjointes aux principales organisations. Ces groupes de travail ont des objectifs bien précis, des résultats à atteindre, des activités, des indicateurs ainsi que des calendriers pour les réaliser. Il s'agit notamment de 12 groupes de travail portant sur les thèmes suivants : Le cadre stratégique régional de référence pour le renforcement des capacités en Afrique (CSRR), les stratégies nationales pour le développement de la statistique (SNDS), l'appui aux pays fragiles, le programme de comparaison internationale pour l'Afrique (PCI-Afrique), le programme de formation statistique pour l'Afrique, la charte africaine de la statistique, la mesure du progrès des sociétés africaines, les associations nationales et régionales de la statistique, le programme du prix d'excellence de la statistique africaine, le comité de coordination statistique africain (CSSA), les bases de données et les publications statistiques africaines communes, et le programme statistique africain consolidé.

- Le cadre stratégique régional de référence pour le renforcement des capacités statistiques en Afrique (CSRR): Compte tenu du peu de progrès réalisés dans le cadre de la coordination des activités statistiques, dû principalement aux changements institutionnels intervenus dans les deux organisations principales, les participants à la réunion ont résolu de mettre en place un groupe de travail sur la coordination du CSRR. Ce groupe a pour objectif rendre opérationnelle la coordination du CSRR. Ainsi vise-t-il à la mise en place d'une structure opérationnelle pour la coordination du CSRR. Les tâches de ce groupe incluent la nomination des coordonnateurs régionaux, sous régionaux et nationaux ainsi que l'établissement d'un secrétariat basé à la CEA.
- Les Stratégies nationales pour le développement de la statistique: Étant donné la lenteur observée dans l'adoption et la mise en œuvre des SNDS, un groupe de travail chargé de l'accélération de leur mise en place et leur adoption a été créé sous la direction de la BAD. Ce groupe est chargé de rendre compte de l'état de l'adoption et la mise en œuvre de ces stratégies et d'assurer l'échange des bonnes pratiques en matière d'intégration des stratégies sectorielles dans le processus d'élaboration des stratégies nationales.
- L'appui aux pays fragiles : Un groupe de travail sur l'élaboration d'une stratégie et un cadre statistiques pour le renforcement des capacités statistiques des états fragiles a été constitué sous la houlette de la BAD.
- Le programme de comparaison internationale pour l'Afrique : Tout en soulignant le travail réalisé par la BAD et les pays africains dans la production des résultats du PCI-Afrique, les participants à la réunion ont émis le vœu de voir la BAD, en collaboration avec les autres organisations régionales, mettre en place une stratégie de communication visant à vulgariser l'importance des résultats du PCI-Afrique.
- Le programme de formation statistique pour l'Afrique: Étant donné l'importance que revêt la formation statistique dans la production des statistiques de qualité, il a été créé un groupe de travail sur

les ressources humaines et la formation avec pour objectif principal l'élaboration d'un programme de formation statistique pour l'Afrique sous la direction de la CEA et de la FARC.

- La charte africaine de la statistique : Les participants à la réunion ont salué l'initiative de la CUA de préparer et mettre en œuvre une charte africaine de la statistique et ont appelé la CUA à rendre opérationnelle ladite charte dans les plus brefs délais.
- La mesure et la promotion du progrès des sociétés africaines : Un groupe de travail sur la mesure et la promotion du progrès des sociétés africaines a été mis en place sous la direction de la BAD. Le travail du groupe est chargé de l'organisation tous les deux ans de forums devant rassembler des statisticiens et autres experts dans les domaines correspondants, et de mener des études connexes.
- Les associations nationales et régionales de la statistique : Les participants ont remercié le travail en cours de la FARC sur la renaissance de l'association statistique africaine. Cependant, la réunion a également noté la nécessité de rétablir des associations statistiques nationales. Un groupe de travail sur les associations statistiques en Afrique (nationale et régionale) sera à cet effet dirigé par la CEA et la FARC.
- Programme du prix d'excellence de la statistique africaine: Un groupe de travail conduit par la BAD et la CUA sera mis en place, pour promouvoir l'excellence et l'innovation dans la pratique statistique.
- Le Comité de coordination statistique africain (CSSA): Il a été convenu de créer un groupe de travail conduit par la CEA pour la préparation d'un document sur le CSSA en vue de mettre en place un mécanisme de coordination des activités statistiques en Afrique.
- Bases de données et publications statistiques africaines communes : Afin de réduire au minimum la duplication des efforts et la diffusion des données contradictoires sur les pays africains, il a été décidé de mettre en place un groupe de travail sur l'harmonisation des bases de données et des publications statistiques, menée par la BAD et la CEA.
- Programme statistique africain consolidé : Un groupe de travail sur la préparation d'un programme statistique africain consolidé sera dirigé par la BAD en vue d'une meilleure coordination et d'une synergie renforcée.

Suivi et évaluation des groupes de travail

Le suivi et l'évaluation de différents groupes de travail se fera via des rapports au Comité de coordination des activités statistiques en Afrique établi selon les recommandations du CSRR. Pour atteindre les objectifs fixés, les organisations impliquées dans le processus recourront à la mobilisation des ressources de consultation et financières nécessaires à la réalisation des activités prévues. □

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The coordination of statistical activities in Africa: A first step in the right direction

Dimitri Sanga (PhD), ACS, UNECA

The Abou Nawas Hotel in Tunis was the venue of a meeting on the coordination of statistical activities in the Africa region held from 23 to 25 September, 2007. The meeting brought together representatives of the African Development Bank (AfDB), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), as well as the Statistician General of Statistics South Africa and the Director General of the National Bureau of Statistics of Nigeria.

A need for coordination of statistical activities in Africa

The main objective of this meeting jointly convened by ECA and the AfDB was to establish mechanisms for achieving greater synergy in the implementation of statistical activities of various institutions within the Regional Reference Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa (RRSF).

The agenda included issues related to: statistical capacity building, the exchange of information on statistical activities aimed at statistical development on the continent, mechanisms of coordination of statistical activities, the harmonization of statistical data bases as well as the reinforcement of the capacities of the national statistics offices (NSO) in Africa to enable them to better meet users' needs in order to make them more relevant to development policy design and monitoring.

Establishing working groups

Discussions that followed presentations and proposals made by the organizations represented at the meeting led to establishing working groups expected to propose specific coordination strategies. These work groups have been assigned quite precise objectives, results to be delivered, activities to be implemented, progress indicators as well as relevant implementation timeframe. Twelve (12) working groups have been created under the following themes: the Regional Reference Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa (RRSF), National strategies for the development of statistics (NSDS), Support to fragile States, the International Comparison Programme for Africa (ICP-Africa), the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA), the African Statistics Charter, Measuring and Fostering Progress of African Societies, statistical associations, African Statistical Award Programme, African Statistical Coordination Committee, Joint African Statistical databases and publications, and Consolidated African Statistical programme.

- Regional Reference Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa (RRSF) - Having noted that little progress has been achieved in terms of coordination of the RRSF implementation mainly because the two coordinating institutions were

undergoing institutional reforms, participants have agreed that a working group on the setting up of the RRSF coordination mechanisms led by ECA be set up. Its objective is to operationalize the RRSF coordination through the setting up of a functional structure. The tasks of this working group include the nomination of coordinators at the regional, sub-regional and national levels as well as establishing of an RRSF coordination secretariat at ECA.

- National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) - Given the low pace in designing and implementing NSDS in African countries, the meeting decided to create a working group led by AfDB to increase the pace and rate of NSDS design and implementation in African countries. The working group is expected to follow-up and report on the status of NSDS design and implementation and to ensure the sharing of best practices on mainstreaming sectors into the NSDS design process.
- Support to fragile States: The meeting agreed to establish a working group on designing a statistical strategy and framework for supporting statistical development in fragile states. The group will be led by AfDB.
- International comparison programme for Africa (ICP-Africa) - The meeting noted with appreciation the progress made in the implementation of the ICP-Africa programme which is coordinated by AfDB. However, the meeting underscored the need for better packaging and dissemination of the results from the programme in order to optimize their policy usefulness.
- The Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA) - Recognizing the criticality of statistical training for the production of quality statistics, a working group led by ECA/ACBF was established to propose a strategic programme on human resources and training in statistics.
- The African Statistics Charter - The meeting acknowledged the initiative taken by the AUC to design and implement the African Charter on Statistics and encouraged the AUC to prepare an implementation plan for the Charter
- Measuring and Fostering Progress of African Societies - The meeting agreed to establish a working group that will prepare a forum every two years bringing together statisticians and other experts involved in analysing the dynamics of African societies and undertake related studies. The AfDB was to take the lead.
- Statistical Associations - The meeting acknowledged with appreciation the ongoing work by ACBF on the revival of the African Statistical Association. However, the meeting also noted the need to revive/create National Statistical Associations. It was therefore agreed that a working group on Statistical Associations in Africa (national and regional) led by ECA and ACBF be set up.
- African Statistical Award Programme - It was agreed that a working group on the African Statistical Award programme led by AfDB/AUC be set up, to promote excellence and innovation in statistical practice.
- African Statistical Coordination Committee - It was agreed that a working group on the finalization of a paper on ASCC led by

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ECA be set up to put in place mechanism for the coordination of statistical activities in Africa

- Joint African Statistical databases and publications - In order to minimize duplication of effort and dissemination of conflicting data on African countries, it was agreed that a working group on databases and joint statistical publications led by AfDB/ECA be set up to harmonize regional statistical databases and publications.
- Consolidated African Statistical programme - It was agreed that a working group on the preparation of African statistical programme led by AfDB be set up, to achieve better coordination and synergy.

Follow up and reporting

The Meeting agreed that all working groups above should report to the African Statistical Coordination Committee (ASCC) on progress made according to the RSFF recommendations. To achieve the set objectives, the principals in this coordination arrangement will mobilize necessary consultancy and financial resources to undertake identified activities. □

Conférence sur la Coordination de l'assistance en Afrique francophone dans le domaine de la statistique

Bakary Dosso, ACS, UNECA

Une Conférence consacrée à la coordination de l'assistance en Afrique francophone dans le domaine de la statistique, a réuni dix huit pays africains et trente organisations nationales, sous-régionales, régionales et internationales le 31 octobre 2007 à Bamako (Mali), sous la présidence de Monsieur Ousmane MATAR BREME, Ministre de l'Economie et du Plan de la République du Tchad, Président du Conseil des Ministres d'AFRISTAT.

La conférence se situant dans la perspective de la mise en œuvre de la déclaration de Paris sur l'efficacité de l'aide, s'est accordée sur l'idée que les stratégies de développement et en particulier celles relatives à l'impulsion de la croissance et à la réduction de la pauvreté, doivent être accompagnées de la mise en place d'un appareil statistique performant et efficace permettant le suivi et évaluation des politiques mises en œuvre.

Les présentations et les discussions larges et constructives qui ont eu lieu au cours de la rencontre ont abouti à des orientations formulées en quatre points ci-après.

- i. le renforcement de la coordination et la programmation des activités statistiques;
- ii. le développement des programmes statistiques concertés et adaptés aux stratégies nationales ;
- iii. l'amélioration de l'efficacité de l'assistance technique; et
- iv. l'amélioration du suivi du développement statistique en Afrique

tel que recommandée par le Cadre stratégique régional de référence pour le renforcement des capacités statistiques en Afrique (CSRR)

Les conclusions de la réunion dorénavant reconnue sur le nom de «Déclaration de Bamako sur la coordination de l'assistance en Afrique francophone dans le domaine de la statistique », ont abouti aux recommandations suivantes :

1. à AFRISTAT :
 - i. de mettre en place, en collaboration avec PARIS21, un mécanisme de suivi de l'utilisation de l'assistance des partenaires dans la mise en œuvre des stratégies nationales de développement de la statistique reposant sur la collecte d'informations auprès des partenaires et des systèmes statistiques nationaux des Etats bénéficiaires ;
 - ii. d'assurer la diffusion des informations collectées auprès des partenaires et notamment de leurs représentants dans les Etats ;
2. aux systèmes statistiques nationaux des Etats bénéficiaires : de s'impliquer auprès d'AFRISTAT pour alimenter le mécanisme à mettre en place en fournissant des informations sur l'assistance reçue des partenaires ;
3. aux partenaires techniques et financiers : de donner instruction à leurs représentants dans les Etats de tenir compte de ces informations et plus généralement des procédures et des contraintes des pays bénéficiaires dans la gestion de leurs appuis aux stratégies nationales de développement de la statistique, pour une mise en œuvre concrète de la Déclaration de Paris ;
4. d'organiser chaque année, sous l'égide d'AFRISTAT, une conférence analogue pour faire le point sur l'avancement de la mise en œuvre des stratégies nationales de développement de la statistique dans chaque pays bénéficiaire et étudier les problèmes de coordination et d'adéquation des appuis aux systèmes statistiques des pays. (source: <http://www.afristat.org>) □

Mozambique Population and Housing Census, 2007

João Dias Loureiro, Presidente, Instituto Nacional de Estatística



Mozambique has conducted from 1st to 15th August 2007 its Third Population and Housing Census since its independence in 1975. The past census was held in 1997.

The census cartography which started in 2005 was among the key elements of the preparatory activities. The main objective of the census cartography was to define the enumeration areas (Eas) in the whole country. The EA correspond to the geographical space to be covered by an enumerator during the data collection period.

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Also, it is important to mention the administrative organization of the preparatory phase of the census which involved the creation of executive organs at the national, sub-national and local levels, since the census execution had been decentralized.

At national level, was established the Census Central Unity, composed by eight commissions for, respectively: administration and finances; cartography; methodology and analysis; training; field operations; data processing; census security; and information and publicity. Also set up was a Coordination Committee comprising various ministers and headed by the Prime Minister.

At provincial level there was a Provincial Census Office and a Census Provincial Committee, composed of various provincial Directors and headed by the provincial Governor.

At district and local levels, there were only executive census offices.

The data collection for the Population and Housing Census occurred from 1st to 15th August 2007. However, to assure the simultaneity of the census, a time reference for the Mozambique Census was established as 1st August 2007 (at zero hours).

For the collection of information, enumerators were assigned to different enumeration areas. They covered all the households and individuals in the enumeration area during the fifteen days and also registered characteristics of all the houses in that area, according to the items of the questionnaire.

The table below shows the number of persons involved in the census operation and their respective roles:

Role Performed and Number	
Members of the Coordination Committee	13
Members of Census Central Unity	178
Members of Provincial Census Committee	110
Members of Provincial Census Office	110
Members of District Census Office	1,184
Members of Census Office of the Administrative Post	1,242
Members of Local Census Office	2,786
Supervisors of field work	16,906
Enumerators (calculated from number of EAs plus 5%)	48,953
Trainers (for three phases of training)	4,281
Local guiders for enumerators	48,953
Grand Total	124,716

Population and Housing Particulars

Sex and age	Housing materials used
Civil Status	Water and sanitation
Religion	Source of Energy
Civil registration	Durable goods
Place of Birth and nationality	Access to and use of Computers
Disability	Access to and use of Internet
Language	
Literacy	
School attendance	
Educational attainment	
Economic activities (occupations and industries)	
Fertility Infant and maternal mortality	

The census questionnaire was designed to obtain, among others, information related to:

Thirty days after the data collection, on 16th September 2007, the Post Enumeration Survey (PES) was launched and it was carried out until 30 September. The main objective of the PES was to assess the degree of coverage during the census enumeration. The results of PES will provide information on the characteristics of persons who may have been missed during the census enumeration. The PES was conducted by 340 enumerators in 340 EAs at the national level. The results of the PES will be representative at national level, urban and rural areas at the national level, and also at the provincial level.

The dissemination of the preliminary results is expected to be in November 2007. The preliminary results will represent the total national population by sex and also the number of houses and households at the national and sub-national level. This information will be based on the field information filled by the enumerators in the daily summary forms.

Coders for the census questionnaire have been recruited and the process of coding is planned to last almost 1 year, from October 2007. Two or three months later, the process of data entry will begin and it is expected to last for one year. It is planned to use CSPro for data entry and for the tabulation programme. Information from the city of Maputo will be the first to be entered and then from Maputo Province, running from the south to the north of the country. Once the data entry of any province data is finished, it will be tabulated, analyzed and disseminated. Both printed publications and electronic dissemination will be utilized.

The dissemination of the final results at national level will be in 2009. However, it is planned to produce final results for at least six provinces in 2008.

For more information, visit <http://www.ine.gov.mz/censo2007>. □

NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF STATISTICS (NSDS)

The Status of the NSDS Design and Implementation in Selected Anglophone Countries of Africa

O.O. Ajayi, Consultant, ADB and Adalbert Nshimyumuremyi, ADB

Although the Marrakesh Action Plan for Statistics (MAPS) had admonished low-income countries to have completed the design of their National Strategy for Development of Statistics (NSDS) by December 2006 and have implementation commenced by 2007 so that quality data would become available for a major review of MDGs by 2010, most countries in Africa actually started late. There were those countries who had prepared their Statistical Master Plans (SMPs) either prior to the MAPS (2004) or at the outset of MAPS; these countries began implementation and subsequently started the review of these plans in line with the NSDS principles

The countries are at various stages with respect to the design and implementation of their strategic plans for the development of statistics. Visits to some of these countries recently indicated status of progress towards the strengthening of their National Statistical Systems (NSSs). Two of such countries (Kenya & Nigeria) had their Statistical Master Plans (SMPs) being implemented and had embarked on the review of these to bring about the mainstreaming of the Sector Statistical Plans into the NSDS; two others (Lesotho and Liberia) have just completed the launching phase of the design process while one country (Tanzania) had gone reasonably far in the design process with drafts of Tanzania Statistical Master Plan (TSMP) and Sector Statistical Plans already available.

KENYA

Implementation of the SMP (2003-2008) had led to an institutional reform moving the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) to a semi-autonomous status and renamed Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) having been enabled by a new Statistics Act of 2006. The Bureau, now headed by a Director-General is being managed by an appointed Board with representatives coming from across the broad groups of stakeholders (Government, Private Sector, NGO's/CSO's, Academic and Research Community, etc) by the President. The structure of the new Bureau is being worked out at the moment. The new Bureau had also taken major initiatives to assist the sectors (about 14 of them now) through well-developed work programmes, technical and equipment support and an active coordination tasks on-going. The review of the SMP is being geared up and will bring about proper mainstreaming of the sectors for an NSDS (2009 – 2013).

NIGERIA

Nigeria, like Kenya, has been implementing the SMP (2004-2008) and accomplishments include, a new Statistics Act (2007), rationalization of staff in a new organization (National Bureau of Statistics NBS), improved physical and ICT infrastructure – a befitting complex

to accommodate the Bureau and adequately equipped (about 522 Personal Computers and other communications equipment) and up-graded Zonal offices with new mandates. Reasonable implementation of the programme of Surveys had taken place with availability of more data. NBS, in reviewing the SMP, has embarked on design plans to mainstream the sectors and sub-national statistics so as to have an NSDS (2008 – 2012).

TANZANIA

Embarked on the design of Tanzania Statistical Master Plan (TSMP) since 2006, the process having been launched by no less a person than the Vice-President of the Republic in October 2006. The design is in line with the NSDS principles with Sector mainstreaming taken along right from the beginning. Drafts of the TSMP and 16 Sector plans are now available. Reasonable amount of work is required to sharpen these drafts and the process better reinforced in order to ensure ownership and inclusiveness.

LIBERIA

With tremendous drive and commitment Liberia has launched the NSDS design process (October 2007) and this is progressing very well. Liberia is equally preparing to conduct its Population and Housing Census early 2008. The quest for rebuilding the information system of Liberia has been very high and this is the driving force for these major initiatives.

LESOTHO

Although Lesotho had a sluggish start (began in October 2006) but had now launched the process full-scale with a Stakeholders workshop held in October 2007. National Consultants are now in the field. The sluggish start was occasioned as a result of carrying out the National Population and Housing Census in 2006 whose analysis is currently on-going. The design is respecting all the NSDS design principles.

Other Countries:

- Uganda's Plan for National Development of Statistics (PNSD) was designed respecting the NSDS principles and mainstreaming the sectors. It represents a model in its design. The implementation is on-going.
- Zimbabwe has nearly finalized its NSDS with Institutional reform central to it. It followed the NSDS principles. A new Statistics Act passed. The Act makes the CSO a semi-autonomous statistical agency
- Mauritius has completed NSDS and because of operating a Common Statistical Service, mainstreaming sector plans became easy and automatic. Implementation is on-going and Institutional reform and revision of the Statistics Act (2000) are taking place.

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- Ghana: began its process in 2006 and is now reviewing the stages of work particularly mainstreaming the sectors and might conclude the design about early 2008.
- Swaziland, Namibia, Gambia, Sierra Leone and Zambia all require a wholesale review of the Statistical Master Plans they already had while Botswana is about commencing the design process of their NSDS. The government has approved that the Central Bureau of Statistics (CSO) become a semi-autonomous agency.
- Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Ghana have been funded by the World Bank while UNDP is currently supporting Lesotho. In all these cases, AfDB has given technical support and some funding. AfDB also spearheaded the preparation, in collaboration with Paris21 and Intersect, of a technical guide for mainstreaming Sector Statistical plans into the NSDS. □

The Plan for National Statistical Development (PNSD) Implementation in Uganda

Norah Madaya (Ms.), Uganda Bureau of Statistics

The need to generate and reinforce utilization of quality statistics is underpinned by the urge to demonstrate and manage for results. Re-thinking the conventional statistics core business; how it is conducted, managed and the mechanisms for its advancement as well as the strategy to better inform national and international development initiatives is high on the agenda of most National Statistics Offices (NSOs). This comes as a result of increasing demand for quality socio-economic statistics to support Management for Development Results and formulation of evidence based policies. The vast weaknesses affecting statistical capacity and its utilisation have compelled low income countries to adopt contemporary development and management approaches. Underpinned by the Marrackech Action Plan for Statistics (2004), several African countries have developed National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDSs).

Without exception, Uganda embraced the NSDS concept and made a strategic decision to develop a comprehensive PNSD. Spearheaded by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, the PNSD was launched by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Uganda on 12th October 2006. The PNSD is a composite of Sector Strategic Plans for Statistics (SSPS) developed by selected key data producing line Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). The Sector Strategic Plans are envisaged to respond to the needs of Uganda's national development framework - Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) and support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The PNSD design was a highly consultative, participatory and interactive process that involved key stakeholders in the National Statistical System. The PNSD is a vehicle for

streamlining structures, actors and harmonising processes in the national statistical system, building capacity and meeting national and international data requirements and priorities.

