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**Report of the Working Group on Employment  
and the Informal Sector in Africa**



## **I. BACKGROUND**

1. Since the 1980s when the concept of the special role for the informal sector in developing countries became highlighted, many initiatives have been undertaken, particularly by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Delhi Group on the Informal Sector, research centres such as DIAL in France and researchers from all horizons. The concept has been articulated in terms of substantive content and holistic methods for measurement and mainstreaming of informal sector survey results into national accounts.

2. Measuring the informal economy is becoming increasingly important in the activities of statisticians and economists of developing countries, and more particularly in Africa. The measurement concerns goods and services production, income distribution, and job creation. Furthermore, poverty reduction strategies place employment and microfinance issues, which are closely linked to the informal sector, at the core of development policies. In light of the impact of the recent world financial and food crises on the living conditions of households in Africa, it is obvious that greater knowledge of the informal economy is essential for developing relevant growth and poverty reduction strategies in African countries.

3. With support from DIAL and AFRISTAT, significant progress has been made in developing methodological tools and approaches for measuring and monitoring the informal sector in Africa. Accordingly, the survey mechanism known as “1.2.3 Surveys” has been introduced and is currently widely used by Madagascar, the Congo (DR) and all 18 AFRISTAT countries. Other reliable mechanisms for collecting data on employment and the informal sector have been put in place in other subregions of Africa and in countries such as the United Republic of Tanzania, South Africa and Botswana.

4. The initiatives undertaken over the past few years to improve knowledge on the informal sector in Africa include the following international seminars and expert group meetings:

(a) November 2007 organized by ECA and ILO in Lusaka, Zambia;

(b) October 1997 and October 2008 by AFRISTAT in Bamako, Mali; and

(c) October 2009 organized by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and the ILO in Dar es Salaam, the United Republic of Tanzania on informal employment and employment in the informal sector in Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries.

5. During the first meeting of the African Statistical Commission (StatCom-Africa) 21-23 January 2008, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, a working group was set up to organize and monitor activities on the informal sector in Africa. The leadership of this working group was entrusted to AFRISTAT.

6. Following the recommendations of StatCom-Africa, an action plan was prepared to map out guidelines for activities by the group that could be carried out by stakeholder African countries and organizations over the coming three years. The plan incorporated the key recommendations of the International Seminar on the Informal sector in Africa (ISISA) organized

by AFRISTAT in October 2008 and the positive results of the Dar es Salam seminar, reflecting the recent thinking in this area.

7. The Action Plan for improving and monitoring informal sector statistics in Africa for the 2010-2012 period proposed a wide range of activities to be carried out in a concerted manner. It also suggested some expected outcomes and conditions for successful implementation.

#### **A. Objectives**

8. The overall goal of the Action Plan was to provide informal sector stakeholders in Africa with an integrated working framework for 2010-2012, to help strengthen and secure comparable informal sector and informal employment statistics, as well as to ensure their more frequent and regular availability.

9. The specific objectives were as follows:

- (a) Making an inventory of ongoing work, studies and research on the informal economy;
- (b) Preparing a comparative methodological report on mechanisms for collecting and processing data on the informal sector so as to promote continental comparisons and move gradually towards harmonization;
- (c) Preparing and validating, within an advanced working group, the conceptual outlines and minimum questionnaire content for a survey on the informal sector under themes to be discussed;
- (d) Encouraging countries to initiate studies, research and surveys on the informal economy, and providing technical support for their implementation;
- (e) Testing procedures for preparing informal accounts through employment matrices;  
and
- (f) Establishing an African network of experts on measuring informal economies.

#### **B. Intervention strategy**

10. The proposed overall strategy focused both on resolving coordination issues in the informal sector and on creating conditions for achieving the above mentioned objectives through implementation of annual work programmes with actual deliverables. It differentiated “regional activities” (those of regional and subregional organizations) from “national activities” to be carried out by the countries themselves, with or without external support.

