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Third Meeting of the Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom Africa III)

17-23 January 2012

"Harmonizing Statistics in Support of Economic, Monetary and Social Integration in Africa"

Concept Note

May 2011

I. Background

1. To efficiently serve its member states in different areas of intervention, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) has established, since its inception, a number of subsidiary bodies as part of its intergovernmental machinery. In the area of statistics and statistical development, the status of the subsidiary body has changed through time reflecting the profile of statistics as a thematic area within the UNECA. The first subsidiary body to deal with statistics was the Conference of African Statisticians established in 1959, a year after the establishment of the UNECA while the last but one was the Committee on Development Information (CODI) established in 1997 by the twenty-third meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development (CoM). The CODI was set up to provide policy and technical guidance for the sub-programme ñharnessing information for developmentò and comprised three Sub-committees namely the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), Statistics and Geo-information.

2. Following the last UNECA repositioning exercise, the Statistics Division was re-established in August 2006 as the *African Centre for Statistics (ACS)*. It was therefore imperative to put in place a new subsidiary body specifically devoted to statistics and statistical development on the continent. This new subsidiary body is expected to provide 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 CoM. The CoM held in Addis Ababa from 2 to 3 April 2007 endorsed the creation of the new subsidiary body in charge of statistics: the Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa).

3. The ACS successfully organized the first meeting of StatCom-Africa from 21 to 23 January 2008 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia under the theme ***"Scaling up Statistical Development in Africa".*** Key agenda items of the inaugural meeting of StatCom-Africa included the formal launching of the Statistical Commission and setting up of a strong bureau and various working groups according to priority needs in statistical development on the continent namely: (i) Development Indicators, (ii) Informal Sector, (iii) National Accounts, (iv) Data Management, (v) Statistical Training, and (vi) Gender Statistics.

4. The meeting called on African countries, among other things, to mainstream statistics into national planning and budgeting processes to ensure statistical activities are adequately funded and seen as a key element in the development process, rather than as an add-on. Development partners were also called upon to provide sustainable technical and financial assistance for the collection, processing, analysis and use of data, particularly data necessary for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

5. StatCom-Africa-II was an even more successful meeting. It was held from 17 to 22 January 2010 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia under the theme ***"Harnessing Financial and Technical Resources in Support of the Monitoring of Millennium Development Goals in African Countries".*** Indeed, with only five years to go for the MDGs target date, there was a need to discuss: (i) whether things were in order to monitor the achievements or not; and (ii) what corrective measures needed to be taken where required in order to meet the agreed goals. Therefore, a review of ongoing efforts in support of progress made by African countries towards the MDGs was conducted through a global perspective by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group (IAEG) and a regional perspective by the ACS and the African Statistical Coordination Committee (ASCC). The work undertaken by the MDG Africa Group ï Cluster

on Statistics was also reviewed as well as reflections on ñMonitoring development beyond 2015ò.

6. The meeting also noted the active and fruitful participation of the members of the Working groups who came up with several important recommendations including the need for: (i) continuing the trend in country participation in the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses (PHCs); (ii) implementing the strategies set up by the different working groups including the production of a set of handbooks on various subject-matters in order to facilitate statistical capacity building in the corresponding areas ï this should be facilitated by ECA. Finally, the meeting called on African countries to support the organization of a Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) and to speed up the preparation of the Global Strategy to improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics in Africa.

7. Building on the success of the previous meetings and ongoing capacity building efforts on the continent, *inter alia*, under the ASCC, StatCom-Africa-III will take stock of progress made in various areas, address some of the challenges faced by stakeholders in supporting African countriesôproduction and use of quality information in support of their development efforts including the monitoring of progress made towards the achievement of the MDGs. Moreover, it will particularly address issues pertaining to the African economic, monetary and social integration process, which is critical to Africaôs development in a globalized context.

II. Date and venue

8. As stated in the Terms of Reference of StatCom-Africa, one of its mandates is to ensure the coordination with the United Nations Statistical Commission (UN StatCom), which takes place annually in February/March. Moreover, StatCom-Africa has to report to the CoM, which generally takes place annually in May/June or even in March as it was the case in 2010. Accordingly, StatCom-Africa-III will take place from 18 to 23 January in Cape Town, South Africa back-to-back with the 7th Africa Symposium on Statistical Development ((ASSD).

III. Theme

9. It is a common practice within the UNECA to have the discussions of a subsidiary body around a theme. Accordingly, StatCom-Africa meetings should be built around a theme. The theme for StatCom-Africa-III is: ***"Harmonizing Statistics in Support of Economic, Monetary and Social Integration in Africa"***.