The Implementation Process

The implementation process has taken into consideration, prioritised issues for each MDA. However, emphasis is on activities that will raise all participating agencies to the same level in terms of statistical awareness, organizational structure, skills development, infrastructure development, statistical inventory and methodological issues.

Preparations for implementation: the Bureau initially received one tenth of the costed three year budget of approximately US\$30m, this was proportionately shared among MDAs to support prioritised start up activities. Funding was based on planned activities, submissions and agreed on priorities.

To effectively manage and ensure accountability, control and monitoring procedures for the funds, an institutional framework to guide MDA reporting was developed. Each MDA opened an SSPS account and submitted the bank account details to the National Statistics Office. The signatories included the MDA accounting officer (Permanent Secretary), a senior level Accountant and alternative signatories. In addition, each MDA developed a workplan, a procurement plan and a chart of accounts. There was also need to specify names and titles of the responsible officers in charge of procurement. Efforts to ensure organized management of SSPS accounts and Procurements (Receipt Books, Vouchers, etc) were put in place by the National Statistics Office before the funds were released. Consequently, MDAs were advised to initiate the process of procuring Technical Assistance (TA) by preparing draft Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the various Consultancies highlighted in their respective workplans. The preparations culminated into the signing of an agreement between the National Statistics Office and the respective MDAs. The agreement was approved by the Solicitor General of Government to ensure compliance and accountability.

Implementation

The PNSD implementation process has presented both opportunities and challenges that are not limited to UBOS/NSO but affect participating MDAs, Policy makers and development partners. As the implementing agency, the National Statistics Office is coordinating the implementation process. So far, it has convened Inter Agency Meetings, conducted inter institutional visits, undertaken continuous monitoring, and has conducted initial financial audits. Most activities are undertaken concurrently, for example procurement, advocacy, statistical inventory and other activities requiring technical assistance.

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The reality is that a positive and consistent trend has not been obvious. The process is affected by underlying factors related to management and administrative systems of government (procedures and regulations). For example, while Bank of Uganda, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture swiftly undertake approvals to procure and conduct activities, the process rather takes long in others. This raises issues of incoherence across MDAs and limits harmonization of the process. The best tool is to apply peer pressure to encourage laggards through the Inter Agency Committee Meetings as lessons and experiences are shared. Although this may not necessarily change internal system operations, the focal persons acquire ideas on managing difficult systems – through the identified champion. The following opportunities and challenges have been identified;

Opportunities

- The use of team work to influence change management;
- Regular monitoring and financial audit of activities to steer activity implementation;
- The presence of champions in MDAs facilitates advocacy and quick movement of paper work; and
- Sector committees for internal coordination, consensus building and sequencing of activities.

Challenges

- Lack of funds;
- Limited capacity of sectors to budget and plan for activities;
- Need for continuous sensitization in the sectors to concretize the concept even at implementation level;
- Bureaucratic tendencies that prolong compilation and consensus on issues in SSPPS thereby affecting harmonization of activities across the NSS;
- High expectations for the National Statistics Office to initiate funding for MDA strategic plan implementation raises sustainability issues for respective sectors, and there is fear for it being counterproductive;
- Limited capacity within sectors to source for independent funding for SSPPS implementation;
- Change management issues for the Inter Agency Committee to address implementation concerns calls for enhancement of the committee to include an officer at policy level;
- Delays in procurement of goods and services due to protracted bureaucratic processes affect timely accomplishment of planned activities, and
- MDAs reluctance to comply to some controls (funding, procurement, reporting)
- The above issues point to the need for clear outputs, champions within the sectors preferably at policy level, regular and effective monitoring, advocacy, mobilization of resources and regular reporting. □

The New Strategic Plan of the National Statistical System for Mozambique 2008-2012

Valeriano da Conceição Levene, Vice-Presidente, Instituto Nacional de Estatística

The Prime-Minister recently signed and sent for publishing a Resolution from the High Council of Statistics, which approved the new Strategic Plan of the National Statistical System to enter into force from 2008 to 2012. This act comes after the Plan had been discussed and positively appreciated by the Council of Ministers, marking one of the highest moments of all the participative process that involved the elaboration of the plan.

A national plan of commitments

The elaboration process was developed in two phases during the last years. The first one involved informal audiences, at the level of district and provincial governments about information needs for local governance. It also included audiences at the level of the different central institutions about the needs of information for elaboration and monitoring of the Government Action Plan for Absolute Poverty Reduction (PARPA) and the range of sector and global plans from the government.

The second phase, which started in July 2006, involved workshops and formal meetings with the main information users and producers, as well as international cooperation and development partners. They were evaluation meetings of the implementation of the plan now into force, definition of the information needs and formulation of the new Vision and Mission of the National Statistical System. These meetings were, followed by the definition of values, strategic objectives and an action plan and budget.

The overall process was led by internal staff from INE, having also benefited from the assistance of external consultants in the framework of the cooperation that INE maintains with the set of Scandinavian Countries. In this framework it was possible to get the participation of Professor Ben Kiregyera, among others.

After August 2006, followed a discussion and the approval by the High Statistical Council and latter in October, by the Council of Ministers, firming the continuation of the government's commitment for the development of the National Statistical System as an integrant part of the national development plans.

This commitment from the government was already evident with the PARPA, when defining (1) as general priority "the monitoring of the evolution of the levels of poverty, economic and productivity, using more appropriate and timely statistical indicators, and high quality statistical indicators"; (2) a growing budgeting scenario for the national statistical activities, and (3) the possibility for INE to establish, by itself, the necessary partnerships for its full functioning.

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Now comes a phase of definition of implementation mechanisms, funding, monitoring and evaluation as well as production of sector and territorial plans. On the other hand, the Action Plan will be made operational in annual activities and budget plans as sector component of the annual Government Budget and Social and Economics Plans.

The Action Plan envisages a budget of USD 61 million for the period 2008-2012 with main focus on the strategic objective related with the Agricultural Census 2009-2010 and the building of the new premises for the INE Headquarters in Maputo.

Vision, Mission and Values

From such developed process resulted that the new Strategic Plan, which defines a Vision, Mission and Values for the National Statistical System and the National Statistical Institute, as its leading body;

Vision

To be the main statistical reference for the national development.

Mission

Timely respond to the users information needs and promote the national statistical culture.

Values

The National Statistical System and INE in particular, as its leading body, are oriented for the Users, Professionalism and Synergies (UPS). Inspired in "Uninterrupted Power Supply", symbolizing energy and continuity.

Users

To provide users with the information they need, how and in the time that they need. The users are the only reason of the existence and being of SEN.

The satisfaction of users information needs is an imperative. particularly for the monitoring of national development plans, reduction of absolute poverty, good governance, gender, provinces, districts and municipalities.

Professionalism

Promote qualification, accountability and valorisation of the staff capacity so that they perform their role in a serious, rigorous and competent way.

The professionalism of staff is a fundamental element that promotes the Professional independence, the impartiality, the objectivity and the relevance of the statistics produced and disseminated.

Thus, a good reputation of statistics and its institutions will be maintained. On the other hand, new challenges of information needs, research and scientific innovation will be faced.

Synergies

Create an environment that facilitates the "participation of all": users, suppliers, producers, facilitators, cooperation and development agencies, public and private sectors, individuals, households and population in general, in the production and use of statistics, at present and in the future, for the national development.

All are called to join efforts, in a coordinated, harmonized and integrated way in the national and international sphere. The National Statistical System reaffirms itself as part of the world statistical system, where it participates and applies its principles, methods, norms and classifications.

Strategic Objectives

The following are defined as strategic objectives for the next 5 years:

1. Responding to the user's statistical needs, promote the statistical culture and advocacy for national development.

Priority is given to the dissemination of information with using new information technologies, promotion of statistical culture and advocacy; production of final results and analysis of the 2007 population and housing census; Household Budget Survey (2008-2009), Demographic and Health Survey (2010), Labour Force Survey (2011), Questionnaire of Basic Indicators of Well-Being (2012); Agricultural and Livestock Census (2009/2010), Smalschale Fishery Census (2012); Business Register Database, Basic Economic Statistics, National Accounts, Consumer Price Indexes and Confidence Indicators.

2. Progressively create production capacity of statistics at district and municipality level, that respond to the needs of information from the process of governance and local and national development.

Priority is given to training of local staff for the production of consistent statistics.

3. Capitalize statistics production with new technologies and methodologies, innovation, inter-institutional coordination, appropriation of administrative registers and reduction of response burden from data suppliers.

Priority is given to the construction of a robust system of database management and Internet for collection, sharing, accessing and warehousing of information.

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4. Upgrading the institutional capacity building to face the new challenges imposed by users

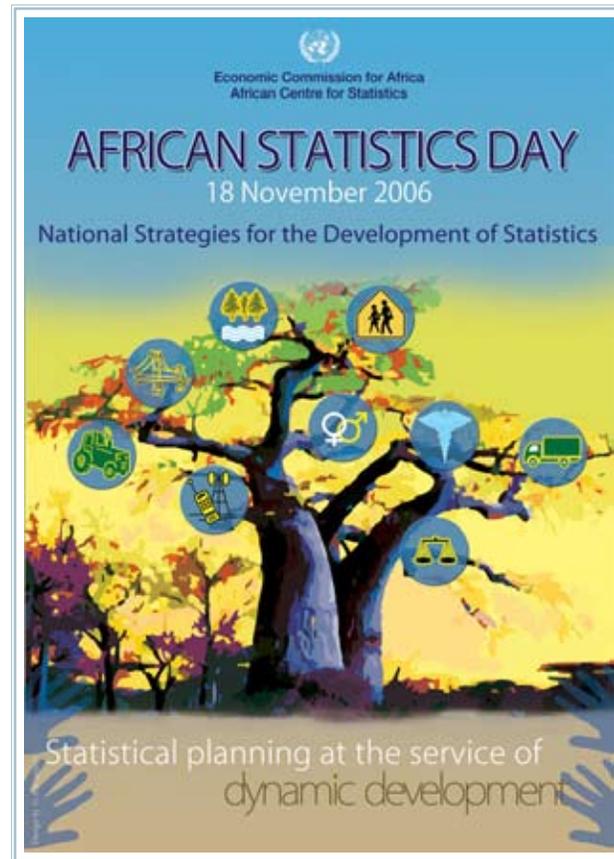
Priority is oriented to high motivation and training of staff as well as for the construction of appropriate premises for the INE Head Quarters and offices for provincial branches. Priority is also given to the establishment of a National School for Official Statistics to serve as a reference centre for training and research for all the National Statistical System, public services, private sector, province and district governments, as well as interests in the regional plan. □

Prof. Ben Kiregyera organized a seminar for legislators in Mauritius as part of the country's NSDS process

The seminar held on 11 December 2006 was also attended by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the Minister of Trade and the Chairperson of the Statistics Council.



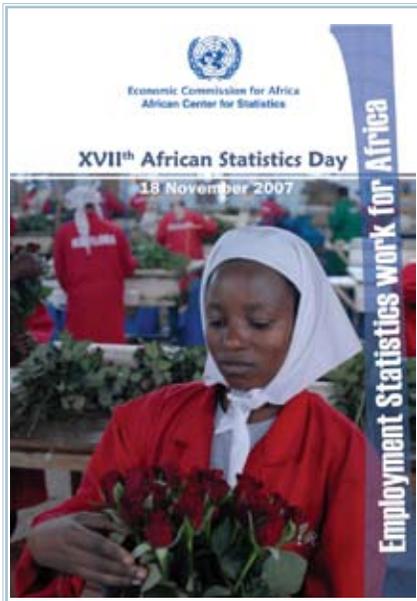
From left to right: Chairperson of Council, Minister of Finance and Prof. Ben Kiregyera



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2007 African Statistics Day Celebrations: Improving Employment and Related Indicators to Better Inform Labour Policies and Programmes in Africa

African Centre for Statistics



In May 1990, the Twenty-fifth Session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the Sixteenth Meeting of African Ministers responsible for Economic Planning and Development adopted 18 November as African Statistics Day to be celebrated each year in order to “increase public awareness about the important role which statistics play in all aspects of social and economic life” of our countries and the continent.

The theme for the celebrations this year is: Improving Employment and Related Indicators to Better Inform Labour Policies and Programmes in Africa. This theme is derived from the Conclusions of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development held in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) in 2006 and in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) in 2007. The 2006 Conference affirmed the centrality of employment and its primary role in poverty reduction and national development, while the 2007 Conference recognized the slow progress towards the achievement of the MDGs. It is, therefore, crucial to raise awareness of data producers, users, suppliers and the population at large about the importance of having better statistics to monitor implementation of job creation policies and programmes in the country as well as the MDGs.

The 2006 Conference of African Ministers of Finance noted with concern that employment has not been embedded in national development strategies, commonly referred to as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) in many African countries. In order to create decent jobs in Africa, employment should be mainstreamed into national development agenda, and African countries should explicitly commit themselves to incorporating employment objectives and targets in their national development strategies and policies.

The special needs of vulnerable groups in society were also recognized, including increasing employment opportunities for women, youth, people with disabilities, internally displaced persons, refugees

and returnees. Despite the strong commitment of the international community to end gender discrimination and major advances made in this domain, some forms of discrimination are still persisting. For example, there are still gender gaps in employment and pay and occupational segregation between men and women. In a recent ILO's Report “Equality at Work: Tackling the Challenges”, it has been highlighted that a key measure for women's improvement is the availability of good-quality jobs for women in legislative, senior official or managerial positions with higher participation rates indicating a reduction of discriminatory barriers. However, according to the report, women still represent a distinct minority in such positions throughout the world, holding only 28.3 per cent of these senior jobs in spite of an uneven progress across the regions.

In Africa, child labour is very widespread; particularly in agriculture, livestock, herding and mining. According to estimates by the ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), in some cases, children begin work as young as five, and as the result children under 10 years account for 20 per cent of child labour in some rural areas. This means that a large percentage of children is not attending school.

Currently, African countries are faced with massive emigration. Forecasts show that the number of migrants crossing borders in search of employment and human security is expected to increase rapidly in the coming decades due to the failure of globalization to provide jobs and economic opportunities to the growing labour force in Africa.

The afore-mentioned highlight the need for National Statistical Systems in Africa to increase availability of accurate, timely and policy-relevant data on employment and related indicators. This will entail, inter alia, building consensus on concepts and definitions related to employment; carefully defining and refining methods for collecting data on each category of employment; measuring and profiling the informal sector, which covers a wide range of labour market activities and which provides many job opportunities; etc.

ECA will partner with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, International Labour Organization, the Regional Economic Communities and other key stakeholders to support country employment generation strategies and programmes in Africa, by assisting countries to compile and provide quality data on employment, in compliance with the methodologies, standards, recommendations and guidelines developed by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians and the 1993 System of National Accounts. This will be done under the Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa (RRSF), a blueprint adopted by the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in April 2007 for moving forward statistical capacity building in Africa in a coherent and comprehensive manner. □

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Stats South Africa's communication channels for statistics

Liz Gavin Deputy Director General and PJ Lehohla, Statistician-General and Head of Statistics South Africa

Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) recognizes that different users have different requirements in terms of format and the level of detail of statistical information which will best suit their needs. Due to our country's history, the users and potential users of statistics differ widely both in terms of their statistical skills, as well as access to and ability to use digital technology, never mind web access. Literacy and connectivity levels have to be taken into account, if statistics are to be communicated successfully. Hence a wide range of statistical products and services are provided, both on-line and off-line.

Starting with on-line: the development of Stats SA's web-site (<http://www.statssa.gov.za>) has been seen as vital, due largely to the economy of dissemination through automation, as well as reach. Consequently much effort has gone into developing Stats SA's web site over the past five years or so: ongoing development of the web-site is driven by user consultation, and it is currently seen primarily as a vehicle to provide ready access to statistical releases and data. Thus direct links to recent publications, as well as a search facility for all publications available in PDF, hold a prominent place on the homepage. The homepage also includes a scrolling banner which provides key indicators such as the Consumer Price Index (CPI), Gross Domestic Product (GDP), unemployment rates and the national population figure for those who simply need these at a glance. Users may also access time series datasets from the web site, and have access to tools to perform cross-tabulations and download their customized tables.

Stats SA monitors user opinion on its services and products both directly, through surveys and consultation, and indirectly, through monitoring the access of statistical releases and data through the web site and specific user requests. Stats SA monitors visits to and downloads of documents and data from its web-site on a monthly basis. The use of Stats SA's web site has grown dramatically over the past few years, while there has been a simultaneous drop in telephonic requests for statistical information.

Bandwidth constraints within South Africa need to be factored in when looking at ways of providing statistics to users. The congestion at the release time of the high profile, market moving statistical releases such as the GDP and CPI has led to the creation and release of 'lighter' products at embargo time, in consultation with users. Bandwidth constraints also still mean that the preferred medium for distribution of large datasets is via CD. For example, one of the most widely used census data products, namely the Census 2001 Community Profiles, packaged with SuperCross, is distributed on a set of six CDs. (We have had only one user download a 60 MB file of unit mortality records from the web – although many more have been

requested on CD!) Many users have access to e-mail, although their web access is more constrained, and for this reason, Stats SA introduced a weekly e-mailed newsletter in May 2004, which includes the key findings of publications released during the preceding week. By the end of July 2007, we had 14 642 subscribers to this newsletter, with three quarters of these subscribers resident in South Africa.

However, not even all existing users of statistics desire electronic products. Surveys of subscribers to hardcopy releases, particularly compendia of statistics such as the annual "Statistics in Brief", have shown that approximately half of these subscribers still prefer to receive statistical releases and reports in hard copy, even though the download of the electronic product from the web is free.

There is a need then, within the South African context, to continue to pursue off-line – and non-digital - communication of statistics as well. A weekly column by the Statistician-General is published in the business section of daily newspapers distributed country-wide. The key indicators – a replica of those on the web-site - are scrolled on an LCD board across the corner of Stats SA's head office. In addition to print, Stats SA also seeks slots on community radio stations, to present key statistical results to communities, as well as encourage their participation in statistical collections. Given the plethora of languages in South Africa (11 official languages, and others spoken too), community radio is a means of reaching people who might not be reached by the English print media – never mind the web. A slot on statistics is also incorporated into a morning television news and current affairs programme, with the text and graphical representation of statistics being provided by Stats SA to the South African Broadcasting Corporation.

But, in line with the ideas presented in the papers in this session, Stats SA is also aware that communicating statistics to users requires building the statistical literacy of users. Stats SA thus sees its various campaigns to improve upon the quality and content of mathematics teaching in high schools as part of the foundation to enable statistics to communicate to users. (In order to raise their profile, some of these campaigns have been linked to South Africa's hosting of ISI 2009!) Workshops are held biannually across the country, at which there are presentations on basic statistical concepts and how various statistics are collected, in order to promote more effective use of statistics. Even the Statistician-General's weekly column is used to explain statistical methodologies and their application. To date the Statistician-General has issued 209 weekly columns over the last four years.

Effectiveness of statistical communication into the future – how and why?

The experience of Stats SA – albeit in a country with relatively low connectivity and statistical literacy – also bears out the fact that the use of new technologies does indeed seem to grow the uptake of

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statistics. For example, the use of SuperWeb and Nesstar to access data previously provided only in 'static' formats (administrative data from municipalities, and household survey data respectively) more than doubled from the first to second month of publishing through StatsOnline! This also illustrates the power of 'enticing' users through dynamic tools, which enable the user to tailor how the statistics they seek are packaged for them.

But we are mindful of the need to explore other channels to communicate statistics to users who may not have unfettered access to the web. A digital channel not yet exploited is that of mobile phones – the use of mobile phones by South African households has grown rapidly; households are at least as likely to have ready access to a mobile phone as to a television! (see Stats SA's General Household Survey 2005 - <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/statsdownload.asp?PPN=P0318&SCH=3962>). Thus far our explorations have been



limited to that of sending short text messages to convey key indicators. But perhaps there are more innovative ways to be discovered to use mobile phones to communicate statistics.

We have generally applied the use of new tools to disseminate information which we know to be of greater relevance to a wider audience (e.g. the Labour Force Survey releases are downloaded by more users than the release describing the number of companies liquidated) and have found that the availability of new tools to access data has even further increased its usage. Perhaps there is an interplay between what we regard as relevant content, and the format. What would be the effect of presenting 'less popular' data, such as the number of liquidations, in more 'interesting' formats? The experience of Swivel (www.swivel.com) would suggest that with greater exposure, more interesting things get 'done' to the data by users, rendering them more interesting to other users in turn.

We tend to measure the use - and usefulness - of statistics produced by their uptake in terms of numbers of users. Perhaps this is because this is the only thing we can easily do at this stage. But is this the appropriate metric for the successful communication of

statistics? Whenever Stats SA goes to report to the South African parliament, the question is asked: what has been the impact of the statistics produced? The argument presented, that the fact that increasing numbers of people bother to download statistics (put effort into making at least three clicks – and waiting!) means that there is growing use – or intended use – of these statistics, is not seen as convincing. What is the value added – not merely to the statistics – but of the statistics? The measurement of this value-added is certainly a topic for future discussion and research. □

Reaching out to the Political Class: An advocacy initiative on statistics in Nigeria

Dr. Vincent O. Akinyoso, Director General/Chief Executive,
National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) of Nigeria is the National Statistical Office (NSO), which by law, coordinates the National Statistical System (NSS) in the production of statistics at the national and sub-national levels of government. The Bureau is also responsible for promoting the use of statistics in the public and private sectors; providing statistics for the design of intervention programmes of development partners and donors to the business community for their planning and execution of production and marketing strategies; and for macro and micro level research in the academic community.

Until the last few years, the agency had under-performed largely because it was under-resourced, under-skilled, poorly-equipped, poorly-housed, mismanaged and misunderstood. A large pool of the data-user community, who could have been useful in supporting the agency were even ignorant of its existence and worse still, many potential users could not appreciate the usefulness of statistics to their work. A critical segment of this data-user community consists of politicians at all level of governance, particularly the legislature. As the NBS found out, legislators in Nigeria have been insensitive to the essence of developing statistics in the country, even as they need statistics to carryout their over-sight functions.