##### *Institutional arrangements*

11. The first StatCom-Africa meeting set up WGISA, and this Working Group was expected to have a formally-constituted and structured bureau, with operating resources. Indeed, the activities of the group were viable only if the WGISA bureau had the resources to meet at least twice each year.

12. The work of the bureau was presented to the group during StatCom-Africa sessions, and the WGISA outcomes were approved by the same sessions. The work was related to the preparation of WGISA annual work programmes and common methodological documents and progress reports. As much as possible, the bureau contributed to mobilization of financial resources and organization of the technical support required by countries to implement national action plans on the informal sector.

*Key strategic work areas*

13. Two key areas were defined in the Action Plan: organization and conduct of regional activities, and implementation of national work programmes on the informal sector.

*Regional activities*

**(a) Establishing a knowledge base on the informal sector**

14. Although the Dar es Salaam Seminar (October 2009) noted significant progress in comparability of key data on the informal sector and informal employment among African countries, it recommended that efforts should be made to work on an inventory of relevant surveys and studies so as to produce a complete map of the surveys.

15. The key objective of the inventory should consist of defining an “African methodology” for measuring the informal economy on a consensual basis so as to produce metadata of results and facilitate inter-country comparisons, as well as mainstreaming of the data into the overall evaluation of the economy. As a priority activity, the inventory of surveys and preparation of a methodological report, which would be an assessment of survey methodologies of the past 20 years on the informal sector, should be scheduled from 2010 and carried out by the African Centre for Statistics (ACS) at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in partnership with AFRISTAT.

**(b) Building a strong basis for harmonization of work on the informal economy**

16. ISISA gathered recent documents on progress made by countries, as well as the status of applied research on the informal sector. Furthermore, ECA, UNSD and ILO conducted comparative analyses of the various mechanisms in Africa, highlighting their specificities and facilitating the comparison of results. However, guidelines still need to be defined to help African experts to incorporate the general principles and operations of international activities in this area, such as those carried out by the Delhi Group.

17. The second stage entailed preparation and adoption of a “minimal” methodology for conducting surveys on the informal sector in Africa, based on information from past experiences, mainstreaming of new needs in line with growth and poverty reduction strategies, and national ownership of the 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA2008). This “African methodology” will be presented to and approved by the third session of StatCom-Africa in 2012.

**(c) Pursuing and strengthening studies on the informal sector**

The third area of focus was on conducting in-depth studies for increased knowledge on the informal sector, particularly through:

(a) Design and testing of procedures for preparing informal sector accounts on the basis of employment matrices; and

(b) Studies on the contribution of the informal economy to national accounts (GDP and its growth by branch of economic activity).

**(d) Building capacity for analysis of information on employment and poverty**

19. A key phase of the Action Plan consisted of developing activities to ensure better use of available information to generate reports and analyses that meet the expectations of users, particularly policymakers, social partners and various authors involved in preparing, implementing and monitoring the national Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).

20. In addition to seminars and workshops organized for national officials, the training of a network of stakeholders and researchers on the informal sector in Africa allowed for exchange of information and experiences. ACS/ECA has been able to institute such a network. The network comprises national focal points responsible for providing regular information on:

(a) Webpages on the “Informal Economy in Africa” based on the Action Plan from the African Statistical Knowledge Networks (ASKN) site of ACS; and

(b) A discussion forum on ASKN for members of the network to blog their concerns on activities to be carried out on the informal economy.

*National activities*

21. Countries are required to play a major role in establishing a mechanism for measuring and analysing the informal sector. Their commitment to this initiative depends largely on their respective activities in this area, particularly in preparing and conducting surveys on the informal sector and in analysing and disseminating the data.

22. The objective is to start the activities of the Action Plan in five pilot countries so as to implement the key orientations of the “African methodology” for testing in the selected countries. Particular emphasis will be laid on:

(a) Various survey phases reflecting the major themes of the survey;

(b) The relevance of questionnaires for each of the phases; and

(c) Establishment of a mechanism for collecting data on the informal sector (panel for annual monitoring of informal sector employment).

