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Draft Report on the Activities of AGNA since February 2010

Acronyms

ACS	African Centre for Statistics
AfDB	African Development Bank
AGNA	African Group on National Accounts
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
StatCom-Africa	Statistical Commission for Africa
SNA	System of National Accounts
ICP	International Comparison Programme (database)
NSDS	National Strategies for the Development of Statistics
NSO	National Statistics Office
SHaSA	Strategies for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa

I. BACKGROUND

1. The African Group on National Accounts (AGNA) was created by the Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa) at its first meeting that was held from 21 to 23 January 2008 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. AGNA was created in order to address the challenges that confront African countries in the compilation of national accounts statistics and the issue of the inclusion of the informal sector in national accounts on regular basis. Hence, the main objective of AGNA is to monitor and evaluate the successful implementation of the “African strategy on the implementation of the 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA): Results based framework” by the respective member States. Furthermore, the specific objectives of AGNA include:

- a. Equipping African countries with SNA that is appropriate to their socio-economic realities;
- b. Strengthening the International Comparison Programme (ICP – Africa) tools in the field of national accounts;
- c. Preparing an optimal and efficient operational system of the production and dissemination of national accounts;
- d. Building capacity and sustainability of national accounts production and analysis;
- e. Increasing the availability and improving the quality of the basic data required for the compilation of national accounts, based on the National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS);
- f. Increasing human, material and financial resources;
- g. Undertaking advocacy at all decision-making levels; and
- h. Preparing bi-annual reports on monitoring and evaluation of progress in the implementation of the strategy.

2. At the conclusion of its second session which was held in January 2010 at the headquarters of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), StatCom-Africa adopted the African strategy for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and made it the first pillar of the African Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA); urged pan-African institutions, regional economic communities and member States to take ownership of the strategy and to mobilize the necessary funds for its implementation; and also urged Africa’s development partners to support its implementation.

3. It is to be recalled that the Statistical Commission for Africa II during its meeting of January 2010:

- a. **Adopted** the African strategy for the implementation of the 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA); and
- b. **Made** it the first pillar of the African Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA);
- c. **Urged** pan-African institutions, regional economic communities and member States to take ownership of the strategy and mobilize the necessary funds for its implementation; and urges Africa’s development partners to support its implementation.

II. MAIN ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY AGNA SINCE STATCOM-AFRICA-II

4. AGNA organized five meetings since February 2010, namely:

- a. Seventh Meeting of the African Group on National Accounts (AGNA) held from 17 to 22 January 2010.
- b. Eighth meeting of the African Group on National Accounts (AGNA) held from 13 to 16 December 2010 in Yaoundé, Cameroon.
- c. Seminar on the implementation of the 2008 SNA in Africa held from 11 to 15 April 2011 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- d. Ninth meeting of AGNA held side by side with the Seminar in April 2011 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- e. Tenth AGNA meeting held on 2-4 July 2011 in Pretoria, South Africa.

5. The main outcomes of the meetings under various headings were as follows:

i) **Regional Strategy and the Regional Project Document**

Regional Strategy

Implemented activities

- The Regional Strategy for the implementation of the 2008 SNA was prepared by AGNA members with regional organizations as facilitators and adopted by all stakeholders namely, the participating countries as well as regional and subregional organizations. Participatory approach was adopted in the preparation of the Strategy where each stakeholder was expected to contribute in making constructive proposals; taking part in the validation of strategic lines, objectives and activities; adapting the strategy; and implementing the strategy in its sphere of action. In general, the Regional Strategy is composed of seven strategic lines, sixteen objectives and thirty-nine activities.

Planned activities

- Preparation of vision document at national level for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics, based on the outcomes of the self assessment of the statistical capacity in order to establish a set of actions to accomplish statistical and institutional goals as it is instrumental in the sustainable improvement of the statistical agenda ensuring adherence to best practices in official statistics. These visions documents are expected to be in line with the Regional Strategy and to be integrated to the national strategies for the development of statistics (NSDS) in countries.