The statistics community need the politicians in parliament to be favourably disposed to statistics development, because they are the final arbiters in the process of budgetary allocations to various agencies of Government. This is particularly so at the Federal level of Government in Nigeria where the Legislature has the power to review allocations proposed by the Federal Ministry of Finance. Moreover, the Legislature enacts laws that guide the operations of different Government agencies. The foregoing is the rationale for the National Bureau of Statistics to reach out to the Nigerian Upper (Senate) and Lower (House of Representatives) Chambers of Parliament, followings its creation in 2005. The first opportunity came when the Statistics Bill was being considered by the legislators.

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Moving the Statistics Bill through Parliament

The Bureau, as it operates today was administratively created by the Executive arm of Government in early 2005 without an enabling law. It emerged from the merger of the old Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) and a wholly-computerised data warehousing agency, the National Data Bank (NDB). In Nigeria, there are some other legally-established statistical agencies like the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), National Population Commission (NPopC), Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Federal Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and State Statistics Agencies (SSAs). Since they have laws to back-up their operations, coordination of statistical activities was difficult, with the attendant production of conflicting statistics for several years. There was, therefore, the need to give legal backing to the establishment of the NBS to enable it coordinate statistics production in the country. Consequently, the Nigerian President sent a new Statistics Bill to Parliament in October 2005.

As part of efforts to enhance the passage of the Statistics Bill into a Statistics Act, the National Bureau of Statistics had to reachout to the politicians in parliament. The first step was to organise a Statistics Retreat for the relevant Parliamentary Committees responsible for over-seeing operations of the NBS. They and other stakeholders were invited out of Abuja, the nation's Capital, to a quiet town some 250 kilometres away for a 3-Day Interaction. During the Retreat, the politicians were exposed to the usefulness of statistics in political debates and for their over-sight functions, among others. At the end of the exercise, many of them admitted that they knew very little about statistics and were completely ignorant of its relevance to their work. Next came a study tour for some of the legislators to Statistics South Africa and Ugandan Bureau of Statistics, which experience further sensitised them to the essence of statistics in national development. With the Retreat and Study Tour, the NBS now joys a cooperative relationship with the Senators and Members of the House of Representatives.

Bringing Statistics to Parliamentarians

As a follow-up to the Statistics Retreat and Study Tour, the NBS organised a series of dialogue with the parliamentarians. At some of such fora, for instance, Senators were exposed to the results of a National Survey as they relate to all the 109 Senatorial Districts in Nigeria. In 2004, with the support of the World Bank, the agency conducted a National Living Standard Survey (NLSS) from which the poverty level in Nigeria was estimated. The survey revealed that 54.4 per cent of Nigerians live below the poverty line. To the appreciation of the Senators, the NBS mapped out the incidences of poverty across the 109 Senatorial Districts. The results of a 2005 survey on Core Welfare Indicator (CWIQ) which enabled the NBS to report on the welfare status of Nigerians, were also shown to the legislators. The CWIQ Survey reported on access to health facilities, electricity, safe water, primary school enrolment, male and female drop-out rates in primary schools and so on. Interestingly, both

reports demonstrated to the parliamentarians that constituencies with the high incidences of poverty also have low access to safe water and electricity; have high drop rates for female pupils in primary schools as well as low enrolment of female pupils in primary and secondary schools, among others. The interactions with the parliamentarians have been very rewarding to the NBS in line with making the political class identify with the operations and problems of the agency. Some of the direct benefits of the outreach initiatives include the following:

Acquisition of New Corporate Headquarters

The first visible response of the parliamentarians to the NBS reachout initiative, was the allocation of funds to purchase a new headquarters building for the agency. In 2005, \$9.6 million was provided for a building complex in the Central District Area of Abuja. The complex is in the same Building Zone as the National Assembly, Supreme Court, the Federal Secretariat, the Central



The New NBS Building in Central District, Abuja

Bank of Nigeria and the Official Residence of the President. Until that year, the Corporate Headquarters of the NBS was in a small, over-crowded building in an obscure street in Abuja. The new structure is a 5-Storey twin-building complex with all the complements of modern facilities.

Passage of Statistics Bill

Between October 2005, when the President sent the Statistics Bill to the Parliament, and its passage into the Statistics Act, in May 2007, several debates were organised on the Bill. All through the debates, the legislators who had interacted with the NBS were consistently in support of the Bill, including the provision for coordinating powers for the agency. One of the interesting features of the passage of the Bill was the speed of the process. The actual debate of the Bill started in the second quarter of 2006. Eleven months later, both Houses of Parliament (Senate and House of Representatives) had variously passed the Bill and two months later the Bill scaled through a joint session. The President signed the Bill into law two weeks later.

STATISTICAL ADVOCACY

Improved Funding

Funding for the NBS has improved since the political class started to appreciate the relevance of the agency to national development. For example, in 2004, Government appropriated \$11.40 million to the agency to pay salaries, meet operating expenses and conduct its regular Household and Establishment Surveys. In 2005 when the wind of change started blowing through the National Statistical Office (NSO), the budget rose to \$22.75 million to include purchase of the Headquarters building along with its regular activities. For 2006, \$15.75 million and in 2007 \$20 million were allocated. An interesting incidence happened prior to the finalisation of the 2007 budget session. The House of Representatives appropriated \$1 million from another agency, which claims to be producing statistics, to the NBS; a testimony to the confidence the political class has developed in the NBS.

Other benefits of the Outreach Initiative

The outreach initiative has not been directed at only parliamentarians, as the President was not left out. When the new management of the NBS was set up in June 2005 it was given the mandate to start the reform of the agency into a modern statistical office and report on progress periodically. Three months later, a privileged meeting was arranged by the Economic Adviser to the President between the pioneer Head of the NBS and the President. At the meeting, the President was taken through the operations of a National Statistical Office, the rationale for having an effective National Statistical System, the usefulness of statistics in designing evidence-based policies and use of statistics in formulating, monitoring and evaluating government programmes and projects. The outcome of this meeting was very revealing:

- The President chaired a number of quarterly fora of major stakeholders in the economy (Ministers, Parliamentarians, Business Leaders, etc) and insisted that the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, the Economic Adviser to the President, and the Group Managing Director of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation make presentations using basic Statistics (mainly from the NBS) on the status of the economy. Such presentations were broadcast live.
- The President had an Economic Team that worked with the IMF on the design of the Policy Support Instrument (PSI), which provided the framework for the \$18 billion debt-relief provided Nigeria by the Paris Club of Creditors. Initially, the NBS was not on the Team but when the President realised how important the agency was to the dialogue on the Debt-Relief, the Head of the NBS was invited to join the Team. In the last six months of the life of the last administration, the Head of the NBS was invited to the weekly briefings/meetings of Ministers and Heads of key agencies with the President.

- In 2006, the Office of the President was to commission a survey, under the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), to elicit information on the perception of Nigerian Households to Governance in the country. The Survey was to be conducted by private Consultants. However, based on his awareness of the capabilities of the NBS, the President insisted that the agency be given the responsibility to conduct the survey.
- One of the last activities of the President in the twilight of his administration was an official visit to NBS Headquarters.
- Over the last two and a half years, various Ministers and Heads of Agencies have invited the NBS to support specialised surveys. Among others, the nation's foremost anti-graft agency, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) engaged the NBS in early 2007 to conduct a Perception Survey on Corruption in the Business Community in Nigeria.

Lessons and Challenges

The present visibility enjoyed by the NBS amongst the political class in Nigeria has demonstrated the positive effect of outreach initiatives by NSOs. In the experience of Nigeria's NBS, once political leaders understand the usefulness and relevance of statistics to their work and for national development, efforts at developing statistics will be welcomed and supported at the highest level of governance.

One challenge from the foregoing is to continue to make out-reach advocacy initiatives part of the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS). As in Nigeria, such initiatives should be extended to the Business and Academic communities as well as the Press. □

STATISTICAL ADVOCACY

Journée Africaine de la Statistique

FALL Babakar, Senegal

La préparation de la célébration de la Journée Africaine de la Statistique (JAS) édition 2007 a été conduite au Sénégal par un comité d'organisation présidé par le Directeur Général Adjoint et regroupant les membres du bureau de l'Amicale des Agents de la Statistique (ADIS) et des représentants des différentes directions de l'Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la démographie (ANSD). Le programme d'activités qui s'est déroulé durant toute la semaine du 12 au 18 novembre 2007 a été exécuté sur un financement conjoint de l'ANSD et du FNUAP. Le programme comprenait une cérémonie de don de sang, une conférence sur le thème des statistiques de l'emploi, des activités sportives et une randonnée pédestre.

Travaux Préparatoires

Les travaux préparatoires ont été marqués notamment par des insertions dans les journaux de la place et la confection de banderoles.

Déroulement des journées portes ouvertes

Les journées portes ouvertes sur l'ANSD ont débuté le mercredi 14 novembre 2007 par une cérémonie de don de sang. L'ouverture de la cérémonie a été présidée par le Directeur Général de l'ANSD. C'est la quatrième année consécutive que l'ADIS organise un don de sang. Pour cette année, le nombre de donneurs est passé à 75 personnes, contre 65 en 2006. Ainsi, le personnel a marqué son soutien au Centre National de Transfusion Sanguine (CNTS) qui est confronté à une rupture de stock. Ce geste a été largement apprécié par les autorités du CNTS qui ont vivement remercié le personnel de l'ANSD.

Sur proposition du Directeur Général de l'ANSD qui souhaiterait que les statistiques relatives au don de sang soient publiées dans le Bulletin Trimestriel de Statistiques, le CNTS a accepté ce principe qui leur permettrait de faire un meilleur suivi des stocks.

La deuxième journée a été consacrée à l'organisation d'un panel qui a enregistré cinq (05) communications autour d'études relatives aux statistiques sur l'emploi, et une communication sur le schéma directeur de la statistique :

- Le système d'informations sur le marché de l'emploi au Sénégal par la Direction de l'Emploi ;
- Les indicateurs du marché du travail et indicateurs du travail décent par le Bureau International du Travail (BIT) au Sénégal ;
- A la recherche de l'emploi : le chemin vers la prospérité – un agenda de réformes par la Banque Mondiale ;
- La pauvreté laborieuse : une question sérieuse à prendre en

compte par la Cellule de Lutte contre la Pauvreté (CLCP) qui est chargée de la mise en œuvre du Document de Stratégie de Réduction de la Pauvreté (DSRP) ;

- Analyse critique des indicateurs relatifs à l'emploi retenus dans les cadres de référence de suivi des politiques nationales et sous régionales par l'Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la Démographie (ANSD) ;
- Le schéma directeur de la statistique par l'ANSD.

La cérémonie d'ouverture de ce panel a été présidée par Monsieur Abdoulaye DIOP, Ministre d'Etat, Ministre de l'Economie et des Finances. Il a connu une large participation de représentants du Système Statistique nationale, des partenaires au développement et a enregistré un relais important de la presse publique et privée. Ces communications suivies de riches débats sont postées sur le site de l'ANSD (www.ansd.sn).

Le samedi 17 et dimanche 18 novembre 2007 ont été consacrés aux activités sportives et récréatives.

En effet, après l'édition de 2006 qui a porté le nom de Awa THIONGANE, ancienne Directrice de la Préviation et de la Statistique, Monsieur Sogué DIARISSO, président du Conseil d'Orientation de l'ANSD a été choisi comme parrain de cette année. Ainsi, un match de football a opposé l'équipe de l'ANSD à celle de la Direction Générale des Impôts et des Domaines (DGID). Le « yendu » qui a suivi le match de football a rassemblé à nouveau toute la famille statistique.

La randonnée pédestre qui a clôturé les journées a enregistré trois cent cinquante (350) participants qui ont fait 10 km à travers les artères de Dakar. Cette quatrième édition a été marquée par le choix du Directeur Général de l'ANSD comme président d'honneur du Comité National de Promotion de la Randonnée Pédestre (CNPRP).

1 Festivités durant toute la journée dans les locaux de l'ANSD.



50th Anniversary of UNECA

The Statistical fraternity in Africa wishes the Executive Secretary and all staff of the UNECA a happy 50th Anniversary

ECA's contribution to Statistical Development in Africa focuses on the following areas, which constitute the core functions of the African Centre for Statistics (ACS):

- a. Research on methods and standard setting including harmonization so as to produce a consolidated set of statistics for Africa;
- b. Developing and implementing regional programmes that are well-coordinated across African countries;
- c. Development of survey systems;
- d. Data compilation with respect to the African region particularly statistics to support regional integration and development frameworks;
- e. Strengthening data processing capability in African countries;
- f. Database development; and
- g. Providing advisory services to member States towards building their statistical infrastructure.

STATISTICAL CAPACITY BUILDING

Un nouveau cadre professionnel pour le développement de la statistique en Afrique

Dossina Yeo et Thiekoro Doumbia, Commission de l'Union africaine

Constatant la faiblesse du système statistique africain et l'absence de données statistiques pertinentes, de qualité, fiables, comparables dans le temps et dans l'espace sur l'ensemble des Etats membres et disponibles en temps opportun pour accompagner le processus d'intégration ainsi que le suivi et l'évaluation des programmes de développement du continent, le Conseil exécutif de l'Union africaine a pris une décision historique, (No DOC.EX.CL/308(X)) en janvier 2007 lors sa Xe session ordinaire à Addis Abéba (Ethiopie), de doter le continent d'une Charte gouvernant la statistique africaine.

En effet, sur recommandation des ministres africains de l'économie et des finances lors de leur conférence qui s'est tenue en novembre 2006 à Yaoundé (Cameroun), le Conseil a mandaté la Commission de l'Union africaine d'élaborer en collaboration avec l'ensemble des membres du système statistique africain une Charte africaine de la statistique.

L'objectif principal de la Charte est de servir de code d'éthique professionnel et de cadre d'orientation pour le développement de la statistique en Afrique. Plus précisément, elle a pour but de : (i) servir d'instrument et d'outil de plaidoyer; (ii) contribuer à l'amélioration de la qualité et de la comparabilité des données statistiques; (iii) promouvoir le respect des principes fondamentaux de production, de stockage, de gestion, d'analyse, de diffusion et d'utilisation de l'information statistique; (iv) contribuer au renforcement de la coordination des activités statistiques et des institutions statistiques; (v) renforcer les capacités institutionnelles des structures statistiques; (vi) servir de code d'éthique professionnel et de bonnes pratiques; (vii) promouvoir une culture faisant de l'observation des faits la base de la formulation, du suivi et de l'évaluation des politiques; et (viii) contribuer à l'amélioration et au fonctionnement effectif du système statistique africain.

La Charte s'articule autour de six (6) principes clés : (i) l'indépendance professionnelle des autorités statistiques; (ii) la qualité de l'information statistique; (iii) le mandat légal pour la collecte des données statistiques; (iv) la diffusion appropriée de l'information statistique; (v) la confidentialité et la protection des données individuelles; et (vi) la coordination et la coopération entre les différents acteurs impliqués dans le développement de la statistique.

L'avant projet de la Charte a été approuvé par les directeurs et représentants des instituts nationaux de statistique, des Communautés économiques régionales, des institutions panafricaines, et des partenaires au développement réunis à Gisenyi (Kigali) en juin 2007. Lors de cette importante rencontre, les participants ont exprimé leur satisfaction devant les progrès accomplis depuis quelques

années grâce aux nombreuses initiatives prises par les Etats aux niveaux national, régional et continental et ils ont, par ailleurs, recommandé :

- la promotion de l'avant projet de la Charte par les représentants des Etats membres auprès de leurs autorités respectives;
- l'évaluation du système statistique africain, par la Commission de l'Union africaine, avant toute mise en place de mécanisme de mise en œuvre de la Charte; et
- la mise en place, par la Commission de l'Union africaine, d'un fonds UA pour le financement durable des statistiques en Afrique.

Ils ont également invité les membres du système statistique africain à promouvoir la Charte une fois que celle-ci est adoptée par la conférence des Chefs d'Etat et de Gouvernement de l'Union africaine.

Dans la continuité du processus d'adoption de la charte, il est prévu l'organisation d'une Conférence extraordinaire des ministres africains de l'économie et des finances au mois de décembre 2007 pour recueillir leurs avis et leur approbation avant son adoption finale par les Chefs d'Etat et de Gouvernement lors du XIe Sommet ordinaire de janvier 2008.

Pour donner toutes les chances de succès aux membres du système statistique africain dans la mise en œuvre de la charte, l'étude sur le mécanisme de mise en œuvre de la charte et de la création du fonds UA pour le développement pérenne des statistiques en Afrique est en cours pour parachever le processus.

La Commission de l'Union africaine voudrait, d'ores et déjà, inviter l'ensemble de ses partenaires à promouvoir la charte et sensibiliser les Etats membres à sa ratification dès son adoption finale. □

STATISTICAL CAPACITY BUILDING

Implementation of the GDDS Project in Anglophone Africa

Oliver Chinganya, IMF-GDDS Regional Advisor, Nairobi, Kenya:

Many developing countries, particularly in Africa have weak statistical systems that have failed to respond to development needs. While the capacity of countries to produce good quality official statistics has increased in a number of countries in the last few years, other countries have made less progress. The need to strengthen the capacity of African countries to collect, compile, disseminate, and use statistical data more efficiently and effectively has been widely recognized. The General Data Dissemination System (GDDS) project for Anglophone African countries, which commenced in 2001 promotes capacity building in statistics by helping countries to take stock of their statistical systems and by providing targeted technical assistance. The Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom has been funding the GDDS project since its inception. Fifteen countries were invited to join initially in Phase 1 project (2001-2006). Later in 2006, following the development of a successor project, Phase 2 (2006-2009), seven more countries were invited to the group bringing the total number of countries to 22. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are the executing agencies for the project; the Fund covers the four financial and macroeconomic core areas in statistics, namely financial and monetary, fiscal, external, and real sector statistics; the World Bank focuses on the socio-demographic areas, health, population, education, and poverty statistics. Over the years the Bank has also provided technical assistance to countries in areas such as, vital registration, justice and security, labour markets, GIS and gender statistics. In the initial year, the phase 1 project concentrated on assisting countries to prepare and publish metadata, comprising detailed current descriptions of national statistical procedures and practices in the areas of economic, financial, and socio-demographic statistics. The second objective, which was phased in as the countries became participants in the GDDS, was to provide technical assistance to help these countries implement plans for improvement in their statistics, as set out in their metadata. Additional objectives, such as fostering cooperation among agencies at the national and regional levels, were also added.

The major project activity during the early part was the completion of metadata, including the plans for improvements, and posting them on the IMF Dissemination Standards Bulletin Board (DSBB) for easy access by the public. In some cases, countries created links on national web sites to the DSBB to allow more nationals to access the metadata. All project countries except Eritrea, formally become participants in the GDDS and their metadata were posted on the DSBB. Subsequently, short-term technical assistance missions related to specific area of statistics were phased in. Many of the missions required one or more follow-up visits, mostly by the same expert, usually for two to three weeks duration, although there were a few longer visits.

Some of the major characteristics of Phase 1 project were the "Awareness workshops", which brought the users and producers of statistics together and provided the first opportunity for participants to get an overview and better understanding of the activities of and linkages among data producing agencies. This resulted in close contacts among data producing agencies and increased dialogue with the users. In addition, the annual regional meetings of GDDS coordinators and NSO directors provided an opportunity for countries to learn best practices through sharing of experience. The project also enhanced cooperation by undertaking joint activities with other sub-regional agencies; including study tours.

The GDDS plans for improvement have played a critical role in the preparation of statistical plans. The GDDS as a development framework for statistics is an important tool for developing an NSDS, provide a broad assessment mechanism and, through the plans for improvement, helping to identify priorities for data activities. NSDS is a PARIS21 initiative, which is in line with Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics (MAPS) recommendations; to support the implementation of national development strategies. As the NSDS process has been rolled out a number of countries have been able to use the technical assistance not only to address immediate data needs, but also to develop a more strategic approach.

The Phase 2 project (2006-2009) overall strategy continues to be based on the recognition that the participation of a country in the GDDS, which is now used in more than 85 countries world-wide, promotes awareness for the importance of good statistics and helps countries to develop a coordinated and prioritized approach to building capacity. The project continues to use the lessons learned and foster achievements of Phase 1 to help participating countries to introduce internationally accepted methodologies and good practices. It focuses on results and regional interaction, by offering defined technical assistance "modules", which can be planned, implemented, and assessed in a coordinated way for no more than six countries at a time, which share similar needs. Participating countries selected four modules; two of the Fund and another two from the Bank. Forms and methods of assistance are chosen so as to maximize their capacity-building potential. The project provides technical assistance with emphasis on hands-on assistance, including on-the-job training, and interaction among officials from the region. It is guided by the existing national structures and strategic initiatives for organizing and coordinating national statistics; countries are assisted in developing and implementing a medium-term strategic approach. The IMF executes the Fund's modules and provides technical assistance in macroeconomic and financial statistics, namely, monetary, fiscal, balance of payments and external positions, national accounts, and prices statistics. The World Bank component executes the Bank's modules and provides technical assistance in socio-demographic statistics, namely, health, education, population, poverty, labor markets, GIS, and Management of statistical system.

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As in the predecessor project, Phase 2 provides for close cooperation with regional institutions with interest in statistics development, so as to leverage their specific expertise and to promote regional ownership. The modular approach is expected to facilitate this cooperation, by providing a structure to which other organizations can relate more easily. Some countries such as South Africa are a resource to some of the participating countries. So far all modules have been launched, and provision of TA and implementation of agreed prioritized actions plans has started in most of the countries. Some countries have already planned to conduct awareness workshops to foster dialogue between users and producers, to increasingly promote closer contact among data generating agencies, strengthen the use of statistics and also to discuss the expected outcomes of the modules implementation. Some of the workshops will coincide with the Africa Statistics Day, which falls on November 18.

1 Phase 1 country: Botswana, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Ghana (from 2004), Lesotho, Liberia, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe was inactive throughout the project and did not receive any technical assistance because it was ineligible to receive assistance from the Fund and the Bank.