23. Generally speaking, the “African methodology” will have to be tested in terms of all these aspects, including the content of the concept and definitions of the informal economy in Africa. Furthermore, through analyses to be conducted, the operationalization of employment matrices for national accounts would be one of the key points in promoting the use of data from these operations.

24. Depending on availability of resources, the pilot countries should receive technical support to strengthen the capacity of the national teams responsible for conducting surveys, from

data collection to final analysis of results and/or accounts produced. The lessons learnt from conducting surveys and studies in pilot countries could be extended to other countries as and when they undertake such initiatives.

## **II. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN**

25. The main problems encountered in implementation of the Action Plan of the Working Group are as follows:

- (a) It has been difficult to run the bureau of the Working Group smoothly due to;
- (b) Difficulties in mobilizing financial resources for activities. As a result, the Working Group has been unable to organize two annual meetings as planned;
- (c) Constraints with translation of the methodological documents produced by AFRISTAT and ACS;
- (d) Persistently weak attendance at the meetings organized by WGISA during Statcom-Africa meetings, including:
  - (i) StatCom-Africa I (January 2008), and
  - (ii) StatCom-Africa II (January 2010).
- (e) Lack of commitment of the countries concerning implementation of the Action Plan:
  - (i) The focal points were not nominated in many countries; and
  - (ii) There was little inter-country communication on the activities they were planning and conducting in the areas of employment and informal sector.
- (f) Inadequate coordination of the activities of WGISA with those of the other working groups of StatCom-Africa (National Accounts, Gender, etc.).

## **III. ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

26. The main accomplishments of WGISA since the beginning of 2010 are:

- (a) Installation of the bureau and the technical secretariat;
- (b) Production by ACS of a technical note on the integration of the informal sector in national accounts;
- (c) Production by AFRISTAT of a technical note on recent innovations on the measurement of the informal sector;
- (d) Production by AFRISTAT of a methodological note on the comparability of statistics on employment and informal sector and the establishment of a minimal common module for the data collection; and
- (e) Organization of the first meeting of the extended working group on employment and the informal sector, in Yaoundé, Cameroon, in September 2011.



**A. Installation of the bureau and the technical secretariat**

27. A bureau of the working group has been established with a technical secretariat composed by AFRISTAT and ACS.

**B. The technical note of ACS on integration of the informal sector in national accounts**

28. This note starts with the main causes for non-observation of the informal sector:

(a) Inadequate coverage of the surveys or the non-responses;

(b) Lack of knowledge of the sector from which to begin to investigate (no archive or records available); and

(c) Inaccessibility of some areas to an investigator.

29. Given these difficulties and the characteristics of the informal sector, the technical note proposes a methodology for the integration of the informal sector in national accounts using labour-input matrices. The idea is to use the productivity of informal sector enterprises by production mode using data from phase 2 of a 1-2-3 survey. Once these productivity statistics are known, the value added of these enterprises can be obtained from the information on the quantity of labour used by the production mode. This information is obtained through phase 1 of a 1-2-3 survey or through any employment survey. The data are calculated in two iterations:

(a) Establishment of the accounts of branches by balancing supply and use (ERE), or the supply of goods and services vis-à-vis the demand for institutional sectors and based on prices of input and output production processes; and

(b) Establishment of institutional sector accounts.

30. At the conclusion of these iterations, it is possible to obtain a correspondence between the use of resources on the market for goods and services and on the labour market. From the data obtained previously, it will be possible to produce a supply and uses table and an annual satellite of the informal sector.

**C. TECHNICAL NOTE OF AFRISTAT ON RECENT INNOVATIONS ON MEASUREMENT OF THE INFORMAL SECTOR**

31. The purpose of this methodological note is to outline the recent innovations in the definition and measurement of the informal sector and of informal employment. An analysis is made on the basis of the provisional manual on the informal sector and informal employment surveys prepared by the Delhi Group (January 2010 version).

