



Distr.: GENERAL

E/ECA/CMRCR/2/EXP/12  
25 June 2012

**UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

Original : ENGLISH

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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

Second Conference of African Ministers  
Responsible for Civil Registration

Durban, Republic of South Africa  
3-7 September 2012

## **Outcome of the Third Session of the Statistical Commission for Africa on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics**



African Union Commission



African Development Bank



## A. Background

1. The Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa) is a subsidiary body of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) that was created following the last UNECA repositioning exercise in August 2006 that saw the establishment of the Statistics Division at its Africa Centre for Statistics (ACS). The Commission was endorsed by the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development held in Addis Ababa in April 2007 as the apex entity in statistical development on the continent. The Commission's membership is composed of the heads of the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) of ECA member States.

2. StatCom-Africa provides a forum for discussions and decisions on all aspects related to statistical development which are of interest to its members within the framework of the policies and procedures of the United Nations and subject to the general supervision of the Conference of Ministers. Among its mandates is to ensure coordination with the United Nations Statistical Commission (UN STATCOM), which takes place annually in February/March and to also report on progress to the Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development, which also takes place annually.

3. The Commission held its third session from 18 to 23 January 2012 in Cape Town, South Africa under the theme "*Harmonizing statistics in support of economic, monetary and social integration in Africa*". For the first time, the meeting broke the tradition of being hosted in Ethiopia and was held back to back with the seventh Africa Symposium on Statistical Development (ASSD-VII), which was held under the theme of "*improving civil registration and vital statistics institutional and human infrastructure*". The joint meeting provided a strategic forum for increased focus on and attention to the regional initiative on the improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Systems.

## B. Attendance

4. The meeting was attended by a wide range of participants including the heads of NSOs from 44 member States of UNECA, observers from non-African States, representatives from United Nations agencies, subregional, regional and international organizations, representatives of training institutes, statistical organizations, non-governmental organizations, academic and research institutions, and a few young African statisticians.

## C. Agenda and Work Programme

5. Welcoming remarks were made by the Executive Secretary of UNECA, Mr. Abdoulie Janneh. Official statements were delivered by the President of the African Development Bank, Mr. Donald Kaberuka and the Commissioner for the Economic Affairs of the African Union Commission, Dr. Maxwell Mkwezalamba. The meeting was officially opened by the Minister in the Presidency in charge of the National Planning Commission of South Africa, Honourable Trevor Andrew Manuel. An award ceremony, recognizing the contributions of senior statisticians to the advancement of statistical work in Africa, concluded the opening ceremony.

6. A new bureau comprising of a chairperson, two vice chairpersons and two rapporteurs was elected.

7. The sub-themes of discussion were as listed below;

1. Report on the Statcom-Africa working groups. The seven working groups reported on the progress made and challenges faced in their respective fields of assignment.

2. Support for economic, monetary and social integration. A review was made on the data requirements of regional integration, the strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).
3. Ongoing and new/emerging issues, Reports on selected ongoing activities were presented. This included reports on civil registration in Africa, vital statistics in Africa and on the assessment of CRVS systems in Africa
4. Coordination of statistical activities. A report of the Africa Statistical Coordination Committee on implementation of the Reference Regional Strategic Framework for statistical capacity-building in Africa, the African Charter on Statistics and on measuring progress towards statistical development in Africa was presented.
5. Information management in Africa. The draft of the Gaborone Action Plan for Geographical Names and Activities in Africa was presented.
6. Statutory issues. The secretariat provided a report on ACS activities in 2010-2011 and the proposed work programme for 2012-2013.

#### **D. Recommendations**

8. The conclusions and recommendations emerging from the meeting were categorized into three: the preamble, the general recommendations and recommendations on different thematic areas. The preamble and general recommendations of the meeting are as presented below.