2 The Gambia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda. The metadata of these countries was already posted on the DSBB. □

Scaling Up the African Development Bank's Statistical Capacity Building Activities in Africa

Charles Leyeka Lufumpa and Michel Mouyelo-Katoula, ADB

The African Development Bank (AfDB) is involved in various activities aimed at building statistical capacity in African Countries in the context of the 'Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa (RRSF)'. The RRSF is a strategy for guiding statistical development in Africa and has been adopted by all stakeholders, including donors and countries, as Africa's tool for implementing the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics (MAPS) agenda. It focuses on strengthening national statistical systems to meet the data challenges for MDGs & the results agenda. Coordination of RRSF implementation is assured by the African Statistical Coordination Committee (ASCC), led by AfDB & ECA and comprising also the African Union and ACBF. In addition to its statistical capacity building activities, the AfDB also ensures effective acquisition and dissemination of reliable and harmonized data on African countries both within and outside the Bank, in support of the results agenda and the MDGs.

The budget for the Bank's statistical capacity building (SCB) activities for the period 2002-2007 is about US\$ 37 million with the AfDB contributing approximately US\$ 28 million of the total budget. Other contributing partners include the World Bank (US\$ 3 million), DFID-UK (US\$ 1 million), Indian Trust Fund (US\$ 0.1 million), the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF – US\$ 1 million), the Japanese Authorities (US\$ 0.665 million) and the rest by participating countries.

Achievements

Since its launching in 2002, the Bank's statistical capacity building (SCB) program has recorded notable contributions to statistical capacity building in Africa using the International Comparison Program for Africa (ICP-Africa) as a springboard. Through its SCB program, the AfDB provides financial and technical assistance to 51 African countries to strengthen their statistical capacities in the following areas:

(i) Design of National Strategies for the Development of Statistics: The design of the NSDS is recognized and presented as the overarching action by the RRSF. The NSDS is a framework for coordination both across sectors and between donors, making donor assistance coherent and reducing transaction costs by setting out the objectives and results to be achieved and by establishing common mechanisms for implementation, monitoring progress, and reporting. The AfDB is supporting 15 African countries, financially and technically, to develop or update their NSDSs. Another seven countries are about to start this process with AfDB assistance. Overall coordination of NSDS work in Africa is assured by the ASCC Working Group led by AfDB. The Working Group will work very closely with Paris21 and the World Bank to ensure that all countries have up-to-date NSDSs in line with the MAPS & RRSF recommendation.

Furthermore, in collaboration with PARIS21 and the Intersect Task Team, the AfDB has also prepared a manual on 'Mainstreaming Sectoral Statistics in National Statistical Systems'. The manual will be available in both English & French by December 2007.

(ii) Generating Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) Statistics: Launched in 2002, the ICP-Africa is an ongoing initiative coordinated and managed by AfDB and involving 48 African countries, 4 sub-regional organizations and other partners. ICP-Africa is part of the global comparison program managed by the World Bank and aimed at generating PPPs for cross country comparison of economic aggregates. The first results on comparative consumption and price levels for African countries were published in March 2007 and the final PPP results are due for publication by 13th December, 2007. Technical assistance for the program is being implemented in partnership with the ONS-UK.

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(iii) Improving Price Statistics and National Accounts in Africa: Through its ICP-Africa program, the AfDB is assisting countries to streamline and improve the timeliness and quality of their CPIs through wider coverage (urban and rural areas in some countries) and in-depth scope (more price items, improved staff capabilities, updated survey frames, use of internationally accepted data collection methods, etc.). The AfDB is also assisting African countries in upgrading their National Accounts systems through on-the-job training and workshops on the implementation of SNA93.

(iv) MDG Monitoring and Statistical Literacy Project: The AfDB in collaboration with UNDP is helping to build national statistical capacity to improve monitoring of the MDGs in African countries by increasing access to data and building statistical skills within a large number of users across Government and Civil Society. Training workshops have been launched in five pilot African countries and work in other countries is expected to be underway in 2008.

(v) Improving Social Statistics: The Bank is working with UNFPA to improve the UNFPA Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) required for generating poverty indicators in order to enhance trend measurement and cross-country comparisons. The Bank is also contributing to advocacy work for use of census data and for resource mobilization for the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses in Africa. Liberia is expected to be the first country to benefit from the Bank's financial and technical support in the preparation of its census.

(vi) Statistical Training: The AfDB is providing technical and financial assistance to all Statistical Training Centers in Africa to help them improve statistical training on the continent through improved curricula which is more relevant to African circumstances and in particular with respect to the production and use of official statistics. Furthermore, through its ICP-Africa program, the Bank has trained over 2,000 officials from 52 African countries, including a wide range of African consultants. The training is conducted through workshops, seminars and on-the-job training in such areas as price data collection and analysis, NSDS design principles, processing and production of national accounts data, etc.

Way Forward: Scaling Up the Bank's Statistical Capacity Building Activities

In view of the many remaining data challenges in Africa and given the need for timely and reliable data to support the results agenda and MDGs by 2010, it is clear that Africa needs a significant scaling up of resources for statistical capacity building. In response to this challenge, the AfDB is currently preparing a proposal to significantly scale up its support for statistical capacity building activities in African countries. The proposal is expected to be presented for consideration by the AfDB Board of Directors in early 2008. It aims to solicit seed funding from the Bank to support the continuation and significant scaling up of the Bank's statistical capacity building activities

aimed at helping African countries to meet the data challenges for MDGs and results agenda. Donor funding will also be solicited to supplement the resources of the Bank and those of the countries.

This next phase of the Bank's statistical capacity building program will lay special emphasis on improving social and poverty statistics in African countries in addition to the economic statistics. The proposal will include strategies and action plans to: (i) effectively implement the RRSF; (ii) support African countries in implementing their NSDSs which will clearly outline the country priority areas of intervention; (iii) support African countries in the implementation of the 1993-System of National Accounts; (iv) help Regional Economic Communities (RECs) harmonize their national accounts and price data; (v) implement, on a yearly basis, activities aimed at generating PPP-adjusted GDPs as well as poverty PPPs, (vi) the support African countries in their census work in the context of the 2010 round of population and housing censuses in Africa; (vii) help countries to improve their poverty and social statistics in general through enhanced support for country survey programs; (viii) support the training of African statisticians; and (ix) review the existing manuals/guidelines for NSDS design and prepare/review other methodological materials. Other statistical areas to be covered include governance, gender, infrastructure and surveys on the investment climate and competitiveness of African countries. □

The African Development Bank is Mobilization Funds for Liberia's 2008 Population and Housing Census

Adalbert Nshimyumuremyi, ADB, and O.O. Ajayi, Consultant, ADB

Since the 1960's, three modern censuses have been successfully conducted in Liberia, namely, 1962, 1974 and 1984. The 1984 Population and Housing Census collected data as a number of demographic and socio-economic characteristics and indicated a total population of 2.1 million people. However, following the 1984 decennial census, Liberia could not participate in the 1990 and 2000 rounds of censuses due to the civil disruption that engulfed the country starting from 1989 and ending in 2003. The gap for population data that occurred during this period had only been partially and inadequately filled by some few sample surveys between 2000 and 2007-Liberia Demographic and Health Surveys (1999/2000 and 2006/07) and Core Welfare Indicator Questionnaire (CWIQ) Survey (2007).

Liberia formulated in 1988 and revised and enacted into law in 2005, a National Population Policy for social development with specific goals, objectives and targets. Apart from this, Liberia finalized in January 2007 an Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRS), endorsed by the International Community, and is currently engaged in the formulation of a full PRS, aspiring to achieve the Mil-

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lennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. The monitoring and evaluation of these policies and programs require timely availability of comprehensive and disaggregated data/indicators which could be generated through a National Population Census. There is therefore a compelling reason for the census to take place; hence the Government of Liberia (GOL) resolved to undertake a population census in 2008. Government resources for this project became inadequate and unfortunately, donor support that had been anticipated were not much forthcoming leaving a funding gap of well above five (5) million US dollars. This has necessitated the need to request for more donors support. Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geographic Information System (LISGIS) requested the African Development Bank (AfDB) to assist in resource mobilization for its census.

The total census project budget was initially estimated at US\$5.6m but after a careful review, the budget was revised upwards to US\$ 7,659,834. UNFPA has already contributed in the preparation of the Census and committed additional resources for 2007 towards technical, cartographic mapping, GIS equipment, vehicles and motor-bikes. The Government of Liberia (GOL), on its part, has committed resources towards operational cost including fueling and maintenance of vehicles, motor-bikes, generators, expansion of the GIS laboratory and store room for storage of questionnaire, maps etc. But more resources will be needed. The AfDB has committed some resources for data processing equipment and capacity building (trainings). The AfDB also is mobilizing resources and advocating for other donors to commit resources. Japan, EU and USAID have indicated that they may contribute to close this gap, but it has not yet been confirmed.

Mobilizing resources for the 2010 Census Round has become a priority for the AfDB in addition to other statistical capacity building activities undertaken so far in the country. The latter include AfDB's support to Liberia to rebuild its price statistics and national accounts capacity and designing the NSDS through the ICP-Africa Programme. □

PARIS21 Task Team on Statistical Training

Bakary DOSSO, ACS, UNECA

The first meeting of PARIS21 Task Team on Statistical Training was hosted by the Subregional Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics (ISSEA), in Yaoundé, Cameroon, from 18 to 19 September 2007. The meeting was jointly organized by the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21), ISSEA and the National Statistical Office (NSO) of Cameroon. The Task Team on Training was created as a recommendation of the meeting held in Kampala on statistical training on 12 and 13 March 2007.

The meeting was attended by representatives of five Statistical and Demographic Training Centres (STCs): Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Statistique et d'Economie Appliquée (ENSEA) of Abidjan; East African Statistics Training Centre (EASTC) of Dar es Salaam; Makerere University; ISSEA and Institut de Formation et de Recherche Démographique (IFORD). The following organizations also attended the meeting: the African Development Bank, the African Centre for Statistics (ACS), Afristat, EUROSTAT, InWent, the National Statistical Offices of Cameroon and Mozambique, the National Statistics Institute of France (INSEE/CAPESA), PARIS21, the French Embassy in Yaoundé (SCAC Yaoundé), and the Ministry for the Economic Affairs, the Programming and the Regional Planning (MINEPAT) of Cameroon.

The meeting agreed on the organization of the Task Team and discussed the follow up to the recommendations of Kampala. The agreed programme of work of the Task Team includes:

- The complete enumeration of African Statistical Training Centres;
- The widening of the membership of Réseau d'Institutions pour la Formation Statistique Supérieure en Afrique (RI-FOSSA), a network of Institutions providing Higher Statistical Training in Africa;
- A study on statistical training within existing National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) or NSDS under development;
- An Opportunity Study on the creation of a Trust Fund for Statistical Training;
- The Provision of technical assistance to countries to integrate training into their NSDS;
- Advocacy towards partners to finance training within the framework of the NSDS;
- Support to the products and services proposed by Statistical Training Centres to countries; and
- A proposal to have the 2008 African Statistics Day celebrated on a theme related to Statistical Training.

The Task Team will hold its activities under the overall framework of the RRSF and will communicate its findings to all the stakeholders of statistical training in Africa during the forthcoming meetings of the Forum on African Statistical Development (FASDEV) and the Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom Africa). □

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Statistics Development in SADC

Maphion Jambwa, SADC Secretariat

Background

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is a regional grouping comprising 14 countries: Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Its purpose is to serve the common political and economic interests of its member states. This includes much stronger economic integration within the region and common policies vis-à-vis other world regional blocs.

The need for reliable national and regional statistics to support the process of economic integration was recognised right from the start by SADC member states. Statistical information was especially required to support national economic management, international negotiations within SADC and with other economic groupings, monitoring the process of regional integration, and supporting the debate accompanying democratic development.

While the need for reliable statistics was recognised, most of the countries lacked the infrastructure and human resources to produce even a minimum set of core official statistics at the required level of data quality and timeliness. The region was also bedevilled by the fact that good and experienced statisticians often left the respective national statistical systems for more attractive employment elsewhere. In addition, many potential statistics users, especially decision makers at the national and regional levels, were insufficiently aware of the available data and lacked the basic training to enable them to interpret and use the information correctly.

The SADC Regional Statistical Training Project (RSTP) was developed against the above background. It operates under the auspices of the SADC Statistics Committee which is charged by SADC with the responsibility of co-ordinating and guiding statistical development in the region. The RSTP has a focus on the development of regional and national statistical training strategies to provide capacity building for official statistics within the various member states. These strategies will identify the main deficiencies and develop training tools to remove them. This is designed to lead to better production and utilisation of official statistics in the National Statistical Systems (NSSs) of the SADC member states.

It was also envisaged that the above-mentioned strategies would provide mechanisms and frameworks for harmonisation of core official statistics within the SADC region. This would be made possible given that they would facilitate the adoption, promotion and implementation of harmonized statistical concepts, classifications, sources and methodologies across the member states.

The activities of the RSTP to achieve the above results include the following:

- Development of a regional statistical training strategy covering the identification and prioritisation of the users and producers training needs at regional and national level, and a regional training plan.
- Development and adaptation of a Regional Model Syllabus and related training materials, addressing the basic skills needed for the production and analysis of statistical data within the respective national statistical systems of the member states.
- Development and adaptation of regional training programmes and standardised training materials for short courses targeted at NSS management and professional staff to be implemented at a regional level covering theoretical and practical skills, communication skills, resource and management skills, and training of trainers.
- Establishment of the Project Management Unit and the Regional Steering Committee for the RSTP, with the former based at the SADC Secretariat.
- Establishment of the national statistics training committees for purposes of co-ordinating project activities at the national, each co-ordinated by the national statistical office of the respective member state.

Key Milestones in the Implementation of the RSTP

- Important milestones in the implementation of the project include the following:
- Conducting of audits of National Statistics Systems of 12 of the 14 SADC Member states in 2003.
- Finalisation of the Regional Statistical Training Strategy (RSTS) in October 2005.
- Development of the Regional Model Syllabus for the basic course in statistics for national statistical systems in SADC.
- Conducting regional short training courses including: Sample Survey Design, National Accounts, Geographic Information Systems, Human Resource Development, Organization and Management of NSO's, Foreign Trade Statistics, Business Surveys and Frames, Data analysis, Survey and Statistical Methods, Economic Statistics, Agriculture and Food Security Statistics, and Training of Trainers.
- Conducting prioritised national short training courses; on average 3 such courses per member state.

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The Regional Model Syllabus and Training Pack on the SADC Basic Course in Statistics

The development of a Regional Model Syllabus and training materials addressing basic statistics skills needed for the production, analysis and use of statistical data within the respective national statistical systems of SADC member states is the focus of this article. This represents a single key activity and has critical implications for the overall development in official statistics in the SADC region.

The rationale for having a Regional Model Syllabus is based on the fact that this spares Member States the effort of developing such material themselves. Using the same syllabus throughout the region has an added advantage, since it assists in preparing the ground for common thinking on issues of methodologies, classifications and definitions.

(a) Process and Institutional Framework

The audits of national statistical systems in SADC member states undertaken in 2003 and the Regional Statistical Training Strategy (RSTS), finalised in 2005, have been the main frameworks and prerequisites for the development of the Regional Model Syllabus and the Training Pack (training materials). They were crucial to determine the priority user needs and the content of the syllabus and training pack and were the basis on which the service contract for the development of the syllabus and training pack was formulated.

The service contract for the development of the Regional Model Syllabus and Training Pack was awarded in early 2007 to the Statistical Services Centre (SSC) of the University of Reading based in the United Kingdom. Following the award of the contract, the SCC undertook an Inception Mission to the SADC region in March 2007 to:

- map out the detailed implementation plan for the development of the Syllabus and Training Pack. This task involved the SCC and the PMU of the RSTP.
- Stakeholder consultation to determine priority topics for the syllabus. This task was undertaken in five SADC member states (Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, South Africa, and Zimbabwe).
- Detailed planning for the first Stakeholder/Training of Trainers workshop on the Regional Model Syllabus.

The stakeholder workshop was held in May 2007 in Zanzibar, Tanzania, attended by Training Officers from national statistical offices and key staff from statistics training institutions from each member state. Their recommendations were tabled and endorsed at the 11th Meeting of the Regional Steering Committee Meeting of the RSTP which was also held in May 2007 at the same venue in Zanzibar, immediately after the workshop.

The workshop in May 2007 proved to be a critical milestone in the

development of the Model Syllabus and Training Pack and the implementation of the RSTP as a whole. First, it provided a forum where the proposed contents of the syllabus were extensively discussed and the SADC member states were given an opportunity to provide their detailed inputs. Apart from enabling the ownership of the syllabus by the member states, it was also the initial step in the formation of the critical network between the national statistics and key statistics training institutions within the respective member states. This network will be critical for the sustainability of the key results of the RSTP, including the Regional Model Syllabus and the Training Pack.

At the time of writing this article, the second workshop, involving the above network, was underway. The main objective of the second workshop is to allow an intensive review of the training pack. More importantly, the workshop articulated a roll-out plan to facilitate the adoption and adaptation of the Model Syllabus and Training Pack by the respective member states.

(b) Structure of the training programme

The structure of the training programme is modular, organized in three levels where the complexity of the topics covered increases as the student progresses through the programme. As shown in the following table the training at the Basic Level includes two modules, five modules at the Intermediate Level, and eight modules at the Higher Level.

Level	Module	Area
Basic Level	B1	The Statistical System
	B2	Handling Data
Intermediate Level	I1	Collecting Data
	I2	Organising Data
	I3	Analysing Data
	I4	Presenting Statistical Results
	I5	Basic Demography and Epidemiology
Higher Level	H1	Understanding Basic Statistical Concepts
	H2	Using Probability Ideas in Dealing with Data
	H3	Introducing Time Series Concepts
	H4	Economic Concepts and Principles for Statisticians
	H5	Index Numbers and Economic Statistics
	H6	Sampling Concepts in Survey Work
	H7	Surveys
	H8	Statistical Modelling

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Each module is designed to cover topics that fulfil requirements expected of NSS staff with respect to data handling, study design and data analysis. Consideration has been given to the relevance and importance of the resulting outcomes for government statistical work. The modules are linked in the sense that the contents of some are a pre-requisite for another.

Each module consists of around 20 sessions, a session being defined as requiring a period of 3-hours if taught as a face-to-face course. It should therefore be technically feasible for a module to be taught within two weeks as an intensive training programme. A problem-based approach is adopted, so that statistical concepts are introduced with illustrative examples to provide the justification and motivation for the ideas being taught. Lectures and practical work involve examples of relevance drawn from NSS work.

(c) The structure of the training pack

The training pack provides the detailed information of the harmonised model syllabus. It is divided into three levels: Basic, Intermediate and Higher. Each level contains a number of modules that are courses in specific areas of statistics. A series of trainers' guides and notes for trainers have been prepared for each module. They can be found in the pages for the corresponding modules. Video-lectures and demonstrations are also included in the pack.

(d) Accreditation

Students who reach the Higher Level training may wish to proceed to a degree in statistics, and accreditation of the courses under the programme is critical for that reason. At the country level, efforts will be made to embed the syllabus within a University programme, while in other cases the national statistical office will offer the training programme within their own training programmes. In the first case the issue of accreditation will be tackled jointly by the national statistical office and the University. In the second case the national statistical office will need to seek accreditation from the national competent authority.

The programme has also been designed to reach the standard established by the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) for the Higher Certificate, in the United Kingdom and hence training institutions offering the programme can seek RSS accreditation for the qualification they award to successful students. Such accreditation would allow the possibility of proceeding to a Graduate Level Diploma in Statistics by the RSS and will help to benchmark the training programme against other training programmes offered by training institutions in their own country and elsewhere. For this reason, the preparation of a document that sets out the case for accreditation by the RSS, is one of the deliverables in the service contract between SADC and the Statistical Services Centre of the University of Reading for this assignment. This document describes the requirements in terms of examination procedure, external examiner audit and other conditions that a train-

ing institution needs to meet in order to obtain accreditation of the award by the RSS.

4. Conclusion and Way Forward

Version 1 of the Regional Model Syllabus and Training Pack has recently been finalised. The Roll-out plan to be articulated at the second workshop is designed to facilitate the:

- Testing and revision of the training materials;
- Adoption and adaptation of the Model Syllabus and Training Pack by the respective member states to suit their national contexts;
- Translation of the training materials into the other official languages (French and Portuguese);
- Training of Trainers to ensure the effective implementation of the Syllabus and Training Pack especially at the national level and regional statistics training centres. □

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The ECOWAS statistical system

Akou Adjogou, ECOWAS

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was created on 28 May 1975. The ECOWAS Treaty, which was signed in Lagos, Nigeria, was revised in 1993 in Cotonou, Benin Republic, thereby providing the Institution with new organs and mechanisms to enable it function more efficiently for the promotion of greater cooperation and integration towards the realization of an economic union goal. Until the withdrawal of Mauritania in 2000, ECOWAS has covered all the West Africa countries as its Member States.

To achieve its ultimate goal of economic union in West Africa, ECOWAS established a trade liberalization scheme (TLS) and has just adopted a common external tariff (CET). Also, a preparatory arrangement for the monetary union, a multilateral surveillance mechanism for economic policies of Member States was adopted in 1999. Other programmes were also put in place in key socioeconomic areas to accompany the integration process. The main areas covered are: agriculture, transport, telecommunications, energy, as well as peace and security.

The year 2006 will remain a landmark in the history of the Community; it concludes the restructuring of the Community Institutions, stemming from the need to rectify some observed institutional shortcomings so as to make ECOWAS cope more effectively with current and future West African development challenges. The Executive Secretariat was thus transformed into a Commission, with supranational powers. The Commission became operational in January 2007.

The statistical activities of the ECOWAS Commission are geared towards sustainable support to the integration process in three main areas: update of information, harmonisation of statistical tools and statistical coordination, with the overall objective to facilitate the development of the national statistical systems, through cooperation with regional, continental and international partners, frameworks and initiatives.

The ECOWAS statistical system

Evolution of the statistical service of ECOWAS

During the 1980s and 1990s, the Statistics Service was a Division under the Department of Study and Statistics. During this period, it was clearly felt that the service needed to be strengthened. In that regard, and by means of harnessing the necessary resources, the Directors of National Statistics Offices (NSOs) of ECOWAS member states recommended in 1993 the transformation of the Division into a Department, as well as due arrangements to strengthen its capacity in all aspects. This recommendation received no immediate attention, due to constraints prevailing at that time.