32. The note focuses mainly on the following issues:

(a) Harmonization of the definition of the informal sector;

(b) The logical link between production units and institutional sectors within the scope of 2008 SNA;

(c) Operationalization of the concept of the informal sector;

(d) The scope of informal sector surveys and treatment of specific cases;

(e) Measurement of employment in the informal sector and informal employment; and

(f) Inclusion of the seasonality of informal activities.

**D. THE METHODOLOGICAL NOTE OF AFRISTAT ON COMPARABILITY OF STATISTICS ON EMPLOYMENT AND THE INFORMAL SECTOR AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A MINIMAL COMMON MODULE FOR DATA COLLECTION**

33. This technical note by AFRISTAT gives an overview of the comparability of data on the informal sector and informal economy in Africa. It then proposes a strategy for harmonization. The aim of the strategy is the production of harmonized statistics on employment, decent work and technical and vocational training. The proposed strategy includes:

(a) Adoption by all the countries of a minimal list of indicators, produced and disseminated according to a common methodology; and

(b) Implementation of regional plans for strengthening national systems of information on the labour market, including:

(i) Promotion of the use of information on the labour market and technical and vocational training and organization of national labour market information systems;

(ii) Training of personnel involved in data collection, processing and dissemination, and of data users;

(iii) Strengthening of the material, technical and financial capacities of national labour market information systems;

(iv) Assistance with production of information; and

(v) Organization of data centralization and dissemination at regional level.

**E. FIRST MEETING OF THE EXTENDED WORKING GROUP ON EMPLOYMENT AND THE INFORMAL SECTOR**

34. The first meeting of WGISA took place 14-16 September, 2011 in Yaoundé, Cameroon. The meeting was attended by about 20 experts, including labour statisticians and national accountants from selected pilot countries, and representatives from development partners.

35. The main objective was to take stock of the progress made so far in data production on the informal sector and of the integration of this data into national accounts for the purpose of reporting to StatCom-Africa III, taking place in January 2012. The meeting was also an opportunity to discuss the methodology for integrating informal sector production in national accounts via labour-input matrices developed by ACS, to review the technical note on the production of informal sector statistics developed by AFRISTAT and to set up and operationalize an African network of experts on measuring the informal economy.

36. During the meeting the participant:

(a) Adopted the revised Plan of Action on the Informal Sector in Africa for the period 2012-2014 and requested the working group to present the new Plan of Action to StatCom-Africa III for final approval;

(b) Requested the technical secretariat to prepare the terms of reference (TOR) of the focal points of the informal sector not later than 30 September, 2011 and to disseminate this document among the group members and get feedback through the discussion forum;

(c) Requested AFRISTAT, in collaboration with ILO and UNECA to prepare a budget for operation of the working group over the next three years on or before 30 November, 2011, and to disseminate this through the forum to members, for comments and finalization;

(d) Requested the technical secretariat to publish the technical papers on the website of the working group as working documents;

(e) Requested the technical secretariat to discuss issues and operations with the African Group on National Accounts (AGNA) and obtain feedback in order to improve the quality of the technical note prepared by ECA and move towards the creation of a satellite account on the informal sector. After incorporating comments from AGNA, this technical note will be distributed among the countries in order to obtain their comments before finalization; and

(f) Called upon all African countries to send the technical papers on their methodologies for data collection and on the integration of the informal sector in national accounts to the technical secretariat of the working group no later than 15 December 2011. The following documents were required:

(i) Concepts and definitions manuals;

(ii) Manual of the surveyor;

(iii) Questionnaires;

(iv) Logical framework for data processing;

(v) Outline of the report; and

(vi) Technical notes on integration of the informal sector in national accounts.

