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**Africa Action Plan for Improving Statistics for Food
Security, Sustainable Agriculture, and
Rural Development (2011-2015)**

**AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP
CHIEF ECONOMIST COMPLEX**



**Africa Action Plan for Improving Statistics for Food Security, Sustainable
Agriculture, and Rural Development (2011-2015)**

**Progress Report
for
Third Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa),
January 2012**

Statistical Capacity Building Division

Statistics Department

Economic Complex

African Development Bank Group

November, 2011

I. Introduction

1. The central and strategic role that agriculture plays in Africa's development makes the sector the key to economic growth, enhanced living standards, poverty reduction, and increased food security. Indeed, all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have direct or indirect linkages to agriculture. However, agricultural statistical systems and data are in a sorry state in many developing countries – the systems are weak, uncoordinated, poorly resourced, and essentially unsustainable. Moreover their outputs are wanting in terms of quantity, quality, and dissemination. This situation has been exacerbated by new data requirements to inform policy on emerging development issues such as food production vs. biofuels, global warming, environment, and food security.

2. In order to respond to the declining quantity and quality of agricultural statistics in developing countries, a Global Strategy for Improving Agricultural and Rural Statistics was produced and endorsed in February 2010 by the United Nations Statistical Commission. The purpose of the Global Strategy is to provide a framework and methodology that will lead to improvements in the availability and quality of national and international food and agricultural statistics, to guide policy analysis and decision-making in the 21st century. The Global Strategy has three pillars, namely: (a) the establishment of a minimum set of core data that countries will provide to meet their current and emerging demands; (b) the integration of agriculture into their national statistical systems (NSSs) to ensure that the data will be comparable across countries and over time; and (c) ensuring the sustainability of the National Agricultural Statistical System (NASS) through governance and statistical capacity building.

3. Africa is the first region to implement the Global Strategy. The Action Plan for Africa of the Global Strategy was designed in 2010 by the African Development Bank (AfDB), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the African Union Commission (AUC). It was shared and discussed with key stakeholders both within and outside the continent, including African countries, regional and international organizations, regional economic communities (RECs) and donors. A global discussion of the Action Plan was held at the fifth International Conference on Agricultural Statistics (ICAS V) held in Kampala, Uganda in October 2010 and at the UN Statistical Commission in February 2011. The Action Plan adopts a long-term perspective (10 to 15 years) but will follow a phased approach. This report presents the progress made so far in implementing the Action Plan and recommends the next steps in the way forward.

II. Progress made so far

(a) Document preparation

4. In 2011, AfDB together with partners – UNECA, AUC and FAO, finalized two important documents of the Action Plan, namely:

- Improving Statistics for Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture, and Rural Development: An Action Plan for Africa, 2011-2015. The Plan comprises three

technical components – technical assistance (TA), training, and research – as well as a governance mechanism. The Plan also envisions a comprehensive and detailed assessment for African countries, which will provide the foundation for the three technical components. The components will play complementary roles in implementation of the Global Strategy.

- Improving Statistics for Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture, and Rural Development: An Action Plan for Africa, 2011-2015, Summary. This document gives a complete summary of the Implementation Plan. It will be used for advocacy among policy- and decision-makers who do not have much time to read the full document. It was used by AfDB, FAO and ECA to advocate for statistics among donors in New York on the margins of the UN Statistical Commission in 2011.

In mid-2011, the two documents were finalized, printed and translated into French.

(b) Action Plan Implementation Strategy

5. In October 2011, an Implementation Strategy for the Action Plan was designed. The Strategy takes different scenarios into account for resource availability for the Action Plan activities: the ideal situation where all required resources (\$66 million) would be mobilized; only 60 per cent of required resources (about \$40 million) would be mobilized; only 45 per cent of required resources (about \$30 million) would be mobilized; and only 30 per cent of required resources (about \$20 million) would be mobilized. The Strategy prioritizes activities accordingly.

(c) Establishment of a Secretariat

6. To ensure that activities related to preparation of the launching of the Action Plan for Africa are being executed smoothly, a Coordination Office was established at AfDB and a Coordinator recruited in April 2011. A coordination team will progressively be enhanced to take full responsibility for a Regional Secretariat and for technical coordination of the implementation of the Action Plan for Africa.