In 2000, as a result of a restructuring exercise, the Statistics Division became a service under the Department of Economic Policy, with a relatively strong recognition of the necessity to strengthen its capacities. The driving force was, mainly, the priority which was given to the trade programmes and the multilateral surveillance mechanism for economic policies, and which called for data comparability in the areas of trade, national accounts, consumer price index (CPI) and public finance. Against this background, a 3-year assistance (2003-2005) of the European Commission (ECOSTAT) was prepared to help ECOWAS meet its pressing statistical needs arising from the implementation of the multilateral surveillance and the trade promotion programmes. Under the project, the statistical activities were strengthened in the areas of data production and dissemination, as well as statistical harmonisation and coordination. The ECOWAS own contribution to its statistical activities also increased significantly.

This positive development (and also the increasing interest of partners) made it possible to finance and sustain the participation of Directors NSOs of Statistics in the Community statistical activities. Also, since January 2007, the statistics service has been operating under the Department of Research and Statistics, with increased responsibilities and an architecture designed to accommodate increased manpower.

Legal basis

Although the importance and role of statistics in the integration process have been recognised since the inception of the Community, they have taken quite a long time to materialise. The establishment of a statistics service as a Division at the ECOWAS Secretariat (now ECOWAS Commission) from the beginning of integration activities was a demonstration of such recognition. The Revised Treaty (1993), more than the 1975 Treaty, made clear reference in that regard and set up a Technical Commission (now Technical Committee) to deal with statistical issues, though this Technical Commission combined many other areas such as trade, customs, taxation, money and payments. Statistics was then implicitly understood to facilitate the realisation of the Trade Liberalisation Scheme (TLS) as key integration programme.

With time, it was recognised that the legal background set by the Treaty was not sufficient to widen the scope of the regional statistical activities to include issues relating to statistical development in the region. A Statistical Policy was prepared and adopted in 1996 by the 19th ECOWAS Summit as the framework for the functioning of the regional statistical system. The Statistics Policy, underscores the importance of statistics in regional development and integration process, defines the ECOWAS Statistical System responsible for the implementation of the policy, basic principles and structures of the system, scope of statistical activities, resource requirements and policy implementation mechanisms. The ECOWAS statistical system comprises:

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- National Statistical Systems of Member States as focal points of the ECOWAS statistical system;
- ECOWAS Commission Statistical Service (consisting of the Research and Statistics Department, Community Computer Centre, data banks and information centres of Technical Departments); and
- Regional Statistical Coordination Organs consisting of Meetings of ECOWAS member states Directors of NSOs; 2 Regional Steering Committees – for the two sections: Economic Statistics, and Social and Demographic Statistics; and Standing Committees – for each of the main sub-sections of statistics.

The Research and Statistics Department is at the core of ECOWAS statistical system. Its mandate is to service all cooperation areas of ECOWAS to assist member countries to develop their statistical systems.

The Statistical Policy served as reference for the adoption of subsequent programmes by the Community Decision Organs:

- Plan of action for the harmonisation of national accounts (2003)
- Plan of action for the harmonisation of CPI (2003)
- ECOWAS Framework for Improved GDP (2006)
- ECOWAS Framework for Improved CPI (2006)
- Mid-Term Programme for the harmonisation of CPI (2006),
- Updated Customs and Statistical Framework of External Trade (2006)
- 2006-2010 Regional Statistical Programme (2006)
- ECOWAS Framework for strengthening capacity and development of energy statistics (2007)
- ECOWAS Framework for strengthening capacity and development of environment statistics (2007)
- Regional technical committee on poverty and MDG indicators (2007).

The evolution of the statistics service closely followed that of the Community programmes. In other words, the statistical activities at ECOWAS have been driven by the regional integration programmes. The existing systems allow effective assessment of the community data needs.

Current statistical activities

The activities are geared towards sustainable support to the integra-

tion process in three main areas: update of information, harmonisation of statistical tools, statistical coordination and cooperation.

Update of information

In the area of information update, emphasis is laid on strengthening capacity in data processing and dissemination, through connectivity and databases, at national and regional level. In that regard, common tools are promoted, as means to force harmonised concepts and methods. An example of such tools is the EUROTRACE software for the compilation of external trade statistics. Similar objectives are being pursued in the area of CPI and GDP. The regular publications cover trade statistics, national accounts, social and economic indicators and ECOWAS Statistical Bulletin.

Recently adopted programmes concern energy and environment statistics, as well as poverty and MDG indicators. A publication on the status of environment statistics in ECOWAS member countries has been compiled in 2005. The implementation of the energy and environment frameworks will be of priority for the short-term. The publication on ECOWAS Poverty Profile and the database on poverty indicators (being developed), constitute the reference framework for the harmonisation of concepts and methods in this area.

Harmonisation of statistical tools

As regards the harmonisation of statistical tools, the current efforts are geared towards external trade statistics, national accounts and CPI, and have reached advanced stages; while preparatory steps are taken for the harmonisation of public finance.

Statistical coordination and cooperation

In the area of statistical coordination and cooperation, the main reference is the 2006-2010 Regional Statistical Programme. Efforts are being made to mobilize the necessary funding for the programme, the main potential partners being the European Commission, the African Development Bank (ADB) and the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF).

The Directors of NSOs of ECOWAS member states meet every year (within the framework of the Technical Committee on Trade, Customs, Taxation, Statistics, Money and Payments) to discuss progress in the implementation of the regional statistical activities and programmes, and to provide necessary orientation. Their reports go to Councils of Ministers. The main input to the meeting of Directors of Statistics reports of regular meetings of technical standing committees in specific areas. These are:

- Regional technical committee on national accounts
- Regional technical committee on CPI
- Regional technical committee on external trade statistics

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- Regional technical committee on energy and environment statistics
- Regional committee on poverty and MDG indicators.

In addition to these institutionalised meetings, other forums of experts are also organised on data collection, data processing and data dissemination. Also, the international exposure of the Directors of Statistics is being enhanced through their participation in international fora, including the United Nations Statistical Commission.

ECOWAS also keeps abreast of international developments in statistics. In this context, ECOWAS has been working with regional and international organizations (such as AFRISTAT and the ADB) in the development of statistical nomenclature and frameworks and participation in meetings of these organizations. It is also working with the United Nations Statistical Division on poverty and MDG indicators monitoring.

Funding and other resource requirements for statistical development in the ECOWAS region

The issue of funding and other resource requirements for statistical development in the ECOWAS region has long been recognized. The following benchmarks could be mentioned in that regard:

- The 29th session of the Authority of Heads of State and Governments held in Niamey, Niger, on 12th January 2006, reviewed the state of statistical development in the region with regard to:
 - importance of statistics for development and integration of the West African region;
 - inadequate functioning of the national statistical systems in the production of statistics;
 - existence of an ECOWAS statistics policy adopted in 1996;
 - the fact that statistics constitutes a public good and as such its production must be adequately provided for by the Member states; and
 - the need to strengthen the regional mechanism for the production, harmonization and dissemination of statistical information necessary for the monitoring of economic and social development in the ECOWAS region.
- The session adopted the ECOWAS 2006 – 2010 Regional Statistical Programme along with its objectives, coordination tasks for the programme, its monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and the funding strategy both at the regional and national levels. In view of these decisions, the Authority of Heads of States directed that the Executive Secretariat (now the ECOWAS Commission)

should carry out a study on the feasibility of creating a support fund for statistical development in West Africa.

- During the 13th joint ordinary meeting of the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee and the Operations and Administration Committee of the West African Monetary Agency (WAMA) held in Accra, Ghana from 9th to 11th January, 2005, the status of the harmonization of statistics in the West Africa region was discussed. The committee made the following recommendations among others:

- That the Governors of Central Banks of the sub-region should use the forum of the convergence council meetings to sensitize the Ministers responsible for statistics to ensure the efficiency of the operations of such structures by providing them with adequate resources;
 - That there was need for high priority support for institutions responsible for the production of statistics by giving them adequate human, material and financial resources;
 - That studies be carried out on the feasibility of creating a support fund for statistical structures; and
 - That particular attention be given to the promotion of regional strategies with respect to coordination of statistical institutions of the region in order to facilitate access to external financing.
- The ECOWAS Statistical Policy adopted on 27th July 1996 by the Authority of Heads of State and Government, provided that:
 - Member States shall give priority attention to the development of statistics;
 - There shall be adequate and timely provision of the resources required by the community statistics cooperation programme and the functioning of the ECOWAS statistical system, at both national and regional levels, particularly concerning the modernization, upgrading and general enhancement of the operations of the statistical services in the region. To this end, member states shall grant the requisite autonomy to the national statistical services;
 - In order to develop and enhance the human resource capacity of national statistical services, Member States shall adopt appropriate staff training and remuneration policies;
 - The ECOWAS Executive Secretariat (now the Commission) shall take all possible measures to mobilize financial, technical and material assistance from external sources, to complement the support of member states.

These positive developments contributed to an increased funding for the community statistical activities, from both the Commission's budget and external assistance.

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Conclusion

Despite the above positive note on funding of statistical activities in the region, a lot remains to be done. For instance, less than one third of the required funding for the implementation of the 2006-2010 Regional Statistical Programme has been mobilised so far. The conclusion and the implementation of the on-going work on sustainable funding for statistical development in West Africa will retain great attention of the Commission during the lifespan of the current Regional Statistical Programme.

1. This participation was poor during the 1980s and 1990s, due to the difficulties encountered by Member States to sponsor the participation of the Directors of Statistics in meetings.
2. ECOWAS Briefs: ECOWAS Statistics Policy: A Key to Regional Development
3. previously the Statistics Division
4. EUROTRACE for external trade statistics, ECOMAC for the multilateral surveillance, and StatBase for data dissemination (with technical assistance from ECA)
5. The work on poverty and MDG indicators, as well as energy and environment statistics is done in close collaboration with the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD).
6. The harmonisation of national accounts and CPI are being carried in close collaboration with the UEMOA Commission, Ouagadougou, and with technical assistance with AFRISTAT, Bamako.
7. The study is being carried out.

Statistical Capacity Building for Improved Data Management In Uganda

Johnson Kagugube Lubega, Uganda Bureau of Statistics

The capacity of a country's statistical office to produce, share, and disseminate quality statistics is crucial for the success of any development strategy. Both the human resource and equipment are very vital in facilitating provision of data to support evidence based planning and monitoring. A wide range of social, economic, demographic and environmental statistical data is needed to support the development process, provide the evidence base for policy formulation, support implementation, monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.

The Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) was established by the UBOS Act Number 12 of June 1998, as a successor organization to the Statistics Department under the Ministry for Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MFPED). It is the principal Government agency responsible for developing and maintaining the National Statistical System (NSS) in Uganda so as to ensure collection, analysis and publication of integrated, relevant, reliable and timely statistical information; and to constitute a coordinating, monitoring and supervisory body for the NSS. The NSS is constituted by data producers, users, and suppliers, and the research and training institutions at the national and lower levels of planning. UBOS established a Directorate for District Statistics and Capacity Development (DSCD) which is responsible for designing and supporting the development of capacity within districts to produce, handle and utilize statistical data and information. The Directorate coordinates and assists in the generation of district statistics and supports the building of capacity within the districts and line ministries through its Statistical Capacity Building (SCB) Section.

The Government of Uganda (GOU) has initiated strategies to develop a national coordination framework for monitoring and evaluation of the development process, and UBOS is mandated by the UBOS Act to produce reliable statistics and also harmonise and standardise the production and utilisation of statistics in the country.

At every level of administration, it is recognized that, without good statistics, governments cannot deliver efficient administration, good management, and evidence-based policy making. Statistics provide a means for the public to monitor the activities of government and make decisions about their own lives. Statistical capacity is desirable for an effective and efficient national statistical system that would provide data needed to support better policies and to monitor progress.

Statistical capacity building is undertaken through; training and mentoring of human resources, and equipping and maintenance of equipment. Capacity building is crucial since there are some important programmes both at national and international level with agreed goals and indicators that require statistical support for improved implementation and monitoring.

Universities and colleges in Uganda are responsible for the training of students/ researchers to acquire degrees and certificates in statistics. The Statistical Capacity Needs Assessment Study which was conducted by UBOS in 2005 revealed that all the Universities that were visited were offering statistics either as a major or a subject for the science degree students. There were degree and non-degree statistical training programmes. The statistical capacity building efforts are extended to the stakeholders in collaboration with the higher institutions of learning to eliminate duplication of efforts. The collaboration takes the form of availing facilities for the training, identification of trainers, co-facilitating the trainings, and joint development of the training modules.

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Statistics House, Uganda

The statistical capacity building support is being delivered at three levels of national, regional and district level, with the aim of strengthening the capacity of institutions to collect and analyse information that will support poverty monitoring, resource tracking and evaluation of development programmes. Institutions are equipped with skills to enable them collect reliable information to facilitate planning and also update the various data management information systems. The aim of statistical training is not only to teach some new methods, but also to increase the trainee's abilities to manage data.

At national level, short-term training not lasting more than a month have been initiated for the sector ministries, Non Governmental Organizations, research institutions and others. The Statistical Capacity Building (SCB) Section of the Bureau is co-facilitating training a Statistical Data Analysis Course, which is organized by the Uganda Management Institute on a bi-annual basis. The training is conducted twice a year, in the months of February and October, and has been running since 2005. In addition, in-service trainings in data management have been conducted in the past at the UBOS headquarters for the staff of UBOS, and sector ministries.

In order to achieve high quality training, and enable the trainees to master the capacities of applying statistical methods correctly, a training of trainers' course was organized for the facilitators. Regular statistical capacity needs assessments are also conducted, to enable the SCB Section identify the training needs and capacity gaps of stakeholders. One important step in the Plan for National Statistics Development (PNSD) process was the comprehensive assessment of the current status of the NSS including its challenges. The Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) being covered identified their capacity gaps in the process of preparing their Sector Strategic Plans for Statistics (SSPS).

There is a plan to establish a Statistical Training Centre at UBOS to meet the statistical training needs of the national level stakeholders. The table below presents the target group, and proposed courses of the national level stakeholders.

Table 1: Statistical Training at National Level

Target Group	Proposed Courses	Location	Trainers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UBOS Staff - Staff handling statistics in sector ministries - NGO Staff -Research institution staff - Others mainly from neighbouring countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data collection techniques and methods: (both qualitative and quantitative techniques) - Survey design, organisation and management - Sampling techniques - Statistical concepts - Project design, planning, management, monitoring and evaluation - Data management (processing, analysis, storage, and validation) using specialised statistical packages - Report Writing, presentation and dissemination skills - Others like, training of trainers 	UBOS Statistical Training Wing. Entebbe	UBOS ISAE/MUK UMI Universities Short-term Consultants

The target group, courses, location and the trainers are presented in the table 2 below.

UBOS is facilitating the attachment of statistics students of the Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics (ISAE), Makerere University. Students are exposed to the application of statistical techniques in sector ministries, and Higher Local Governments (HLGs). The students are attached for a period of one month during their recess term. During the year 2007, a total of 236 students of statistics were facilitated to undertake their internship in the sector ministries, government organizations, NGOs, and HLGs. The facilitation was in form of meeting the accommodation, subsistence and transport costs. The internship helps the student to acquire some experience in management of statistics in a large organization. The organization also realizes the importance of statistics in planning and resource allocation. The current curricula in our Universities are generally academically oriented, and as such, students are usually not exposed to the practical issues in real life situations. As a result it is usually difficult to apply the knowledge so acquired after completion of the university programme. The internship arrangement will contribute to bridging this gap.

UBOS conducts regional training in collaboration with seven universities of Gulu, Kumi, Makerere, Mbale Islamic University in Uganda, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Mukono Christian University, and Ndejje. The HLGs were attached to the Universities based on proximity (Figure 1). Currently, there are 93 HLGs (80 districts and 13 municipalities), and each of the HLGs has a planning unit. Every planning unit has a staff responsible for statistics, and this is the staff mainly targeted for the statistical capacity build-

STATISTICAL CAPACITY BUILDING

ing efforts at regional level. The structure of the HLG also has a Bio-Statistician in the Health Department.. The training also benefits staff of other departments who handle statistics in the district.

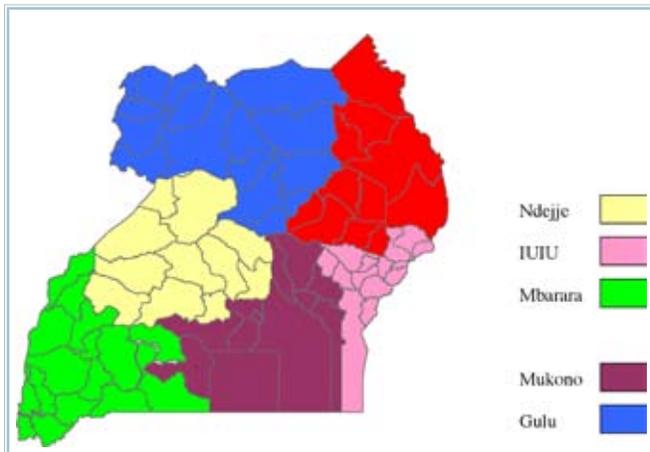


Figure 1: Map of Uganda by District and Collaborating University

When the Universities were consulted about the collaborative arrangement, they were very positive about providing skilled staff as resource persons and well-equipped venues for the training. Universities were offering statistics as a course for the under-graduate and post graduate students in the science disciplines. Prior to the collaborative arrangement with the Universities, UBOS had to book a hotel and transport equipment (computers and projectors) to the venue of the training workshop, whenever a training course was to be conducted. Currently, the role of UBOS in a regional statistical training is to provide guidance on the course content, and participants; co-facilitate the training; coordinate and supervise the training; and provide the necessary funds to facilitate the training. Under the European Development Fund for the Statistical Capacity Building, some IT equipment have been procured for the Universities under the collaborative arrangement.

In addition, the SCB programme included a component on the mentoring and attachment, where staff of the district planning unit, mainly the statistician will be attached to UBOS, sector ministries and well performing districts for a period of about one month. The component also provides for the attachment of some of the UBOS statisticians to HLGs. The SCB is also equipping staff handling statistics in the HLGs.

Table 2: Statistical Training at Regional Level

The devolution of power and functions of planning, delivery and management of basic services from the Central Government

to local authorities, empowered sub-counties as important levels of planning. The local governments restructuring programme has empowered further the sub-counties by entrusting the planning process to graduates (Administrative officers and Community Development Officers). At the sub-county level, the Community Development Officer is in-charge of planning and data management. The district level training is aimed at addressing the statistical capacity building needs of the sub-counties. The training will be implemented at district level by the statisticians in the district planning units for the Community Development Officers and other staff involved in data handling and management. The role of UBOS at this level will be; to develop training modules in collaboration with the Universities and district planning units; provide guidance on the course content, and participants; co-facilitate the trainings; coordinate and supervise the training; and equip sub-counties for improved data management.

The statistical capacity building process, whether at the national or local government level in Uganda is faced with a number of challenges. These include; limited resources; over-reliance on donor funding; inadequate coordination among stakeholders involved in handling statistics; attrition of trained staff for green pastures; and lack of control of the staff of other departments/ agencies by the National Statistical Office. Amidst all these challenges, statistical capacity building is a prerequisite for evidence based planning.

There is a need for statistical capacity building to enable all the stakeholders involved in the NSS to acquire expertise to determine their data needs and priorities. Stakeholders need to acquire knowledge to collect, interpret and use data effectively to support planning and monitoring of national development. The statistical capacity built will ensure availability of abilities to collect data for planning, implementation and monitoring of development programmes. Co-ordinated capacity building is an important precondition for the sustainability of development initiatives. □

Target Group	Proposed Courses	Location	Trainers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - District officials from departments of Planning, Education, Health, Environment, Community Development, Agriculture, Gender, etc. - District NGO Staff - Research institution -staff - Others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Statistical methods - Data collection techniques and methods (both qualitative and quantitative) - Survey design, survey organization, and management - Sampling techniques - Statistical concepts - Project Planning, Design, Management, Monitoring and Evaluation - Data Management (Processing , analysis, storage, and validation) - Report Writing, presentation, and dissemination skills - Others like training of trainers for the district level training 	<p>Six centres in the university campuses of Mbarara, Ndejje, Gulu, Mukono, Mbale and Kumi</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UBOS - University Lecturers - UMI - Short-term Consultants

STATISTICAL CAPACITY BUILDING

E-Learning in Africa

Roger Stern, Statistical Services Centre, University of Reading, UK

The analysis of climatic data is important in many development sectors including agriculture, food security, health, water supply, building and flood prevention. National Meteorological Services (NMSs) in Africa are decentralising their climatic activities, a change made possible by the wide availability of computers and improved communications infrastructure. The staff in the headquarters and those in the individual Meteorological stations need training in data analysis, as do the many users of climatic data.

A training course, called **SIAC**, (Statistics in Applied Climatology), is designed to support producers and users of climatic data to develop their skills in the analysis of the historical records. Since 2005, part of this training has been given as a facilitated **e-learning course**.

The background to **SIAC** and the need for an e-learning course are described in Butcher and Dale (2007) and in Janssens-Bevernage and Stern (2006). This article merely describes the objectives of the training and the way the e-learning course operates.

Fig. 1 Objectives of the e-SIAC course

Statistics in Applied Climatology
Topic 1: About SIAC and e-learning
Screen 3 of 10

Improving Climatic Services

What are the SIAC programme's objectives?

1 Click on the underlined text or the pictures in the field to find out.

The objectives of Statistics for Applied Climatology (SIAC) are:

- 1 Enhance** the role of the National Meteorological Services (NMS) in economic and social development activities by responding better to the needs of end-users of climatic information.
- 2 Enable** decentralisation of some NMS activities, such as computerization of data and production of basic reports.
- 3 Extend** the range of products from climatic data, tailored to the needs of users in agriculture, food security, health, and other sectors.
- 4 Upgrade** the quality of processing data from national climatic databases by training participants in the use of an analytical tool (Instat).
- 5 Improve** statistical capabilities and computing skills of participants to produce appropriate analyses of climatic data.

Navigation

Objectives

The objectives of **SIAC** are shown in Figure 1 (taken from Module 1 of the e-learning course). Two points from the objectives are as follows:

They apply particularly to the National Meteorological Service (NMS), but courses with similar objectives are equally needed for the National Statistical System (NSS). This can be seen by changing NMS in the objectives above to NSS and changing climatic to statistical. For example the first and third objectives would read:

Enhance the role of the **National Statistical System (NSS)** in economic and social development activities by responding better to the needs of end users of statistical information.

Extend the range of products from statistical data, tailored to the needs of users in agriculture, food security, health, and other sectors.