(g) Called upon potential pilot countries and other countries that have pledged to conduct surveys on employment and the informal sector in the period 2012-2014 to confirm their

commitment as pilot countries at the request of the Technical Secretariat no later than 15 January, 2012;

(h) Called upon all countries of the region to designate focal points for employment and informal sector at the request of the Technical Secretariat of the Working Group no later than 30 October, 2011;

(i) Called upon all national focal points designated to register on the ASKN, and be more active in this forum;

(j) Requested all countries of the region to conduct regular surveys on employment and informal sector with national coverage;

(k) Asked the pilot countries to test the methodologies developed by the working group and to send their comments either through the forum or via email to the technical secretariat. Comments on the consistency of assumptions were welcomed;

(l) Recommended that countries should integrate the methodological innovations presented at the meeting in their future plans while ensuring consistency and comparability with past results;

(m) Called upon regional organizations to prepare technical papers on best practices based on the documentation sent by the countries on data collection and integration of the informal sector in national accounts not later than November 2012; and

(n) Requested technical partners, namely, AFRISTAT, the African Development Bank (AfDB), ILO and ECA to work together and to include the activities of the Plan of Action on the Informal Sector in Africa in their normative activities to promote the objectives.

#### **IV. THE WAY FORWARD**

##### **A. Activities in the Action Plan for improving and monitoring informal sector statistics in Africa**

37. Given that there were not many activities that took place since adoption of the Plan of Action on the Informal Sector in 2010, the participants at the WGISA meeting that took place in Yaoundé in September 2011 recommended reusing the same action plan for the period 2012-2014 with a few modifications. Therefore, the objective for the period 2012-2014 is to launch at least two phases of the mixed survey on employment and individual production units in the pilot countries, formalizing employment matrices, and adopting a satellite account approach to the informal economy.

38. Regional activities during year one 2012 is detailed and described as follows:

(a) Two WGISA bureau meetings with the following main items on the agenda:

(i) Adoption of the work programme of the bureau;

(ii) Consensual finalization of the schedule of activities to be implemented;

- (iii) Methodology of inventory of informal sector surveys and studies;
  - (iv) Procedures for preparing the methodology report on mechanisms for measuring the informal sector in Africa;
  - (v) Official designation of pilot countries and of national focal points;
  - (vi) Evaluation of costs, and issues relating to resource mobilization for the smooth implementation of WGISA activities;
  - (vii) Content of the annual progress report;
  - (viii) Establishment of a network of actors on the informal sector;
  - (ix) Issues relating to communication within the bureau (use of ASKN, etc;
- (b) Inventory of surveys and studies on the informal sector to be conducted before the end of 2011; and
- (c) Preparation of a draft African methodology for measuring the informal economy. This activity should be completed before the end of 2012 and should be given priority to enable the pilot countries to carry out their activities on the basis of a common minimal methodology. The methodology was especially important for preparing the following documents:
- (i) Concepts and definitions manual;
  - (ii) Questionnaires;
  - (iii) Survey interviewer's manual;
  - (iv) Data processing of logical framework (computer programme for data collection and processing);
  - (v) General plan of the data analysis report; and
  - (vi) Any other document relevant to the informal sector.

39. National activities during year one 2012:

- (a) Establishment of survey mechanisms; and
- (b) Mobilization of financing.

40. Regional activities during year 2 (2013):

- (a) Two WGISA bureau meetings with the following main items on the agenda:
  - (i) Review of the progress report of year 1;
  - (ii) Adoption of the work programme of the bureau;
  - (iii) Review of the survey reports of pilot countries (methodological aspects);
  - (iv) Finalization of the “African methodology” and related methodology documents based on pilot surveys;
  - (v) Review of the status of resource mobilization;
  - (vi) Issues relating to communication within the bureau (use of ASKN, etc.); and
  - (vii) Finalization of pilot survey documents in terms of assistance required by countries.

41. National activities during year 2 (2013):

- (a) Implementation of national surveys on employment and the informal sector in pilot countries based on the harmonized data collection mechanism validated by the pilot countries (from data design to analysis and dissemination); and
- (b) Analysis and dissemination of results.