Regional Project Document

Ongoing activities

- The finalization of the common regional project document for the implementation of the 2008 SNA in Africa during the period 2011-2015, which is an action plan for the Regional Strategy was prepared and the five-year period for the implementation of the 2008 SNA is seen as a first step in the implementation process. In fact, after reviewing the Project Document during the AGNA meetings held in April 2011 in Addis Ababa, and in Pretoria in July 2011, AfDB, AUC and ECA have been requested to finalize the document by September 2011.

Planned activities

- Mobilization of financial, technical and material resources from donors by the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), AfDB, AUC and ECA which have been requested to join efforts to push forward the progress toward the implementation of the 2008 SNA;
- The execution of the Regional Project will be carried out through four complementary, mutually reinforcing, and parallel components:
 - (a) The first is methodological developments, followed by capacity-building is which comprising two components: training and technical assistance;
 - (b) The second is institutional setting and strengthening;
 - (c) The third is advocacy campaign; and
 - (d) The above three processes will be supported by constantly and continuously monitoring, evaluation, and reporting process.

ii) Monitoring and Evaluation

Implemented activities

- An Assessment Study was undertaken by ECA on the status of national accounts production, compilation and dissemination in African countries and the summarized version of the outcomes of the Assessment Study was presented during the Seminar which was held in April 2011. The main findings of the Assessment Study in the areas of resources, capacity, SNA versions used, coverage, and status of national accounts were as follows:
 - (a) Limited Human, Financial, and Technical Resources;
 - (b) Weak Capacity and Statistical Infrastructure;
 - (c) Unharmonious National Accounts Systems in the Continent;

(d) Inconsistency and Incompleteness in the Coverage of the Economy; and

(e) Early Stages in the Development of National Accounts.

Ongoing activities

- The responses provided in the Assessment Questionnaire were used to fill the Country Snapshot in the area of national accounts of forty-four African countries, which will be produced as part of the monitoring and evaluation exercise. The main information that is included in the Country Snapshot includes the SNA system used; institutional information; legal base; international and national classifications; data coverage and sources; compilation methods; data quality; and dissemination methods used.

Planned activities

- All Regional Project activities will be subject to periodic monitoring, reviews, and evaluation according to the adopted timetable and deadlines to ensure the required quality of deliverables. The process will involve key stakeholders, especially recipients, implementing agencies and development partners, to regularly assess performance and progress of the work plan and the budget as well as other elements of the plan as appropriate, and to decide on adjustments to the matrix of project results.
- Countries are requested to provide the update of the 2008 SNA implementation milestones, data sets and quality assessment framework for monitoring the scope, detail and quality of national accounts compilation at the country level.
- The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system will actually be accomplished through reporting and will be established before the starting of the execution of the Project Document. The reporting system will help to track the progress of the Regional Project, provide stakeholders with regular status updates related to the Project, and alert them on any changes to the original plan. Tools such as status reports of the Regional Project, charts, and standardized practices will be important for reporting the progress of the Regional Project.

iii) Advocacy

Ongoing activities

- Gearing of advocacy by AfDB, AUC and ECA towards the mobilization of financial resources to operationalize the 2008 SNA implementation strategy;
- The celebration of the African Statistics Day with the 2008 SNA as the theme for celebrating the 2011 ASD was adopted. In this regard, the theme of ASD should target non-national accountants as audience and therefore focus on sub-themes like the use of national accounts for informed decision-making and improving communication between NSOs and the civil society. Accordingly, ECA decided to use the theme “Keeping accounts to improve Africa’s present for a brighter future” in the celebration of ASD 2011. The necessary

advocacy materials as well as the poster and press communiqué are under preparation by ECA and will be disseminated to all African countries and other stakeholders during the month of September. In addition, one pager media-kits that focus on " Why the SNA framework is required to provide the best picture of an economy" and Implementation of the 2008 SNA in Africa" were prepared. All countries in Africa are expected to celebrate the day with different activities and ECA will provide logistical support to the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia with regard to the celebration.