These objectives go further than improving the individual skills of participants. They relate also to improvements in the working of the service itself. A subsequent article will report on a study that assesses the extent to which these objectives were realised.

How the course operates

The **e-SIAC** training uses an online course page developed in the Moodle, open source software to support Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs), (Fig. 2). A 'blended learning' approach is used, catering for different learning styles and different levels of internet access. The early runs of the course are administered and facilitated by SSC staff. Later, staff from African organisations will become involved in the facilitation, as well as building further training materials. The course materials were developed with support from the UK Meteorological Office and DFID.

The online course page is the virtual training venue, where the participants discuss problems and the practical exercises supported by the online facilitators. The learning content is offered in animated visual training units with fictional characters who have similar roles and working environments to the participants' professional context. Fig. 3 shows a screen from the first module of the e-learning course. It features three fictional characters that typify the intended audience for the training.

STATISTICAL CAPACITY BUILDING

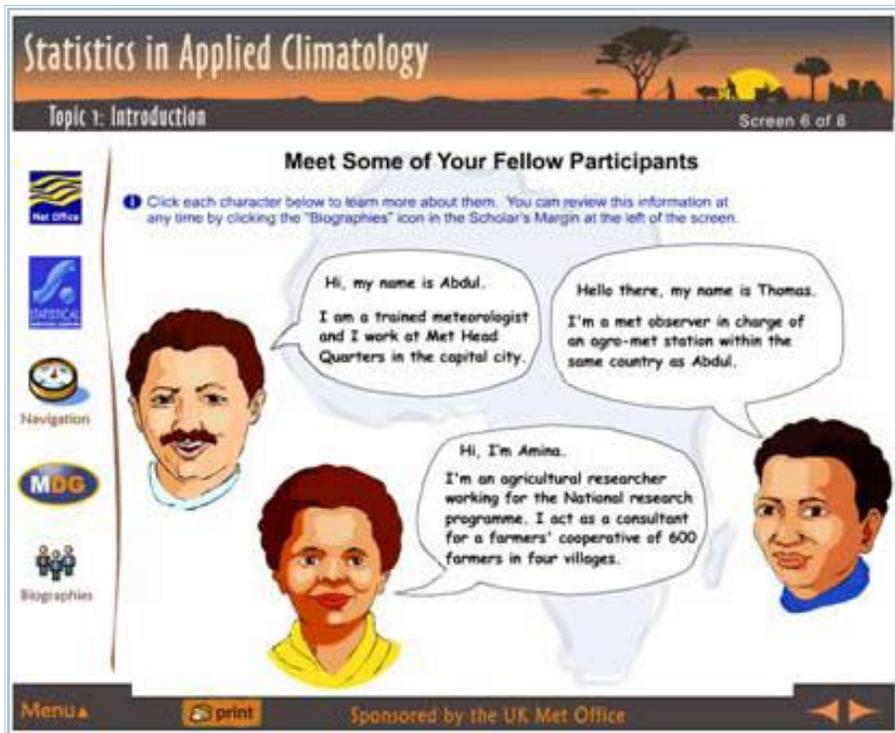
Conclusion

Many online courses consist of only instructional material (unsupported web-based trainings), while others provide a forum for exchange. A strength of e-SIACs is the combination of all elements of online learning in one design called 'blended learning'. As a result an engaging and inspiring educational environment has been created.

Fig. 2 The virtual learning environment



Fig. 3 Typical (fictional) participants on the e-SIAC training course



The high level of participation in e-SIAC is not surprising considering the eye-opening experience for otherwise very isolated professionals and given the cultural bias towards celebrating communication and community. However, the levels of participation exceeded the course developers' expectations in view of the sometimes-difficult circumstances in which participants access the Internet and the fact that statistics is still often regarded as a difficult subject. The quality of the course and the online facilitation seem to give ample motivation to go the extra mile (very often literally) to access the on-line components of the course.

Following the training the "graduates" continue discussions through the "alumni" forum, which currently has over 150 "graduates" from 25 African countries and from 15 other countries. The next article will report on their evaluation of the course.

We hope this type of course can inspire other educational programmes offered in Africa to consider making learning more accessible and learning journeys more engaging through adding an e-learning component.

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STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION

The South African Statistical Association (SASA)

Immo Kleinschmidt, SASA (outgoing) President

Founded in 1953, the South African Statistical Association (SASA) recently held its 50th conference at Misty Hills near Johannesburg. The mission of the Association is 'to foster the study and knowledge of statistical theory and its application towards improving the quality of life of all South Africans.' Therefore, both the advancement of statistical theory and the application of statistics towards broad societal goals are boldly stated in its mission statement.

Membership of the association, which stands at around 400, reflects these two strands. Many members and office bearers of SASA have been academics from Statistics departments at South African universities. However, statisticians from research institutes and from commerce and industry have also started playing an important role in the life of the association. The association holds a conference annually, at which both theoretical and applied papers are presented, and to which internationally prominent statisticians are invited as guest speakers every year. For example, at the 2007 conference Professor Ben Kiregyera, Director of the African Centre for Statistics, Professor Jon Rao from Carleton University, Professor Helen McGilivray from Queensland University of Technology, and Professor Ken Bollen from the University of North Carolina were guest speakers. Professor Denise Lievesley, President of the International Statistics Institute also attended the conference.

In recent years the association has developed close ties with Statistics South Africa (StatsSA), South Africa's official statistics agency. At its 2007 conference the Statistician General, Mr. Pali Lehohla, was awarded the honorary presidency of the association in recognition of his contribution towards bringing about an appreciation of statistics in its broadest sense by government, business, civil society and the public at large.

SASA's activities include the work of its education committee, careers committee, official statistics committee, activities of a number of local chapters, and a statistical terminology project, amongst others.

The education committee annually awards bursaries and organises scholarships and project competition prizes to a number of students studying Statistics at South African tertiary institutions. SASA is highly appreciative of the financial support it receives for making these awards from SAS and from Statistics South Africa. In recent years the education committee has directed much attention to training secondary school teachers and to writing training material in data handling skills, which has been included in the South African schools syllabus. This major initiative is directed at enhancing numeracy and ultimately statistical capacity at grass-roots level in South Africa. The schools initiative is a collaborative venture with Statistics South Africa, which also provides the funding for this project.

The official statistics committee works closely with Stats SA and supports a number of initiatives, including the provision of training for official statisticians. Official statistics received particular attention at the 2007 conference with Professor Ben Kiregyera giving a workshop and a plenary session in official statistics.

The careers committee organises activities that market careers in statistics to students at schools and universities and to inform the general public about the training of statisticians. The activities include a regular column in the SASA newsletter, a careers in statistics brochure and workshops.

The terminology project is a working committee that translates statistical terms into Afrikaans. The list of terms, together with context sentences, definitions and sources is regularly updated, and made publicly available through the SASA web site.

One way in which SASA recognises scholarship in Statistics is through the award of a medal, the Sichel Medal, to the member of the association who has published the best statistical paper during the previous year. The Sichel medal is named in honour of the late Herbert Sichel, a founder member and past president of SASA, who is regarded as one of the pioneers of Statistics in South Africa.

The South African Statistical Journal (SASJ), first issued in 1967, publishes peer reviewed papers on statistical theory, as well as in applied statistics. Published papers are of a high scientific standard as a result of a rigorous peer review mechanism.

The association also publishes a newsletter, SASA News, by which it communicates with its members. The newsletter reports on activities of the executive committee, the annual conference and SASA special purpose committees; it profiles prominent individual statisticians from time to time and publishes book reviews.

SASA is likely to play an increasingly important role in South Africa in the years ahead, due to the hosting of the 2009 ISI conference in South Africa, and due to the increased emphasis by government and other agencies on monitoring and evaluation of policies through the collection and analysis of relevant data. Establishing links with statistical associations elsewhere in Africa is an important goal of SASA, and we are therefore particularly pleased to have been given this opportunity of portraying the association in the African Statistical Newsletter. We are excited by the launching of the Newsletter; we wish it every success and trust that it will make a significant contribution to greater regional communication and to the establishment of statistical systems in Africa which will ultimately contribute to the promotion of democracy, development and greater prosperity.

The SASA web site can be found at www.sastat.org.za □

STATISTICAL ASSOCIATIONS

The Uganda Statistical Society (USS)

Owino Abraham Yeyo, USS President

The Uganda Statistical Society (USS) was founded in 1980 to promote standards in the statistics profession, stimulate and promote research in statistics, promote teaching and application of statistics in planning and decision making in public and private sector and to share experiences. It became inactive in the 1990s due to unforeseen challenges but was revived in 2003 and now has a membership of 200 ordinary members and 6 corporate members. The USS membership is comprised of statisticians from the academia, research institutions, Government offices, Audit firms and banks, NGOs and Private Organizations.

In June 2007, the USS held its first International Scientific Conference at Statistics House, Kampala under the theme: "Monitoring and Measuring Development". This Conference, which attracted 200 participants from 15 African countries and 8 International Agencies/Development Partners, was held back-to-back-backed with a two-week Africa-Regional Workshop on Measuring Progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

The Society holds quarterly forums in which statisticians from different fields present papers on application of statistics in their fields of involvement. Following the first scientific conference, the USS intends to hold annual scientific conferences in which current issues in statistical development and application are addressed by experienced and internationally acclaimed statisticians. In the June conference, for instance, speakers included Prof. Robert McCaa, University of Minnesota USA, Mr. Robin Kibuka of IMF, USA, Dr. V.O. Akinyosoye, Director General, NBS, Nigeria, Prof. Ben Kiregyera of ACS-UNECA and Mr. Thomas Wollnit of InWent, Germany

The Annual conferences will also be an opportunity for encouraging young statisticians to present papers and interact with mentors. It will also be designed to create dialogue between the various stakeholders of the national statistical system, namely the producers, users, suppliers and trainers thus fostering collaboration among them. For instance, in the first conference, there was a panel discussion in which data users in the panel presented their concerns about accessibility and relevance of available data and these concerns were addressed by data producers in the panel. The second Annual conference is scheduled for the second quarter of 2008.

Among its recent activities, the USS participated in the September 2007 Pre-CHOGM¹ symposium of Science and Technology organised by Mbarara University and contributed a paper in the panel for Institutional arrangements for Science and Technology. Three USS members also participated in a training on human rights, governance and democracy organized by InWent in Namibia in October 2007.

The USS is working towards establishing links with various international statistical networks. The USS president attended the 50th South African Statistical Association (SASA) conference held in Johannesburg and registered as a member of SASA. He held discussions with the incoming SASA President on possibilities of collaboration between USS and SASA. In November 2007, the USS signed an agreement of understanding with the American Statistical Society (ASA) so that USS members can have access to ASA materials, journals, meetings and other opportunities. Following this agreement, USS members will be encouraged to register and benefit from the collaboration. ASA members will also have access to USS programmes and will be encouraged to participate in them especially as facilitators in conferences, forums or workshops. The USS is also working towards corporate membership of the International Statistical Institute (ISI) and the Royal Statistical Society (RSS).

A statistical professional ethics committee was set up in 2006 to develop policy on statistical professional ethics. The ethics policy document is to be discussed at the end-of-year forum to be held in December 2007. Plans are under way to open chapters in the districts so that statisticians across the country have opportunity to interact. The society also plans to run a statistical advocacy programme in educational institutions and communities working with the chapters that are to be established. A number of Universities with statistics departments have expressed a desire to become corporate members. Two of them have fulfilled the requirements and have been duly registered. Others are still in the process.

The Society publishes a newsletter, The USS Newsletter, by which it communicates with its members. The newsletter reports on activities of the executive committee, the USS members, and students' statistical activities. The society also jointly started, with the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, the Africa Statistical Journal which is a bi-lingual peer-reviewed Journal mainly circulated in the African region as a research outlet and information sharing publication among academic and practicing statisticians as well as data users. The Editorial Board comprises of internationally distinguished statisticians. The Editorial Board is the Director of AfDB, Dr. Charles Lufumpa and the Director the UNECA African Centre for Statistics Prof. Ben Kiregyera. First issued in 2005, the journal is published bi-annually.

The USS looks forward to working together with other statistical associations across Africa and to being a part of the African Statistical Association once revived and re-established. The USS is also working towards fostering a harmonious working relationship among the stakeholders of the National statistical system so that statistical development is enhanced. With the regional and international statistical networks, the USS hopes to be part of a unified statistical fraternity working towards promoting the development and use of statistics to inform national and the global development agenda.

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You can visit the USS web site at www.ugss.org.

¹Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting which brings together leaderships of 53 British Commonwealth countries from across the world.



A panel discussion: Challenges of statistical education in Ethiopia

Ethiopian Statistical Association

The Ethiopian Statistical Association (ESA) is actively working for the promotion and development of statistical knowledge and practice in the country. In line with of the objectives stated in its constitution, it tries to identify challenges in the broad field of statistics in general, and statistics education in particular, and looks for various methods of responding effectively and responsibly to the challenges so as to assure the effectiveness of programs in reaching desired objectives.

To address these challenges and propose recommendations aimed at improving the statistics education in higher educational institutions, a half day panel discussion was organized by the ESA in collaboration with the Department of Statistics of Addis Ababa University (AAU) on the 13th of August 2007 at UNECA Conference Hall. The theme of the panel discussion was "Challenges of Statistics Education in Ethiopia: The case of Higher Education Institutions". African Centre for Statistics (ACS) hosted the panel discussion as part of the celebration of its 1st anniversary

The standard/quality issues of statistics education, students' attitude towards statistics courses, availability of qualified manpower (statisticians) in the Universities, the postgraduate program in Statistics at AAU, the shortage of resources (books, software, etc), and the recognition of statistics in Universities/or by University administrations were the major areas of focus for the discussion. Staff members from different Universities were invited to present their respective experience in higher education institutions. Also, local and international institutions and prominent individuals working in national organizations who have been involved directly or indirectly in using statistics or teaching statistics at any level were.

The panel discussion was opened by Dr. Emmanuel Gabreyohannes, president of ESA who emphasised on the need for improving statistical education as a major objective of the association. The panel discussion was expected to come up with fruitful ideas that will strengthen the statistics profession. On behalf of the members of

ESA, he expressed his deepest gratitude to the African Centre for Statistics for sponsoring the activities

The next session was a keynote address by Prof. Ben Kiregyera, Director of the African Centre for Statistics at UN/ECA. He began his key note address by stressing the fact that many African countries do not have functioning National Statistical Associations (NSA) either because they have not formed them or they were formed but are just inactive, and yet, there is ample evidence to suggest that NSAs can play a big role in supporting the development of official statistics and in nurturing and promoting the discipline of statistics in a country. He expressed his pleasure to see a vibrant NSA in Ethiopia, and said the staff of ACS "thought that the best way to celebrate the first anniversary of the renaissance of the statistical function in the form of the new African Centre for Statistics was to join the ESA in this very important discussion on statistical training as the Centre believes both in the usefulness of strong NSAs and in statistical capacity building through training".

Prof. Kiregyera added that issues on education must be discussed in some context – historical or developmental – and whichever context is used, two cardinal questions would have to be answered – education for what and for whom? By way of trying to answer these two questions, he discussed pertinent issues related to appropriate training in statistics for the management of the National Statistical System (NSS). These issues include the concept of NSS and official statistics, training towards the creation of an information society, the need to focus on user requirements, improving data analysis and reporting, enhancing statistical competencies in sectors, and THE imperative of greater interaction between academic and "official" statisticians.

Following the key note address, different papers elaborating on the theme of the day were presented from representatives of four well-known Universities of the country, namely Hawassa, Haramaya, Jimma and Addis Ababa University.

Teaching Statistics to Statistics-major Students at Universities

The first presentation entitled "Teaching Statistics to Statistics-major Students at Universities" was by Dr. Ayele Taye, Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences at Hawassa University (HU). The purpose of his talk was to raise some points of discussion on the current and future aspects of statistics education at the Universities based on Hawassa University's experience of running the program. He said that the field of Statistics is at the highest demand among students at Hawassa University. However, the resources for teaching are very limited: most text books and reference materials are xeroxed copies and shortage exists in terms of quantity, appropriateness and up-to-datedness. More work also needs to be done in regard to teaching materials/manuals. Even though computer labs are established, more PCs and legal packages are still in demand.

STATISTICAL ASSOCIATIONS

He discussed in detail a number of issues related to the need for introducing modern statistical methods; balancing between theory and application; curriculum review with respect to content, relevance, clarity and consistency; introducing efficient measurement and evaluation techniques; staff development and exchange, among others. Dr Ayele also highlighted the need for having more diverse M.Sc. programs and the commencement of a Ph.D. program in Statistics as there is high demand for both. He finally calls for strengthening ESA so that it can play its role in Statistics education & research.

The Problem of Teaching Statistics as a Common Course

The second speaker was Ato Adem Kedir who is an assistant professor at Haramaya University. He presented the preliminary results from his research entitled "The Problem of Teaching Statistics as a Common Course". In his review of literature on students' attitude towards Statistics courses, Ato Adem said that many students see such courses as an obligatory hurdle, requiring them to pass a course, in which they have limited interest or ability. Resistance to statistics (quantitative methods) course stems in part from the fact that most of such courses teach proficiency in limited number of statistical techniques, outside the context in which they are used.

In his research Ato Adem included a random sample of 64 students from five departments who took the course "Introduction to Statistics" at different times at Haramaya University. According to the preliminary results, the major problems include:

- Students take statistics courses early in their studies (in the first semester of the first year) when they are unaware of what statistical methods (if any) they will employ;
- The examples and illustrations given in the classroom are often not related to the students' field of study;
- Students often concentrate on memorization of formulae and concepts (which are rapidly forgotten after the conclusion of the courses);
- Demonstrations are not based on real data; and
- Students rely only on lecture notes due to the scarcity of text books and reference materials.

Finally, he recommended that real-problem based approach be followed so as to motivate students to learn Statistics. He added that access to computers/statistical software and real data application are imperative so that students can understand the power and value of statistics.

Challenges and Opportunities of Statistics Education

The third presentation was by Ato Yehene Getachew who is currently a lecturer of statistics at Jimma University, College of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine. The title of the presentation was "Brief Assessment of the Challenges & Opportunities of Statistics Education in Jimma University". He began by outlining the oppor-

tunities enjoyed at his University. These include the positive attitude of the University towards expanding statistical education; availability of financial resources; a decentralized faculty based budgeting system; and involvement of statisticians in projects funded by various agencies.

Ato Yehene then discussed the challenges faced with respect to staffing, training, facilities and researches at Jimma University. There is a shortage of qualified staff due to limited inter and intra faculty collaboration to optimal utilization of available statisticians, and high turnover of staff due to attractive remuneration in the NGO sectors. As to training, absence of strong refresher in-service short-term trainings; less consultation with statisticians in curriculum development; and failure to regularly update curriculum in the department were cited as some of the major problems. Other challenges include shortage of reference materials for the staff as well as students; lack of legal statistical computer packages for data management and analysis; limited capacity to get involved in methodological researches; and scarcity of scientific publications in the discipline.

Ato Yehene concluded his presentation by outlining the way forward. These include: organizing experience sharing forum among Universities; designing networking among Universities to share statistical software, journals, etc.; developing an incentive mechanism to retain professionals in the field; undertaking a training needs assessment to identify gaps; developing a sound and rational short term training plan; and establishing a system to link with ESA to ensure a better technical collaboration with the Universities.

Finally Ato Sileshi Fanta, who is currently the head of the Department of Statistics at AAU, highlighted the challenges they are facing with respect to the postgraduate program in statistics. According to him, the major problem the department is facing is the shortage of human resource (teaching staff) which has resulted in capacity limitation of the department with respect to the annual intake of students in the M.Sc. program. This bottleneck is exasperated by the overspread brain drainage in the country. To alleviate this problem, he said, the commencement of a Ph.D. program in statistics is imperative.

The panel discussion ended with a closing remark by Prof. Eshetu Wencheke, President of Alpha University College and Chief Editor of the Journal of ESA (JESA). He stressed that ESA would like to see statisticians more than ever using their quantitative skills to solve practical problems in all fields and must work, collaborate and share practices with government offices, NGOs, sister associations, the private sector and other professionals to make important contributions to the statistics profession. He also shared his experience from his commitment as an African Educational Ambassador of the year (elected by the American Statistical Association). □

STATISTICAL INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The ECA Statistical Database

Molla Hunegnaw, ACS, UNECA

Introduction

With the ever increasing ease of use of the Internet, the electronic exchange and sharing of data is becoming easier, frequent and important. This underlines the need for an internet based tools for exchange and sharing of statistical data and metadata.

Accordingly, the ECA Statistical database (StatBase) has been developed in-house to facilitate collection, storage and dissemination of time-series data through Internet technologies.

Primarily the StatBase was developed to provide internal and external users with comprehensive statistics on various social, economic and political aspects of all African countries. The database was also built with the intention that it can be easily customized and installed at regional, regional economic communities (RECs) and national levels.

The development process has undergone a number of stages and reached now a point where it can be used for live production and dissemination of statistics. The prototype version of the database was demonstrated to ECA divisions internally and later on to external users at a regional workshop organized by the ECA and was favorably received. The testing phase has now been completed and StatBase will soon be launched for public use.

The database embraces latest and the state-of-the-art tools and techniques. It runs on MS SQL Server database management system and dot net framework environment. From the very initial stage, it was designed to be a web-enabled application to facilitate effective and efficient dissemination of statistical information via the Internet.

Components of the StatBase

StatBase provides a fully integrated solution for data entry; metadata management; search and retrieval; data storage and security. It has two distinct components. The first one, the Data management Component, is a secured environment where statisticians administer the database, manage data and metadata. The second one is what we call Public Access/Online Component designed for end-users to browse, search, produce tables and charts from the database.

Data management Component

This component has the following three modules to facilitate administration, data editing and metadata management.

Administration: The data management component of StatBase can only be accessed by registered users. The administration module facilitates registering of users so as to provide access and administer the day to day activities of statbase. Access to database can

be restricted to registered users by a number of criteria such as countries, sectors, etc.

Data manager: This module allows registered users (data managers) to do routine data editing activities. Data editing activity includes keeping track of quantitative data, full text documents, web links, and other types of statistical information resources.

Metadata: As the name indicates, this module enables the registered users to define and customize the database elements like sectors, indicators, countries, resources types, organization profile, etc.