42. Regional activities during year 3 (2014):

- (a) 2 WGISA bureau meetings with the following main items on the agenda:
  - (i) Review of the progress report of year 2;
  - (ii) Adoption of the work programme of the bureau;
  - (iii) Review of survey reports of pilot countries;
  - (iv) Review of the survey evaluation reports of the pilot countries;
  - (v) Review of methodological aspects for the preparation of the satellite account of the informal sector;
  - (vi) Review of the status of resource mobilization;
  - (vii) Issues relating to communication within the bureau (use of ASKN, etc.);

- (viii) Review and validation of the African methodology (StatCom-Africa III);
- (ix) Conduct of a regional study on the contribution of the informal economy to national accounts (GDP growth its trends by branch of economic activity);
- (x) Development of the methodology for the informal economy satellite account; and
- (xi) Preparation and publication of the survey evaluation reports of pilot countries.

43. National activities during year 3 (2014):

- (a) Conduct of annual surveys (pilot countries), if necessary;
- (b) Replication, in other countries, of national surveys on employment and the informal sector based on the harmonized data collection mechanism validated by the pilot countries (from data design to analysis and dissemination); and
- (c) Analysis and dissemination of results.

**Expected outcomes**

44. At the end of the period, the documents which should be available and widely disseminated will include:

- (a) An inventory of surveys and studies on the informal sector in Africa;
- (b) The methodology report of the surveys on the informal sector in Africa, including the concepts and definitions manual;
- (c) The “African methodology” for surveys on the informal sector in Africa;
- (d) Reports on analysis of data on the informal sector in pilot countries; and
- (e) Summary report on the surveys of pilot countries.

**Budget estimate for WSIGA activities**

45. It is too early to estimate a budget for the implementation of the activities of the working group. Given below are the major aspects that could be taken into consideration for the various figures:

- (a) WGISA bureau meetings, twice each year, and these meetings will be extended to pilot countries;
- (b) Some field missions to compile an inventory of surveys and studies on the informal sector;
- (c) Contribution to surveys of pilot countries; and

(d) Technical assistance to pilot countries and others that would want to conduct such operations.

## **B. Other activities**

### **AFRISTAT**

46. As part of its mandate, AFRISTAT is giving continuous support to its member countries in the methodologies for the production of statistics on the informal sector and informal employment.

### **ILO**

47. ILO is also very active in support to African countries for the production of statistics on employment and decent work.

### **ECA**

48. ECA, jointly with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), and in collaboration with UNSD, is planning to implement in 2012 a project called 'Action Plan for improving and monitoring informal sector statistics in Africa'. This project, which will be implemented under the Development Account of the United Nations, aims to improve the availability of timely socio-economic analyses on the informal sector and informal employment – in particular their contribution to GDP, and total employment – for promotion of evidence-based policy at the national level. The project provides for exchange of knowledge among the participating regions.

49. The project seeks to integrate the informal sector into the development process in support of achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other development targets. One of its objectives is to facilitate the assessment of real levels of poverty and related social and labour issues at regional and interregional levels.

50. The project has capacity-building components, namely, to train national survey statisticians in national accounts data compilation and exhaustive measurement of GDP, and to induce national accountants to extensively use direct survey data related to the informal sector and employment.

51. The main activities under the Action Plan for improving and monitoring informal sector statistics in Africa are:

(a) One interregional expert group meeting to prepare the project implementation plan and validate the methodology;

(b) Eight national training courses to improve the technical capacity of the national statistics organizations (NSOs) to process data on the informal sector and to compile exhaustive estimates of GDP;



(c) Four regional workshops to raise awareness among an increased number of countries on the importance of the provision of regular funding for statistical activities related to the informal sector and satellite accounts, and to contribute to a durable, self-sustaining upgrade of the national statistical system in pilot countries targeted for data compilation activities;

(d) Establishment of a knowledge database to promote knowledge sharing in building national technical capacity – both within project countries and beyond, and produce:

- (i) Training materials and compilations of best practices to be used as guidelines for the project activities and as the main documentation for the training modules together with the “Manual on Surveys of informal employment and informal sector”, being drafted by the Delhi Group; and
- (ii) A web-based repository of all relevant technical materials and project documents, allowing easy access by the NSOs of participating countries.