iv) Coordination and Organization

Implemented activities

- The appointment of the following persons as regional coordinators for the three pan-African organizations: Mr. Luc Mbong Mbong from AfDB, Mr. Xiaoning Gong from UNECA, and Mr. Yeo Dossina from AUC following the decision of the fifth meeting of the Committee of Directors General of NSOs to establish AGNA as a permanent body for facilitating work on national accounts in Africa.
- The adoption of the terms of reference (ToR) for the following RECs, that play an important role in the implementation of the 2008 SNA and will also enable RECs to better serve the needs of their member States, were prepared and endorsed by AGNA.
 - (a) Arab Maghreb Union (AMU);
 - (b) Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA);
 - (c) Economic Community for Central African States (ECCAS);
 - (d) Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS);
 - (e) Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC); and
 - (f) Southern African Development Community (SADC).
- ECA is the Secretariat of the Regional Project Document and AGNA.

Ongoing activities

- Appointment of AGNA principal and alternate coordinators at the RECs' and the country levels.
 - (a) Finalization of the ToR of the AGNA;
 - (b) Finalization of the ToR of the AGNA coordinators;
 - (c) Clarification of AGNA governance; and

(d) Establishment of task forces within AGNA to address specific issues

v) Activities on the Implementation of the 2008 SNA

Ongoing activities

- A study on the impact of the implementation of 2008 SNA in African countries was launched in Pretoria in July 2011 under the guidance of AfDB. The ToR of the study was endorsed by AGNA and Cameroon, Guinea, Morocco and Rwanda were willing to be covered by the study. Further requests were made for at least six more countries to propose their candidacy for the study.
- ICP-2011 activities are being carried out by AfDB with the technical inputs of ECA.

Planned activities

- The calendar of publications of national accounts will be discussed in the next AGNA meeting.
- Preparation of technical document on the integration of informal sector in national accounts will be discussed in the next AGNA meeting.

vi) General

Implemented activities

- Creation of a website at the African Centre for Statistics (ACS) of ECA to archive all the documents of AGNA with access restricted to members and observers of AGNA. The website has been created and all relevant documents are uploaded.

Ongoing activities

- Integration of the region's Central Banks as their important role in the development of national accounts and economic statistics has been recognized, and may therefore, in their capacity of AGNA's members, be requested to support specific areas in the implementation of the 2008 SNA;
- Creation of an online forum of discussion for African partners.

III. Way Forward

6. The regional project document on the implementation of the 2008 SNA will have to be finalized and there is also a need to mobilize resources for its implementation. Furthermore, the following activities will be finalized.

- a) Clarification of AGNA governance;

- b) Self-assessment of statistical capacity using the diagnostic framework for national accounts and economic statistics and prepare a report on the assessment;
- c) Creation of AGNA task forces;
- d) ToR of AGNA;
- e) ToR of regional coordinators; and
- f) Preparation of advocacy materials for the mobilization of resources for the project implementation.

7. The members of the AGNA went through item by item the objectives and activities and reviewed and discussed thoroughly various parts of the ProDoc during the two AGNA meetings in 2011, i.e. the 9th and 10th AGNA meetings, one in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in April 2011 and another in Pretoria, South Africa, on 27 June-4 July 2011. The ProDoc on the Implementation of the 2008 SNA in African countries has been finalized by incorporating all the feedback from the members of the AGNA. The ProDoc is proposed to be endorsed by the StatCom Africa III. In order to implement the project there is a need to mobilize adequate financial resources from development partners.

IV. Points for discussion

8. StatCom Africa is requested to:
- (a) Express its views on the activities of AGNA during the period February 2010 to January 2012.
 - (b) Express support for and provide guidance on the proposed Project Document for the Implementation of 2008 SNA and on the mobilization of financial resources for its implementation.