Public access/Online Component

This component is a public component where an end-user will be able to navigate the database to find statistical data and related resources. Access to the data and resources could be done through various user-friendly screens and access dimensions. End-users could access data from the sectoral, country, period point of views. The main access screens available to users are: Browse, Search and Selected Tables.

Browse: End users can browse the data by sector, country or period years and produce information.

Search: This option allows end-users to search for a set of data from available indicators and other various important criteria are made available.

Selected tables: Data managers put in place frequently accessed dataset to be readily available for end users.

All the resultant dataset from any of the above access dimensions will produce tabular formats where the data is presented by country across period years. However, from the resultant table end-users have the choice to produce charts, geo-spatial maps or save the results table locally for further analysis.

Accessing StatBase

StatBase is a collection of several databases rolled into one. It keeps track of time-series data and metadata, documents and publications, glossary, links to related resources, etc. They are all linked so that it feels more like using one large database than several small ones. Once you find the URL you can edit data and metadata (only registered users), browse data and metadata, search data and documents, produce tables, graphs, maps and download datasets to your PC.

The database contains more than 500 indicators covering socio-economic aspects of Africa. It currently have over 200,000 data points on the various indicators defined in the database.

Production of the African Statistical Yearbook (ASYB)

As the data is managed and organized well in StatBase, extended application can be developed from it. ECA has developed a reporting

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application to produce its statistical yearbook from the StatBase. This is however an independent application which makes use of the database to access data and produce camera ready publication automatically. The 2006 version of ASYB was produced from the database.

Rolling out StatBase to RECS and Countries

ECA has been mandated to assist countries in the area of statistical data management. In this context ACS has started collaboration with ECOWAS Commission. StatBase has been implemented in ECOWAS headquarters for its statistical data dissemination. In order to rollout the application, ECOWAS organized workshops for its members states in 2006 and 2007. ECA facilitated the training on how to use, customize and implement the application at country and sub regional levels. □

Launching of the Data Platform at the African Development Bank

Charles Leyeka Lufumpa and Beejaye Kokil, ADB

As part of its Statistics Day celebrations this year, the Statistics Department of the African Development Bank Group (AfDB) has launched a web-based Development Data (DP) Platform to facilitate effective dissemination of development data on African countries and stimulate their wider use for MDGs and the results agenda. In particular, the intranet version of the system is intended to support the Bank's operational work, research, analysis and knowledge generation on regional development issues. The DP will also be available to external users on the Bank's internet.

The DP is a joint initiative of the AfDB's Statistics Department and the Bank's IT Department and has been deployed at AfDB in partnership with the World Bank -- the developers of the application.

What is the Data Platform?

The data platform is a powerful new web-based system that provides all Bank staff and external users, easy online access to a wide range of development data managed by the Statistics Department. The system enables users to access and manipulate the data according to their preferences and needs.

With the Data Platform, users are able to:

- create and manage databases;
- create reports, maps and charts from the database;
- create content, disseminate data, and publish data;
- organize data;
- manage content;
- view, save and share reports, charts, and maps on the web; and
- view reports, charts and maps on public databases on the web.

Users can change the look and feel of any content they create. The user controls the precision and units displayed and can export results to an XML or ASCII file.

How does it work?

The Data Platform is user-friendly. Power users can create and manage information. Data can be easily updated and through a friendly interface, users have access to the data they want and can present their findings as a simple table, a chart, a map, or even as a web page:

Reports – A report is a simple table displaying the search results. Users can apply different color styles, change the row/column height and width, and align the text in the report. They can also determine the precision and units of the fact values. A saved report pulls the data from the most recent version of the database so that it is always be up-to-date.

Charts -- The user can view, edit, delete, create new content and publish the chart on the web. The user can choose from nine different chart styles: vertical bar, horizontal bar, area, stacked area, vertical stacked area, horizontal stacked area, line, bubble or radar. They change the look and feel of the chart, change the data displayed on the chart by changing the dimension variables and change the header and footer information of the chart.

Maps – Maps are based on the search results and present data for the geographic dimension. The width and height of the map can be adjusted according to user requirements. The map provides the facility to zoom-in, zoom-out or for panning. The actual data values represented on the map can be viewed.

Queries – Users can view, edit, delete, and publish their query results.

Web pages – Web pages, known as "Topic pages" in the Data Platform, are html pages created by power users to present data on the web. The Topic pages use saved maps, charts and reports in a pre-defined template and extra information or comments can be added by the user.

The launching of the DP at the AfDB is intended to significantly improve data management and dissemination within and outside the Bank. Plans are underway to work with the World Bank and other partners to assist interested African countries and institutions in acquiring the DP for their own use. □

DataFirst Resource Centre, University of South Africa, Cape Town

Lynn Woolfrey and Mathew Welch

DataFirst is a Survey Data Archive and training unit located at the University of Cape Town (UCT), South Africa, established in 2000. It operates a world class resource facility and internet portal

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dedicated to the collection and analysis of social survey datasets on South Africa and other Africa countries. The facility provides students and staff at the university with access to its extensive holdings of survey datasets for their research, as well as high-end computer workstations, and training in data analysis. Data First's objectives are to cement and expand its position as the premier centre housing African economic, social and political data, and to facilitate the dissemination throughout Africa of the analytical skills necessary to interpret the data in terms of cutting edge methodological approaches. For this purpose it is tasked with the following functions:

- to act as a portal for digital resources from African survey research available to users internationally;
- to facilitate the collection, exchange and use of African survey datasets on a collaborative basis;
- to provide basic and advanced training in data analysis for researchers in Africa ; and
- to develop and operate a web portal to promote the dissemination of African data and research output via the internet.

DataFirst Resource Centre

Postgraduate students and staff from all disciplines within the university have access to Data First's Resource Centre. The Resource Centre is equipped with computer workstations to provide access to and facilitate the analysis of the online resources. The Resource Centre also has facilities for the presentation of small training courses and seminars. The computers have been equipped with the latest version of the statistical package STATA, the international standard for analysing social surveys (especially panel surveys), as well as a range of additional software suited to the analysis of time series data and qualitative information. The Resource Centre's holdings are aimed at supporting social survey research. The collection includes datasets from surveys conducted in South Africa and other African countries, as well as questionnaires and codebooks relevant to these surveys. The Resource Centre also maintains a collection of publications based on the survey data as well as monographs dealing with the implementation and analysis of household surveys. A web-based version of the catalogue is available online to researchers.

Researchers from outside UCT gain access to the digital resources through the Data First web site. The Unit is widening access to the datasets in the Resource Centre via the Data First web site. A key aspect of the web site is a facility to conduct online analysis and to customise the download of data.

Currently researchers in Africa do not have access to a facility that houses a large number of African data sets. Instead, data is fragmented across the continent, and often is held in research institutions that lie outside the continent. This hampers empirical research on African problems by African researchers. The opportunity for comparative research on the continent is also constrained by the lack of local facilities housing African survey data. Instead, research has come to be conducted in countries outside Africa, often by research-

ers from outside Africa. Providing a portal to African data for African researchers in Africa, aims to reverse this trend, so as to prepare a new generation of African social scientists to engage the problems of the continent empirically in their published work and use African data to inform their teaching. Ultimately, the objective is also to improve the ability of government agencies to undertake decision making based on real data relevant to the African context.

Data collections

DataFirst currently holds datasets from the annual household surveys conducted by Statistics South Africa from 1994 through to 2001, as well as the datasets from all other surveys conducted by this official statistical organisation. Other survey datasets include those of the Population Censuses conducted in 1970, 1985, 1991, 1996 and 2001 and the Demographic and Health Surveys for South Africa and other Sub-Saharan African countries. Data from social surveys conducted by other government bodies and private organisations are also held.

The survey datasets have been converted to a form usable by most of the commonly used statistical packages, and are presented in a standardised format. Data collected by Data First is prepared in a user-friendly and consistent format, in accordance with internationally recognised conventions for data and documentation storage.

Web site

DataFirst runs a dedicated web portal for the dissemination of data and research output via the internet. The site can be accessed from the following URL: <http://www.datafirst.uct.ac.za>. A complete list of the survey datasets housed in the archive is available on the DataFirst web site. The codebooks and questionnaires for these surveys can be downloaded from this site. Bibliographies of publications based on the survey data are published on the DataFirst web site, with links to the publications which can be downloaded as pdf documents.

DataFirst has recently purchased software that allows online analysis and customised dissemination of the survey data, which broadens access to a number of our public access datasets. This software facilitates the analysis of data through a web interface by researchers who do not have access to statistical software.

Training

DataFirst is involved in an ongoing summer training program run in co-operation with the School of Economics at UCT and the Population Studies Centre at the University of Michigan. This comprises a course on the Analysis of Household Survey Data conducted at the University of Cape Town in January every year. It covers an introduction to the analysis of household surveys using the statistical package Stata. A web-based tutorial developed for this project has been made available for training on the DataFirst web site.

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DataFirst runs an internship program for postgraduate students in the Social Sciences, who assist with clients in the Resource Centre. The list of interns includes students from South Africa, Eritrea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and Malawi. Many of these interns have gone on to more advanced degrees after completing of their internships and are using the skills and experience gained at Data First to further their studies using quantitative research methods. The employment of interns from other African countries also serves to broaden the survey data skills of researchers in Africa.

Data Quality Project

DataFirst has been awarded a grant from the Mellon Foundation to investigate the quality of public release data in South Africa. As a Survey Data Archive, the facility is in a unique position to mediate between data producers, particularly the national statistical agency, and the users of this data, to support the production of high-quality, that is, usable official data. The Project involves an assessment of the usability and comparability of national datasets, and the development and publication of methods to facilitate the optimal usage of these datasets. □

IPUMS-International is “Best Practice” in managing access to census microdata but why do so few African organizations participate?

Prof. Robert McCaa, University of Minnesota

Mr. Dennis Trewin, past-Australian Statistician and former President of the International Statistical Institute, bestowed the accolade “Best Practice” on the IPUMS-International project, as he concluded his recent four-day on-site evaluation at the University of Minnesota Population Center. (“IPUMS” is the acronym for Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, a global initiative funded by the National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health (USA) to recover, preserve, integrate and manage access to anonymized census microdata samples for researchers world-wide at no cost.)

The Problem: 1973 census tapes at risk!



“Why are there so few African statistical offices associated with the IPUMS project when it can offer them very valuable services?” was one of the questions posed by Mr. Trewin that is of interest to readers of this newsletter. Indeed, he went on to ask: “Why are there no affiliations with regional statistical organizations, research centers, and universities in Africa?” Although more than 70 National Statistical Offices (NSOs) have officially endorsed the project, “how can you pretend to be global, if only a handful of African organizations participate?”

Before a reply to those questions is offered here, consider that Mr. Trewin’s evaluation is exceedingly important for at least three reasons. First, for the National Statistical Offices that entrust census microdata to the Minnesota Population Center, the evaluation attests to the stringent legal, administrative and technical procedures governing the project. Second, the University of Minnesota is assured that the Center has implemented the protocols to protect the microdata as specified in the memoranda of understanding signed between the University and each participating National Statistical Office. Third, the more than 1,500 researchers registered to access the confidentialized microdata (available without charge from the project web site: <http://international.ipums.org>) are assured that any violation by a user will result in serious consequences not only for the violator but also for the violator’s institution. In sum, the project is operating on a solid foundation and is not simply sustainable, it is thriving.

The evaluation is significant because Mr. Trewin chairs the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Task Force on Statistical Confidential and Managing Access to Microdata. In that capacity, last March, he presented the Task Force report to the Statistical Commission at its annual meeting in New York. The Report concludes with a series of annexes citing several dozen case studies of exemplary (mainly European) practices (see: http://www.unecp.org/stats/publications/Managing_statistical_confidentiality_and_microdata_access.pdf.) The IPUMS project is the only international academic initiative cited as “good practice” by the report. Now, following a probing on-site examination of all aspects of the project, Mr. Trewin raised the evaluation to “best practice”.

On Nov. 2, at the conclusion of the visit to Minnesota, Mr. Trewin presented a preliminary report to the director of the MPC, Dr. Steven Ruggles, followed by a wide-ranging discussion with the principal investigators—Dr. Robert McCaa, Matt Sobek, Monty Hindman, Miriam King, and Deborah Levison. Dr. Dennis Ahlburg was unable to attend the final meeting and Dr. Ragui Assaad was absent due to an extended leave to the Population Council in Cairo.

In reply to Mr. Trewin’s questions regarding Africa noted above, Prof. McCaa explained that unlike IPUMS initiatives in America, Europe and Asia, where cooperation is the keystone of the project’s success, in Africa region-wide cooperation is still materializing. Over the decades the African Census Analysis Project (ACAP) at the

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University of Pennsylvania assembled a vast store of census microdata (45 censuses covering 25 countries according to a 2005 report by the project director, Dr. Tukufu Zuberi). To avoid competition for resources and duplication of effort, in the absence of an agreement, IPUMS has focused where the Pennsylvania project is apparently less successful, such as the 2000 round of censuses and a handful of countries (Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Uganda).

Data recovery in Africa and elsewhere is a fundamental goal of the IPUMS project, yet the Minnesota Population Center does not recover microdata—instead it provides the means for recovery. IPUMS pays not only for the secure shipment by air courier of census tapes containing raw data but also for the recovery of data by the commercial firm, Muller Media, in New York. This company has the equipment and experience to recover data produced by an extraordinary array of machinery over the past half century of computing. Muller Media recovered 95% of the population records for the 1976 census of Mali, two-thirds of the cases for the 1979 census of Kenya, and approximately 1/2 of the 1973 census of Sudan

Once the bits-and-bytes are recovered, the raw data are repatriated to the corresponding National Statistical Office-owner. Then, an attempt is made to construct a valid, documented dataset. IPUMS subcontracts this task to the NSO, but where human or technical

1973 Tapes recovered by IPUMS



Preserving Census Microdata:
IPUMS & Sudan

resources are not readily available, the work may be subcontracted to others (such as Michael Levin, the long-time international data guru at the United States Census Bureau) or even performed at the Minnesota Population Center.

Because the IPUMS project is global it sometimes discovers data that have strayed across continents—as was the case with the 1991 census microdata of Rwanda. Prof. McCaa stumbled upon the files on a secure server of a United Nations organization that had been contracted to edit the data shortly after the census was taken. Once

completed, a copy was retained in case further editing might be required. Then, with the genocide, the institutional memory on two continents was lost. More than a decade passed before a connection was made. The data were immediately repatriated to the Rwandan National Institute of Statistics. Now, an anonymized, integrated sample of 1991 is available from the NISR on CD. From the IPUMS web site both the 1991 and 2002 census microdata are available in integrated form along with samples for Kenya, South Africa, Uganda and 22 countries beyond Africa. In 2008 samples will be launched for Egypt, Ghana, and 6-8 other countries. □

MediaWiki for Organizations knowledge management

Molla Hunegnaw, ACS, UNECA

Think of how important it is to have an online information base that can be easily accessed, created and updated by selected staff within your organization. This underlines the promise of a Wikimedia foundation which provides MediaWiki free of charge.

MediaWiki is a web-based software application used by all projects of the Wikimedia Foundation. It was originally developed to serve the needs of the free content Wikipedia encyclopedia. Currently it has also been deployed by a number of companies as a content management system. Notably, Novell uses it to operate several of its high traffic web sites.

Mediawiki is written in the PHP programming language, and can use either the MySQL or PostgreSQL relational database management systems. MediaWiki is distributed under the terms of the GNU General Public License.

Mediawiki has become a recognizable brand, with a Google search of “MediaWiki” producing over 216 million results in November 2007. This tells us how important this application is in the area of content management.

Why not bring the benefits of a Wiki to your organization?

Here are the main benefits of MediaWiki:

- It is an open source, and as such – free to use.
- You can edit your content online and check the results on the spot – there is no need to upload or use FTP.
- It is an excellent collaboration tool allowing different users to work on one and the same document with versions controlled.
- It allows to put any types of formats such as pdf, word, images of any formats, etc.
- It provides a way of securing and categorizing contents.

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- Generating internal documentation is quick and intuitive.
- Modifications to existing contents are straightforward
- Non-technical staff can be trained to upload contents of any type.

The developers of the software have put greater emphasis on its multilinguality. Thus, the user interfaces can be found in many languages including English, French and Portuguese.

The application is powerful at dealing with a wide variety of uploaded media files such as images and documents of any types. It has rich functionality in the area of images where image galleries and thumbnails can be generated.

Besides the functionalities coming out of the box, MediaWiki provides a rich core feature and mechanism to include additional functionality. This allows programmers to write extensions without modifying the core. Extended functionalities are also available from the net to download and add to the core functionalities. Installing an extension mainly consists of adding a line to the configuration file, though in some cases additional changes such as database updates might be required.

Few of the extensions in relation to content management application are:

- Ratings extension;
- Category suggestion extension;
- RSS feed inclusion;
- Flash inclusion;
- Youtube inclusion;
- etc.

MediaWiki has also proved to be a scalable application. It can serve for small offices content management to the highest traffic sites on the World Wide Web like the Wikipedia.

Where might MediaWiki be useful

MediaWiki can be used in the organization as organization knowledge base such as content management, information sharing, web sites and intranets. It can be installed for internal use or put on the web for public consumption.

MediaWiki installation and configuration

The MediaWiki script has not been added as auto-installer tool yet. But there are some third party components developed by volunteers. Out of the box, only manual installation is possible. Though it is manual, MediaWiki installation is easy. You are required to follow the instructions on MediaWiki's site or read "The open source wiki behind Wikipedia." Install MediaWiki on a server that can be seen by everyone in your organization. You'll then be able to access it from a Web browser by typing in something like <http://servername/wiki>.

To install the MediaWiki software, you need a server running both PHP and MySQL. PHP works on a number of platforms the common one is the Apache server (version 1.13.19 or above - <http://apache.org>). Use the relatively recent versions of PHP (version 5 or above - <http://php.net>) and MySQL (version 4 or above - <http://mysql.org>). You can be running Linux or windows machines.

Conclusion

MediaWiki has generated a lot of interest of headlines in the past few years. There are groups and individuals who are committed to its development. It has demonstrated the power that can bring to an organization aspiring to organize information from a wide variety of sources internally and externally. If your organization is looking for a centralized content managed in a decentralized manner, MediaWiki is available free for you.

However, MediaWiki is not the only available package as a content management solution. The fact that it is open source and highly polished and tested in real-life in a number of organizations makes it one of the best bets in the context of Africa where there are meager resources.

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Africa to Hold the 1st Forum to Realize Statistical Data Archivists Community of Practice

Kizito Kasizi, Uganda Bureau of Statistics

For decades in the struggle for development, Africa has contributed immensely to global statistics especially in respect to poverty reduction. A lot of data generated from surveys, censuses and administrative records that would be of great value to the pro-development research fraternity is unfortunately lost due to poor preservation practices. The enormous investments in data gathering are unfortunately watered down due to limited analytical capacities and selfish tendencies in microdata dissemination.

Whereas National Statistical Offices (NSOs) have adopted modern methods of data collection and processing, little or no effort is made to document and preserve the valuable data. It therefore becomes almost impossible to retrieve most data whenever there is a need for further analysis. A few of the archived sets have either poor documentation or no reference. The little attention given to meta-data management is a severe problem in most statistical agencies and tremendously reduces the true value of data in Africa and other continents. This in addition greatly hampers microdata dissemination processes in Africa.

In order to enhance the development and democratization processes in Africa, the need to promote evidence or knowledge based decisions is paramount. The entire process requires easy and readily available, reliable data most preferably in a single retrieval center. It is for this reason that statistical agencies and other data producers have to adapt to internationally practiced data preservation practices. A change in attitude to raise the importance of data documentation, archiving and sharing is overdue. The practice of tagging data importance to the immediate objectives should be replaced with a more visionary aim of enabling data mining.

PARIS21 has the vision of a fully developed global statistical system in which reliable and timely data is shared. Among the many strategic efforts, promotion of documentation, archiving and dissemination of microdata ranks high.

The International Household Survey Network (IHSN) together with the Accelerated Data Programme (ADP) are among the various deliberate programmes set to help statistical agencies acquire tools and skills to manage and preserve microdata. Benefits like increased quality and diversity in research, reliability and relevance, and reduction in wastages due to duplication of effort are among the many returns for proper management of microdata. In all data value for money is increased.

The whole process of documentation, archiving and dissemination needs total commitment and high levels of professionalism. Africa is

experiencing lots of diversity in statistical development and capacities. Due to limitations in endowments, professional networking is the most appropriate approach to capacity building in Africa. Despite the diversities, statistical systems have lots of similarities that create homogeneity across the continent. Building "Communities of Practice" (CoP) in professional practices is a viable solution to our region's professional challenges. The experiences gained and shared among African countries through such associations is likely to offer feasible and achievable solutions than those from a more developed set up. In addition, it is deemed cheaper to source local support than hiring experts from the developed world. Through formal networks, Africa can easily link up with other international and global arrangements like the International Association for Social Science Information Service and Technology (IASSIST), European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructure (ESFRI) and East European Data Archive Network (EDAN) to tap on the vast knowledge of the more developed set ups. Local experiences blended with advanced practices will help speed transformation of African datasets into research ready input to valuable studies.

An association of African statistical data archivists will act as an organ to promote and advocate for documentation, archiving and wider dissemination of microdata for public use. In addition the associations will serve as a forum for sharing experiences among African statistical agencies and partners in statistical development. In the broader sense the association will aim at:

- Fostering and promoting professional networking for excellence in delivery of statistical services in general and microdata in particular
- Providing opportunities for collegial exchange of sound professional practices

There is no doubt that the network will strengthen the bridge between statistical data users and statistical data producers by promoting open and easy access to valuable microdata for further research. The network will advocate and support building and linking national data archives into an African data archive.

A meeting to inaugurate the association is planned for March 2008 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The meeting shall set forth the guiding principles of the association. Countries practicing microdata management are expected to send representatives. This is one other great opportunity for Africa to make a breakthrough to excellence in statistical development. □

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New Focus on Statistical Development in Africa

Ben Kiregyera, ACS, UNECA

The downside of the new development focus on managing for results which our countries in Africa have signed up to including Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is that a lot of pressure has been put on already weak and vulnerable National Statistical Systems (NSSs). On a positive note, however, this new development focus has created opportunities to raise the profile of statistics and review data needs including data needs in new areas (such as governance, democracy, human rights, gender, environment, etc.), and highlighted priority areas for investment in statistical development.