**Preamble**

1. *Acknowledging that* the theme of this third session of StatCom-Africa, “Harmonizing Statistics in Support of Economic, Monetary, and Social Integration in Africa,” is timely as we are identifying statistical data requirements for the African integration process;
2. *Considering* reports from seven working groups namely on (i) Data Management, (ii) Development Indicators, (iii) Gender Statistics, (iv) National Accounts, (v) Employment and Informal Sector, (vi) Harmonisation of statistics and (vii) Statistical Training;
3. *Considering* reports from the seventh Africa Symposium on Statistical Development (ASSD) and fifth Forum on Statistical Development (FASDEV);
4. *Further Considering* other ongoing and emerging issues namely: (i) the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses, (ii) the International Comparison Programme, (iii) Africa’s Implementation Plan of the Global Strategy on Improving Agricultural and Rural Statistics, (iv) the Implementation of NSDS, (v) Civil Registration and Vital Statistics; (vi) Infrastructure Statistics Programme;
5. *Having examined* reports on (i) the Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity-Building in Africa (RRSF), (ii) Measuring Progress towards Statistical Development in Africa: The African Statistical Development Index, and (iii) the African Charter for Statistics;
6. *Having examined* reports on (i) Gaborone Action Plan on Geographical Names Activities in Africa and (ii) Data Collection and Management Proposal for Africa; (iii) Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Africa; (iv) Assessment of the Status of CRVS;
7. *Taking cognizance* of a number of programmatic issues including (i) the implementation of the 2010-2011 and the planned 2012-2013 work programmes of the African Centre for Statistics (ACS); (ii) the Strategic Action Plan for the Implementation of AfricaInfo;
8. *Recognising* the importance of Statistical Training Centres (STCs) in conducting systematic and sustainable training programmes in the area of official statistics;
9. *Noting with satisfaction* the participation of young statisticians in the discussion of the Commission;
10. *Recognising* that SHaSA integrates major statistical initiatives in Africa, and can serve as a document for communication, advocacy, and as a basis for monitoring of progress on statistical development on the continent;
11. *Acknowledging* efforts by the AfDB to improve the availability and quality of infrastructure statistics in view of their importance in advancing the regional integration agenda;
12. *Recognizing* the crucial role of agricultural statistics in dealing with the challenges of food security and climate change;
13. *Recognizing* the continuing importance of population and housing censuses as important sources of demographic and social statistics;

14. *Recognizing* the support extended by the development partners in supporting the activities of training through the AGROST;
15. *Welcoming* the mobilization of resources by the AfDB for its Statistical Capacity Building III Programme, and encouraging this continental institution to further foster its efforts in mobilizing resources for statistical development in Africa;

### **General Recommendations**

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

16. **Adopts** the reports of the Working Groups, **endorses** the work programmes and action plans contained therein and **requests** the groups to find ways of communicating with each other to ensure harmonization of their activities;
17. **Calls** upon all working groups to align their work programmes to the SHaSA strategy template;
18. **Recommends** the establishment of a working group on environment statistics, to be called “African Group on Environment and Related Statistics”;
19. **Endorses the** report of the activities of ACS planned for the 2012-2013 biennium;
20. **Commits** to engage African members to efficiently use funds allocated by partners and account for resources according to agreed and signed memoranda of understanding, and to apply peer pressure to ensure integrity and proper compliance;
21. **Requests** AfDB and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) to extend coverage of the on-going evaluation exercise of the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDSs) and the Reference Regional Strategic Framework (RRSF) to include all countries and share the outcome with PARIS21;
22. **Calls upon** technical and financial partners to mobilize the financial resources needed to operate the groups, to enable them to obtain the outcomes expected of them;
23. **Adopts** the recommendations of the 7<sup>th</sup> ASSD and 5<sup>th</sup> FASDEV.

### **Recommendations on CRVS**

1. NSOs should actively support their country-level coordination group to align and integrate all the technical and financial resources from interested partners into the common plan of action developed and implemented at national and regional levels;
2. NSOs should work with all stakeholders to integrate vital statistics derived from civil registration into their national strategies for development of statistics;
3. AUC should channel the recommendation of the 2010 African Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration, calling for the institutionalization of the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration, as a permanent forum meeting every two years, to review the progress of work in CRVS, to the AU for consideration;

4. ECA should reinforce the CRVS Secretariat at the ACS with a suitable staffing complement as recommended in the declaration of the First Ministerial Conference on civil registration.
5. HMN and WHO should continue their support to the regional Medium Term CRVS Plan, specifically in the improvement of causes of death recording and compilation of the statistics and support the next ASSD that will focus on causes of death.

**E. Closing of the Meeting**

9. The meeting was closed by the Executive Secretary of ECA and the Chairperson of Statcom Africa III.