IV. Objectives

10. The objectives of StatCom-Africa-III include:

- A review of ongoing efforts in support of the monitoring and evaluation of progress made by African countries towards the integration process in Africa;
- Taking stock of progress made by different standing Working Groups set up during meetings of the Commission;
- Exchange of experiences and best practices on ongoing efforts by sub regional, regional, and international organizations as well as development partners in statistical development on the continent;
- Exchange of experiences and best practices on countriesô efforts in their quest to support their national, regional, and international development initiatives with quality statistics;
- To work out modalities for the coordination of ongoing statistical capacity building activities on the continent; and
- To agree on a proposed list of items for consideration by StatCom-Africa-IV. In this regard, the Secretariat should prepare such a list in close consultation with major players on the continent and based on emerging priorities from, among others, the ASCC, the CoM, the ASSD, the Forum on African Statistical Development (FASDeV), and the UN StatCom.

V. Format

11. The work of the Commission shall consist of plenary sessions. The proposed agenda of the meeting is as follows:

Wednesday 18 January 2012

- Registration, opening remarks, keynote address to joint sessions of StatCom-Africa III and the 7th ASSD.
- Award ceremony

Saturday 21 January 2012

- Election of Bureau
- Adoption of the programme of work and other organizational matters

Reports on StatCom-Africa Working Groups

- Follow up on the resolutions of StatCom-Africa II
- African Group on Statistical Data Management (AGSDaM)
- African Group on Development Indicators (AGDI)
- Africa Group on Gender Statistics (AGGeS)
- African Group on National Accounts (AGNA)
- African Group on Informal Sector (AGIS)
- African Group on Statistical Training (AGrOST)
- Proposed African Group on Environment and Related Statistics

Support for Economic, Monetary and Social Integration

- Statistical Data Requirements for Integration
- SHaSA and Integration of Sector Strategies

Sunday 22 January 2012

Ongoing and New/Emerging issues:

- 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses
- International Comparison Programme (ICP-Africa)
- Africaõs Implementation Plan of the Global Strategy on Improving Agricultural Statistics
- Report on the implementation of NSDS in Africa
- Report on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Africa
- Assessment of the status of CRVS systems in Africa

Coordination of Statistical Activities

- Report on the Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa (RRSF)
- Measuring progress towards statistical development in Africa: The African Statistical Development Index
- Report on the African Charter for Statistics

Information Management in Africa

- Botswana Plan of Action on Geographical Names
- Data Collection and Management Proposal for Africa
- AfricaInfo

Monday 23 January 2012

Statutory Issues

- Report on ACSõs activities in 2010-2011 and the proposed programme of work for 2012-2013
- Discussions on the forthcoming UN StatCom (country participation, contribution of the region on proposed agenda items)
- Proposed date and agenda items for StatCom-Africa IV
- Any other business

Closing

Tuesday 17 January 2012

- FASDEV will take place as a pre-StatCom-Africa event. Technical and financial partners (TFP) will present the status of the support to statistical development in Africa. Focus will be put on financing statistical activities, which remain a critical issue for African statistical System. Presenters will include: AfDB, UN Funds, the World Bank, PARIS21, the AfDB, the Africa Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), GIZt, , the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), Bilateral partners, private foundations, etc.

VI. Documentation

12. As per the STATCOM-Africa's ToRs, the Secretariat will accept the following documents for the sessions:

- ***Documents for discussion***: ***limited to 16 pages in length***, these documents should be forwarded to the Secretariat ***by 15 October 2011*** to allow for translation and clearance. Statutory documents of the Secretariat fall under this category.

- ***Background documents****:* Information from participants and the Secretariat, which are of potential interest to the Commission. They will require clearance by the Secretariat prior to distribution and adequate number of copies should be made available by their authors. No translation services provided for these documents by the Secretariat.

- ***Room documents****:* could be made available, for information, during the session at the initiative of their authors without any responsibility of the Secretariat.

VII. Attendance

13. Every member state sends an official government delegation led by the Head of the National Statistical Office (NSO) and may include and is not limited to statisticians, information and geo-information specialists and policymakers. Representatives from countries outside Africa, United Nations agencies, sub-regional, regional and international inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, academic and research institutions, civil society organizations and private practitioners are also invited to participate and contribute to the debates.

VIII. Funding

14. StatCom-Africa being a statutory meeting of the UNECA, delegates and observers are expected to cover the cost of their travel and subsistence for the duration of their stay in Addis Ababa. Nevertheless, to improve the attendance, pre and post StatCom-Africa workshops/seminars shall be arranged in collaboration with partners, who may fund the cost associated with bringing the experts and facilitators, and sometimes the travel and subsistence of invited participants at the workshops.

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