There is now a lot of focus on statistical development in Africa and African owes it to itself and to the international community to take full advantage of this focus to fundamentally improve its statistical systems. As part of this focus, Africa is attracting international statistical meeting including the following:

Coordination Committee on Statistical Activities (CCSA) will next meet in Africa

This committee brings together the UN Statistics Division, UN Regional Commissions (e.g. ECA), UN agencies (ILO, UNCTAD, UNWTO, FAO), and other international agencies with significant statistical programmes (e.g. OECD, Eurostat, World Bank, IMF, etc) to discuss statistical coordination of the global statistical system. The CCSA meets every year and its 10th meeting held in Madrid, Spain on 10-11 September discussed among other issues use of population estimates, data imputations by international agencies, modalities of data sharing between international organizations, SDMX and costs and benefits of its adoption, implementation of quality assurance frameworks, statistical capacity building, etc.

It was agreed to hold the next CCSA meeting in Africa for the 1st time. The meeting will be hosted by the African Development Bank in Tunis, Tunisia in September 2008.

5th International Conference on Agricultural Statistics (ICAS)

The Fourth International Conference on Agricultural Statistics (ICAS-4) was held in Beijing, China from 22 to 24 October 2007. The previous conferences were held in Washington (2000), Italy (2002) and Mexico (2004). The fourth conference was hosted by the National Bureau of Statistics of China and was the best international statistical conference attended by statisticians from Africa. Of the 300 participants who participated in the conference, a number of them came from Africa.

The next conference will be held in Africa and will be hosted by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics.

The 57th Session of the International Statistical Institute (ISI)

The International Statistical Institute (ISI) is one of the oldest professional bodies in the world. It is the premier statistical association with a membership that covers all fields of statistics and statistical application. The ISI holds biennial conferences and the last one was held in Lisbon, Spain in August 2007.

On behalf of the African Statistics Coordination Committee (ASCC) and the African Center for Statistics (ACS), I would like to heartily congratulate S. Africa for being selected to host the 57th Session of the International Statistical Institute (ISI). This will be the first time that the ISI will be held in Sub-Saharan Africa. The ASCC and ACS plan to work closely with S. Africa and other partners in African and beyond to make the 57th ISI session the best attended ever.

Scaling up support for statistics

A high level donors' meeting on scaling up support for statistics was held in Paris on 15 November 2007. The meeting which was co-chaired by the Mr. Jeff Gutman, the Vice President of Operations and Country Services of the World Bank, Mr. Mark Lowcock, the Director General of the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) and Mr. Richard Carey, the Director of the Development Cooperation Directorate of the OECD was held back-to-back with the PARIS21 Steering Committee meeting and the meeting of the Advisory Board of Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics (MAPS).

While the scaling up is a global effort to support NSSs in developing countries, I have no doubt that African countries will be the greatest beneficiaries. It is my hope that the said scaling up of support for statistics by development partners will be matched by renewed commitment of national governments to mainstream statistics in policy, planning and budgetary processes, and that these efforts will go a long way in enhancing the capacity of NSSs so that they can better support national and international development processes.

African ministers commit themselves to statistical development

The Thirty-ninth Session of the UNECA/Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development held in Ougadougou, Burkina Faso on 14-15 May 2006 resolved as follows:

"...we strongly commit to the strengthening of national statistical offices and legislative reforms that ensure their ability to generate timely, reliable and gender disaggregated statistics. Together with regular censuses, we recommend to Member States to undertake other innovative and cost-effective statistical surveys....."

I would urge Managers of NSOs in Africa to leverage this statement of political commitment to statistical development to have statistics prioritized as a cross-cutting sector in national development and budgetary processes. □

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From Lisbon to Durban, the Journey Continues...

Pali Lehohla, Statistician-General, South Africa

Being in Lisbon for the 56th Session of the International Statistical Institute (ISI) was a very rewarding experience and I am confident that Durban 2009 is ready to take us forward from where Lisbon brought us. The opening ceremony was a very high powered political statement of confidence in what statisticians have done over the past 120 years, are currently doing, and will continue to do in the future; that is, contributing significantly to the knowledge base of society. The opening ceremony was colorful and deservedly opened by the president of the country and the minister for the presidency. For me as Statistician-General for South Africa, and without fear of contradiction for speaking on behalf of the distinguished delegation from my country and that of the continent gathered here in Lisbon, I was very impressed both with the opening, the scientific programme and the hospitality extended to us by the people of Portugal. A further deserving treat was to have your souls fed with the melodies from Mariza, the daughter from the South. It is this association of her umbilical cord with the South and Mozambique in particular, that made her lyrics so inspiring and fulfilling for us from South Africa.

In this regard, as we prepare together for 16-22 August 2009, we are confident that Lisbon was the perfect place to sharpen our resolve to host a successful ISI in Durban. That gathering will address, as others before it, challenges of scientific methods and advances in the field of statistics, but more importantly it will focus on the unique issues of Africa and the developing world. I can promise you that you can count on this African effort and the legacy that we are prepared to usher through the 57th Session of the ISI in Durban. Our magnificent exhibition stand in Lisbon has given the world a virtual

trip to South Africa. I have conveyed my gratitude to the people of Portugal, in particular my friends Paulo Gomes, Denise Lievesley and the ISI fraternity, for making it possible for South Africa to host this prestigious scientific session on behalf of Africa. We promise to deliver in 2009. □

Explaining the ISI 2009 Logo

Statistics South Africa

The logo for the ISI's 57th Session in Durban, South Africa 2009 has been influenced by an African musical instrument, the jembe drum. This magnificent, iconic instrument has been intertwined with African culture for thousands of years, beating deep and echoing deep within the forests; inspiring the very essence of African legends and bonding people together over time as tribes communicated and celebrated with one another. In his historical illustration of the "Sacred Drums of Liberation", Ohadike (2001) chronicles the struggle of the African people's fight to overcome slavery, colonialism, and neo-colonial hegemony.

The innovative brand has been developed to reflect the importance of the 57th Session of the ISI, not just for South Africa - but for the whole African continent as Africa re-affirms itself as a global payer in its own statistical development. It represents the culmination of all African statistical programmes aimed at strengthening the capacity of African countries to monitor the MDGs; ensure the complete enumeration of the African population through the 2010 round of population and housing censuses; develop statistical literacy and build statistical capacity through a regional reference statistical framework.

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South Africa will bring together as many African statisticians as possible from within Africa to share in its vision of planning and providing a better future for all of Africa's people through statistical development. In working together, sharing knowledge, developing new and better ways of collecting/improving statistical data, we will bring about a united continent through statistical development in order to provide a better future for all!

The dynamic and diagonal stroke which forms an integral part of the logo taking on the shape of the digit 1, indicates that it is the first time that the ISI comes to Sub-Saharan Africa since its inception one and a half centuries ago in the Netherlands.

A 'd' shape is formed on the tip of South Africa as the stroke meanders upwards and away from South Africa, also forming a graphical representation of the Zulu shield in the Sub-Saharan space below the ISI image. Durban is the host city in the Province of Kwa-Zulu Natal - the proud ancestral home of the Zulu nation. This small shield was developed by an innovative and strategic thinker/warrior, King Shaka Zulu. The shield and assegai are some of the regions proud heritages. The background shape continues to meander around the continent, symbolising the 'hug' of unity, inviting all Africans to come to South Africa. The stylised Africa formed by the 'squiggle' ends pointing to Durban's ICC where the ISI's 57th Session will be held.

The two jembe drums represent the '1' in the ISI logo. The zeros of the '2009' placed strategically above the drums, hints at the 2010 Soccer World Cup being held in South Africa in 2010 and co-incidentally most countries which host the ISI tend to host the World Cup shortly thereafter.



The lighter drum represents the people of the ISI community and statistical arenas throughout the world and the value it will bring to South Africa and the darker drum represents all the Nations of Africa enriching the 57th Session of the ISI. The bold presence of the orange 'S' depicts the 'Spirit' in which the 57th Session of the ISI is being held in South Africa – a new dawn shared in statistical development which will leave a lasting impression and bring about a positive influence in Africa and enrich the value of the ISI community.

The drum combined with the two zeros becomes a graphic representation of a person. People make up statistics. The bold Zulu colours on the 'chest' of the drum represent the 'Rainbow Nation' of South Africa and rich Zulu culture from which the world can enjoy, experience and participate in 57th Session of the ISI in Durban 2009 at the Kingdom of the Zulu. On this backdrop and with this spirit in mind, the democratic Republic of South Africa will be proudly hosting, sharing and showcasing Statistical Development throughout the world at the ICC Sessions in August 2009. Statistics South Africa is building its Statistical Development to become one of the five reliable sources of Statistics in the world. As Minister Trevor Manuel said at the first African Statistical Symposium on Development (ASSD) in Cape Town 2006, "If you can't measure it, you can't manage it".

The boldness of the logo ... South Africa, we boldly welcome and invite you to our country in Durban, 2009. Let's share and grow together in statistical knowledge and development.

(Courtesy: the Pulse of the organization– fourth edition 2007) □



The ISIbalo Brand:

- *ISIbalo: a Zulu word meaning a "mathematical sum"*
- *Reflects the Durban ISI 2009 logo*
- *Showcases KwaZulu Natal as the host province*
- *Speaks to the drive towards a numerate society*
- *The drum symbolises Africa's oldest communication tool*

**1st Conference of Young Statisticians
in Africa 2007**

Young and Counting!

Johannesburg, South Africa

3-6 June 2008

NEW FOCUS ON STATISTICS IN AFRICA



About the 2007 Africa Symposium on Statistical Development

The Africa Symposia on Statistical Development is an African-driven initiative that seeks to work through the ECA, with support from the "Friends of the ECA" (Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Senegal, Rwanda and Tunisia), to help restore statistical development in Africa. A work programme has been developed that will in the first instance, given critical political intervention and support, encourage the undertaking of a census in every African country towards enriching the information base on which decision-making in Africa can be made. In encouraging the participation of African countries in the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses, the ASSD aims at ensuring that country-level monitoring becomes an indispensable element in assessing progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. The ASSD also aims at assisting to mobilize resources to assist African countries in meeting the targets. The credibility of country-level monitoring depends, to a large extent, on the reliability and accuracy of the data and information that is used.

Since the 2006 ASSD, a series of critical milestones have been achieved that collectively have worked towards identifying and carving out collaborative arrangements and mechanisms that must be established between the different stakeholders on the continent. This follows quite strongly after the outcomes of the 2006 Africa Symposium on Statistical Development. Out of this Symposium came a number of key recommendations and resolutions that represent a holistically African position on census taking in Africa in the 2010 round as well as key issues and challenges that confront the continent on national statistical systems and capacity building. For more information on and documents on the 2006 ASSD click here

An important resolution that emerged from the 39th Session of African Ministers of finance and Economic Planning held in Ouagadougou in May 2006 was that assistance should be provided to countries emerging from conflict. In carrying out this resolution, the Republic of Rwanda was mandated by the 2006 ASSD to host the 2007 ASSD, also because of its infantile participation in the African statistical community and its desire to benefit from statistical development efforts on the continent.

(Courtesy of ASSD 2007 web site. For further information on ASSD, please visit http://www.statssa.gov.za/assd_dec2007/)

Message from ECA for the 2007 Africa Symposium on Statistical Development

Abdoulie Janneh, Executive Secretary of UNECA



The Africa Symposia on Statistical Development are becoming annual gatherings that are on the agenda of not only African countries but also a number of sub-regional, regional, and international organizations. The success of this country-led initiative is due to the dedication of countries and a number of champions for the development of statistics in Africa and the wide recognition of the importance of statistics in evidence-based policy formulation and decision-making and the monitoring of development initiatives including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Following the successful symposia in Cape Town (South Africa) in January 2006 and Kigali (Rwanda) in January 2007, we are heading for Accra in December 2007, a third stop on a fifty-three-year journey started in Cape Town. In the intervening period, we have achieved a number of things including the strengthening of the statistical function at the UNECA under the leadership of the group of countries called the "Friends of ECA".

The last Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development (CoM) endorsed the creation of a subsidiary body solely in charge of statistics, the "Statistical Commission for Africa." (STATCOM-Africa). This is expected to be the apex entity dealing with statistical coordination at the regional level and where all stakeholders will be coordinating their effort in the quest of propelling Africa's development in statistics. More recently, a number of regional organizations namely the African Development Bank (AfDB), the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), the African Union Commission (AUC), and the UNECA met and resolved

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to set up an African Statistical Coordination Committee and design an African Statistical Programme to build synergy and avoid duplication in servicing African countries and institutions in the area of statistics and statistical capacity building. These initiatives are all in line with the provisions of the Regional Reference Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa (RRSF) endorsed by the CoM following its approval by African Heads of National Statistics Offices (NSOs).

You might recall that given the importance of the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses (RPHC), participants to the Cape Town meeting resolved that the first series of the ASSD be devoted to this very topic. The African region has achieved quite a lot in this regards and the trend shall continue. In fact, the Cape Town Symposium focused on assessing the preparedness of African countries for the 2010 RPHC, lessons learned from the 2000 RPHC, as well as the regional contribution to the revision of the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses. The Kigali meeting moved forward the census agenda by identifying key areas of interventions in which we could concentrate as a region in order to improve our participation in the 2010 RPHC. It also focused in preparing an African Supplement to the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses. The Accra meeting will address very specific issues in census taking.

Considering the importance of the 2010 RPHC and the inception of the STATCOM-Africa, it has been agreed that the ASSD concentrates on this very topic while other issues will be discussed during the first meeting of the STATCOM-Africa to be held during the last week of January 2008.

It is worth noting that the statistical capacity building and development has been receiving tremendous political support throughout the continent as displayed by the opening of the ASSD by high level political figures such as Mr. Trevor Manuel, Minister of Finance of the Republic of South Africa in Cape Town, His Excellency Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda and the attendance by the Minister of Planning from Angola, the Honourable Ana Dias Lourenco in Kigali. We shall seize this opportunity to move forward the statistical agenda on the continent and show how statistics can make a difference in the lives of our people.

I'm looking forward to meeting you in Accra to move forward the regional programme on the 2010 RPHC.

Executive Secretary of the UNECA ☐

Invitation by Ghana Statistical Service Office

Dr Grace Bediako

Dear Colleagues

Welcome to the 3rd Africa Symposium on Statistical Development. It is one of the series of symposia aimed at encouraging countries

and governments to improve evidence-based decision making and better planning. This is an African-driven initiative that fits in with the general vision of finding solutions to African problems including among others, poverty, hunger, malnutrition, the spread of HIV, gender equality and empowerment of women, and basic education.



African countries are committed to work through the ECA, with support from the 'Friends of the ECA', namely Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Senegal, Rwanda and Tunisia, to restore and reinforce statistical development on the continent. The first African Symposium on Statistical Development (ASSD) in Africa was held in Cape Town, South Africa, January 2006; the second in Kigali, Rwanda from 15-19 January 2007 and now the third symposium will be held in Accra, Ghana from 3 to 7 December 2007.

It is my honour to welcome our colleagues to this exciting new path where we as Africans will promote best practice and exchange our experiences with regard to census-taking. Our colleagues who have already met the challenge of undertaking a census in the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses will share their experience. Those preparing to undertake a census in the next couple of years have much to learn and share too. For African countries emerging from conflict situations, this forum is an invaluable one as Africa also prepares itself to ensure that it can meet the challenge of measuring its progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Ghana possesses one of the best game reserves in West Africa, a multitude of good beaches, and plenty of hospitality. Accra is an excellent place to meet locals and buy native Ghanaian art and craftwork, especially at the Arts Centre.

On the eve of the African Cup of Nations, it gives us great pleasure to welcome Africa's statistical community to the beautiful West African city of Accra in December 2007.

Ghana awaits you!

(Courtesy of ASSD 2007 web site. For further information on ASSD, please visit http://www.statssa.gov.za/assd_dec2007/) ☐

NEW FOCUS ON STATISTICS IN AFRICA

Chair of the Friends of the ECA: Statistical Development in Africa

Pali J Lehohla, Statistics South Africa



Welcome to the 3rd Africa Symposium on Statistical Development – the third of an anticipated 53 Symposia, of which the theme is 'Best Practice and Exchanging Experience: Africa 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses' to be held in Accra, Ghana from 3-7 December 2007.

The African continent has begun its execution of the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses (RPHC), and has committed itself to meeting on an annual basis to discuss issues of statistical development in Africa that will focus on the need for all African countries to undertake a population and housing census in the 2010 RPHC (2005–2014). Three years later, the African Statistical Community will congregate in Accra, Ghana in December 2007 to take stock of where we are as national statistics offices and custodians of official statistics. The significance of the 3rd Africa Symposium on Statistical Development is that of exchanging and sharing best practices and experiences in the quest for evidence-based planning and decision making in Africa.

Despite the well-known importance of population and housing censuses in sound policy decision-making and to track progress towards internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals, Africa is still lagging behind in census-taking. A regional effort is therefore underway to increase the participation of African countries in the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses. Therefore, the Africa Symposium on Statistical Development has made great strides in ensuring the complete enumeration of the African continent, from the land with many possibilities, Cape Town, South Africa in 2006, to the land with a thousand hills, Kigali, Rwanda in 2007, and heading towards the land of anthills, Accra, Ghana in 2008.

As national statistical offices from up to 53 African countries and their stakeholders prepare to meet in Accra in December 2007, our focus turns towards our 2007/08 cadre of census-taking countries (Swaziland, Mozambique, Sudan, Ethiopia and Malawi) who have just

undertaken censuses and will share their technical experience with other countries. We will, however, also focus on those countries who are preparing to undertake their censuses in 2008, in order to share best practices and exchange lessons learnt during their census planning and operations. This round of population and housing censuses will indeed be a historical milestone for African statistical development, particularly for the monitoring and evaluation of Africa's development agenda in this century.

When the Symposium draws to a close on 7 December 2007 (after much deliberation on matters of statistical development in our continent), the African statistical community will play the jembe drum while Ghana passes on the African Statistical Development jembe to Tunisia. The jembe drum has become the symbol of the ASSD.

The professional role of statisticians as providers and guardians of official statistics at this point in history cannot be overstated, as the need for data becomes more pressing to measure, monitor and evaluate progress made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and improving the quality of life of the African people.

As Chairperson of the Friends of the ECA, in collaboration with the ECA and the National Statistics Institute in Ghana, I extend a warm welcome to all of you who will be participating in the 3rd ASSD, 03–07 December 2007, Accra, Ghana . □



StatCom-Africa

STATISTICAL COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

“Scaling up statistical development in Africa”

Following the establishment of the African Centre for Statistics (ACS) at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) with Division status, a new subsidiary body specifically devoted to statistics and statistical development on the continent has been put in place. The Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development held in Addis Ababa in April 2007 endorsed the creation of the subsidiary body in charge of statistics: the Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa), as the apex entity in statistical development on the continent.

StatCom-Africa will hold its 1st meeting from 20 to 24 January 2008 at the UN Conference Centre in Addis, Ethiopia under the theme, “Scaling up statistical development in Africa”. It will be launched at a high level opening session to be presided over by the Executive Secretary of the UNECA. Two Ministers of Finance (one from West Africa and one from Southern Africa), the Executive Secretary of the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) and the current Chairperson of the UN Statistical Commission have been invited to witness the launch. Dr. Paul Cheung, the Director of the UN Statistics Division, will give the keynote address. We will take advantage of this seminal event to honour, on behalf of the African statistical community, those sons and daughters of Africa who have contributed most to statistical development on the continent. We also plan to use the event to officially launch the “Mainstreaming Sectoral Statistical Systems in Africa: A Guide to Planning a Coordinated National Statistical System” which has been prepared by the African Development Bank, Intersect and PARIS21, and two web sites developed by the African Centre for Statistics, namely the African Gender Statistics Network (GESNET) portal and RRSF web site.

A pre-StatCom-Africa high-level seminar on leadership and management of National Statistical Systems (NSS) is planned for 20 January. The seminar, which is expected to be officially opened by the Executive Secretary of the ACBF, will bring together Heads of National Statistics Offices, Chairpersons of National Statistics Councils/Boards and Managers of national Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) Units/entities. It will address issues related to leadership and management of statistical systems. The Forum on African Statistical Development (FASDEV), which brings together main development partners involved in statistical development in Africa, will be held on 24 January. New statistical initiatives as well as scaling up support for statistics will be the main business for FASDEV.

StatCom-Africa: 20-24 January 2008

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

UPCOMING EVENTS ON STATISTICAL DEVELOPMENT



Date	Event	Organizer	Place
28 Nov - 02 Dec 2007	Regional Workshop on the African Comparison of PPP - adjusted GDPs and price level Differentials	ADB	Accra, Ghana
Dec 3 – 7 2007	3rd Africa Symposium on Statistical Development : “Best Practice & Exchanging Experience: Africa 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses”	ASSD Secretariat , Ghana Statistical Service	Accra, Ghana
Dec 3 – 7 2007	Microdata Management Toolkit Training	ADP/Kenya Bureau of Statistics	Nairobi, Kenya
Dec 3 – 7 2007	Séminaire sous-régional: conjoncture économique et prévisions à court terme pour les États d’Afrique de l’ouest membres d’AFRISTAT.	AFRISTAT	Bamako, Mali
Dec 8 – 9 2007	Atelier Régional pour le Développement des Statistiques Agricoles en Afrique, en prélude à la 20ème Session de l’AFCAS/CASA	FAO/PARIS21	Alger, Algeria
Dec 10-13 2007	African Commission on Agricultural Statistics (AF-CAS)	FAO/Algeria	Alger, Algeria.
Dec 10 – 14 2007	5th African Population Conference	UAPS	Arusha, Tanzania
Dec 13 – 14 2007	Launching of the Central Statistics Agency (CSA) web based data archive	ADP/Ethiopia	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Jan 20 2008	Effective leadership and management of National Statistical System (Pre StatCom)	UNECA	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Jan 20 - 24 2008	African Statistical Commission (StatCom-Africa) Commission Statistique pour l’Afrique (StatCom—Afrique)	UNECA	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Jan 24 2008	Forum on African Statistical Development (FASDEV)	UNECA	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Feb 25 2008	11th Session of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities	UNSC	New York, United States
Feb 26 – 29 2008	Thirty-ninth session of the Statistical Commission	UNSC	New York, United States