(d) Holding of the first Regional Steering Committee meeting of the “Action Plan”

7. The Action Plan provides for a Regional Steering Committee as the decision-making body for implementation of the Plan. The Committee, which includes both users and producers of statistics, is under the high-level stewardship of the Chief Economist and Vice-President of AfDB as its chairperson. Committee members include: members of the African Statistical Coordination Committee (ASCC) (*viz.* AfDB, AUC, ACBF, ECA), African Friends of the Chair of the UN Statistical Commission (Morocco, Uganda, Ethiopia, Senegal), the Chair of StatCom-Africa (South Africa), the Chair of the African Commission on Agricultural Statistics (AFCAS), Statistical Training Centres (1 representative), Ministries of Agriculture (2 representatives), Agricultural Research Institutions (1 representative), FAO and donors (World Bank, DfID, USDA, and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation).

8. The Committee held its first meeting in Tunis, Tunisia 12-13 July 2011. It agreed on its Terms of Reference, composition, mode of operation and other important issues related to implementation of the Plan.

(e) Preparations for country assessment

9. The Action Plan for Africa provides for undertaking country assessment of statistical capacity and needs in African countries to collect the required information for: (i) establishing the baselines against which targets can be set and performance measured; (ii) drawing up a comprehensive Technical Assistance programme for Africa also covering training and research; and (iii) establishing a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system to measure changes in the level of statistical capacity over time. A questionnaire for the country assessment was designed jointly with FAO, customized to Africa's specificities and successfully pre-tested in three countries - Ghana, Uganda and Burkina Faso. It has now been finalized and translated into French. Related guidelines, tabulation and analysis plans, as well as a web-based system for data collection and management are being developed. Training and launching of actual country assessment operations are expected to start in early 2012.

(f) Bulletin on Action Plan for Africa

10. This Bulletin was launched by the African Development Bank (AfDB) Group in January 2011 as part of its communication strategy to inform key stakeholders about progress in implementing the Action Plan. The Bulletin is produced on a quarterly basis and can be accessed online at the [AfDB](#) website. Volume 3 of the Bulletin will be released in January 2012.

(g) Meeting of resource partners

11. A meeting of resource partners was held in Rome, Italy on 28 September 2011 in support of implementation of the Global Strategy and the detailed Action Plan for Africa. It also discussed possible ways of mobilizing the required resources.

(h) Other

12. A quarterly *Food Security Brief* was started by AfDB in June 2011 in the context of the Action Plan for Africa to provide stakeholders with information about the food security situation on the continent. It is available online at the AfDB website. The second volume of the Bulletin was released in November 2011 and focuses on the Horn of Africa that has been experiencing the worst drought in decades. The volume presents the short-term responses to the crisis by the international community; medium- to long-term responses: from crisis to resilience; and an Integrated Resilience Programme.

13. A Food Security Data Portal was also developed and launched by AfDB in May 2011. The Portal website provides information on the following topics: Population Numbers (total, agricultural, rural and urban population), Food Availability and Accessibility (production and trade, food supply, food aid, and vulnerability related indicators), Hunger and Malnutrition, Agricultural Inputs (land use, agricultural tractors, and fertilizer), and Early Warning Information System (EWIS) for cereal products (monthly prices, cereal balance sheet indicators and related aspects). Data can be easily and simultaneously viewed through maps and graphs. Some standard tables have been included and an option for downloading and analysing data further has been provided. There is also a Resource Centre that gives access to some important reports on food

security subjects. The Portal constitutes one of the key information sources for preparation of the quarterly *Food Security Brief*.

III. Next steps in the way forward

14. The next steps in implementation of the Action Plan include:

Country assessments

- a) Launching of country assessment activity,
- b) Training data collectors, data collection, processing and analysis
- c) Developing county profiles and national action plans for improving agricultural statistics,
- d) Establishing M&E baseline information.

Integration of agricultural statistics into NSDS

- a) Establishing countries where NSDS is not sector-based with special reference to agricultural sector,
- b) Organizing a workshop on integration of agriculture into NSDS,
- c) Providing technical assistance to selected countries to integrate agriculture into their NSDS.