(e) National training courses on data compilation and analysis on the labour input matrix to be operated as the kernel of the satellite accounts;

(f) Development of a Handbook on methods and practices to improve national technical capacity in the use and dissemination of statistics on the informal sector, in order to produce:

- (i) Estimates of the contribution of the informal sector to annual GDP using indirect techniques, such as the “labour input methodology” or other appropriate methods; and
- (ii) Guidelines for data dissemination with a Tabulation Plan and a List of Key Indicators.

(g) Support to the launching of a second Labour Force Survey during the 3 years, through expert missions. In this connection, staff or project consultants should travel to pilot countries on advisory missions to help design project activities. ECA could undertake advisory missions to project countries on a needs basis;

(h) Exchange of evidence-based development and socio-economic policies and of sectoral strategies formulated. The main purpose of these activities is to facilitate exchange on best practices among countries and regions. Within these collective activities, the project allows each region to develop specific implementation strategies according its particular conditions and needs; and

(i) One final interregional expert group meeting to share lessons learnt and to evaluate project outcomes.

### **African Union Commission (AUC)**

52. Following a recommendation of the 17th Ordinary Session of the African Union (AU) Assembly which took place in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, in July 2011, AUC has set up a Steering Committee on the Harmonization of the Labour Market Information Systems (LMIS) in Africa. The first meeting of this steering committee took place 7-8 September, 2011 in Addis Ababa, and ended with the:

(a) Adoption of a Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Labour Market Information System Harmonization and Coordination Initiative;

(b) Creation of a Task Force to elaborate common methodologies for the production of labour statistics in Africa; and

(c) Adoption of a minimum list of harmonized indicators on labour, employment and technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

53. In the coming years, the Steering Committee on the Harmonization of the Labour Market Information Systems in Africa is planning to:

(a) Develop the capacity of the labour-market information structures in African country for covering the labour migration flows as part of the LMIS;

(b) Develop technical tools and mechanisms which are essential to implementation of a reliable and effective LMIS, with attention to harmonization of nomenclature, development of specific tools in collaboration with the ministry responsible for TVET, and introduction of the labour market into the work of the education and training system;

(c) Encourage and stimulate utilization of the LMIS and data by policy decision makers, through the dissemination and publication policies of NSOs, negotiation of conventions/agreements between producers (social security services, etc.) and users. This requires development of analytical capacity in the NSOs and in the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Education-TVET, and setting up of analytical groups;

(d) Strengthen the LMIS coordination mechanism and capacity at national level;

(e) Systematize the knowledge and know-how developed in the area of the informal economy and capacity development for more countries;

(f) Enhance effective coordination, dialogue and harmonization of the various initiatives to align them with the AU frameworks and improve their effectiveness and efficiency (inventory, analyses, coordination of the initiatives, etc);

(g) Develop capacity to discuss, build consensus, have common understanding, solve problems, and build mutual respect for agreements;

(h) Conduct annual reviews for improvement of the framework and systems;

(i) Elaborate harmonized methodologies with harmonized questionnaires and harmonized, methodological tools under the leadership of AFRISTAT and ILO; and

(j) Conduct the process for the adoption of the Minimal List of Indicators to be respected by stakeholders at all levels by April 2012, under AUC leadership.

**Points for discussion**

StatCom Africa is requested to:

- (a) Express its view on the Action Plan of the Working Group for 2012-2014.
- (b) Express its view on the proposal to rename the Group “Africa Group on Employment and Informal Sector” to take into account the fact that its scope goes beyond the informal sector issues.
- (c) Express its view on the proposal to give the presidency of the group to a country rather than an international organization.