



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

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

Cape Town, South Africa

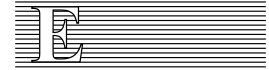
18 – 23 January 2012

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





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Abbreviations and Acronyms

		MDG	Millennium Development Goals
		NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
ACBF	African Capacity Building Foundation	NSO	National Statistical Office
ACS	African Centre for Statistics	NSS	National Statistical System
AfDB	African Development Bank	OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
AGNA	African Group on National Accounts	PARIS21	Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century
AFRISTAT	Economic and Statistical Observatory for Sub-Saharan Africa	PHC	Population and Housing Census
AGROST	African Group on Statistical Training	REC	Regional Economic Community
ASSD	Africa Symposium on Statistical Development	RRSF	Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa
AUC	African Union Commission	SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
CEMAC	Communauté Economique et Monétaire d'Afrique Centrale	SHaSA	Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa
CIDA	The Canadian International Development Agency	SNA	System of National Accounts
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa	StatCom-	Africa Statistical Commission for Africa
CRVS	Civil Registration and Vital Statistics	STPA	Statistical Training Programme for Africa
Eurostat	The Statistical Office of the European Union	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization	UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
FASDEV	Forum on African Statistical Development	UNESCO	United Nations Education and Scientific Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
ICP-	Africa International Comparison Programme for Africa	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
IDB	The Islamic Development Bank	UNSC	United Nations Statistical Commission
ILO	International Labour Organisation	UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
GIZ	German International Cooperation		
ISI	International Statistical Institute		

Introduction

1. The third meeting of the Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa III) was held at the Lagoon Beach Hotel in Cape Town, South Africa, from 21 to 23 January 2012. The theme of the meeting was “Harmonizing Statistics in Support of Economic, Monetary and Social Integration in Africa.” The theme was chosen to highlight the role of statistics in ongoing efforts towards economic, monetary and social integration in Africa. The meeting also reviewed progress made in ongoing efforts to build the capacity of African countries to produce and use quality statistics to support their development efforts. It also reviewed the status of the implementation of resolutions adopted at previous meetings.
2. The meeting was preceded by the Fifth Meeting of the Forum on African Statistical Development (FASDEV V) on 17 January 2012 and the Seventh Africa Symposium on Statistical Development (ASSD 7) from 18 to 20 January 2012.

Attendance

Member States

3. The meeting was attended by delegates from the following 44 member States of UNECA: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Republic of South Sudan, Central African Republic, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Observers

4. The meeting was also attended by observers from non-African States, as well as international, regional, subregional and national organizations and institutions, as listed below.

5. Non-African States: Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

6. International, regional and subregional organizations and institutes: Partnership In Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21), World Bank, Islamic Development Bank (IDB), Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat), African Development Bank (AfDB), African Union Commission (AUC), PROGNOZ, Southern

African Development Community (SADC), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Communauté Economique et Monétaire d'Afrique Centrale (CEMAC), Economic and Statistical Observatory for sub-Saharan Africa (AFRISTAT), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Health Metric Network (HMN), Association pour le Développement des Echanges en Technologie Economique et Financière (ADETEF), France and DRS Technologies UK Ltd. , United Kingdom.

7. Training Institutions: ESTAC, Tanzania, Institut de Formation et de Recherche Démographiques (IFORD), Makerere University School of Statistics and Applied Economics (SSAE), Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Statistique et d'Economie Appliquée (ENSEA-Abidjan), Institut de Statistiques Sociales et d'Economie Appliquée (ISSEA-Yaoundé), Jomo Kenyatta University, Kenya, African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS).

8. Statistical Associations: Association des Statisticiens de Mauritanie (ASM), Association Sénégalaise pour la Statistique (ASTAT), Association des Statisticiens et Démographes du Togo (ASTADEMO), International Statistics Institute, South Africa, Uganda Statistical Society and selected young statisticians from Africa.

9. United Nations Agencies: United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), International Labour Organization (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Liaison Office to the African Union (AU) at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Institute for Statistics of UNESCO and UNFPA (Rwanda Office).

10. Others: Award winners, international statistics consultants and other prominent personalities.

Adoption of agenda and election of the Bureau

Agenda

11. The following agenda was adopted by the meeting:
 - 1) Opening
 - 2) Award ceremony
 - 3) Election of the Bureau
 - 4) Adoption of the agenda and organizational matters
 - 5) Reports by StatCom-Africa working groups
 - 6) Support for economic, monetary and social integration

- 7) Ongoing and new/emerging issues
- 8) Coordination of statistical activities
- 9) Information management in Africa
- 10) Statutory issues
- 11) Closing

Election of the Bureau

12. After recalling the procedure adopted in 2008 by the first meeting of the Statistical Commission for Africa in nominating members of the Bureau, the following countries were unanimously elected by acclamation to form the new Bureau:

Chair	Ghana
Vice-Chair	Mozambique
Second Vice-Chair	Tanzania
First Rapporteur	Tunisia
Second Rapporteur	Angola

Account of proceedings

Opening

13. The meeting was formally opened by H.E. Mr. Trevor Manuel, Minister in the South African Presidency responsible for National Planning. In a pre-recorded video address, Mr. Manuel called on the continent's policy makers to formulate evidence-based policies. He appealed to the national statistics offices (NSOs) to provide users with quality statistical information in support of Africa's development agenda.

14. Opening remarks were also received from Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, Under-Secretary General and Executive Secretary of ECA, Professor Nthuli Ncube, Chief Economist and Vice-President of AfDB; Dr. Jean Ping, Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, South Africa's Minister of Home Affairs and Mr. Pali Lehohla, South Africa Statistician General.

15. In a statement read on his behalf by Mr. Dimitri Sanga, Mr. Janneh called on the African statistical community to focus on improving civil registration and vital statistics. He referred to the Fourth High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-4) held in Busan, South Korea, in December 2011, where partners recommitted themselves to improving aid

delivery by systematically and effectively leveraging resources to boost development results. Indeed, the accompanying action plan for statistics was subtitled “Statistics for transparency, accountability and results,” emphasizing the key role of statistics for policy-making and monitoring progress in development outcomes.

16. In a recorded video message, Professor Nthuli Ncube highlighted the need for statistics to support the efforts of Governments towards poverty reduction and the social and economic betterment of their people. In recognition of that need, AfDB had continued to provide direct grants to assist African countries to strengthen their statistical capacity over the past 10 years.

17. The opening remarks of Dr. Jean Ping were read on his behalf by Dr. René N’Guettia Kouassi, Director of Economic Affairs at the AUC. Dr. Jean Ping appealed to all countries that had not ratified the African Charter on Statistics to take all the necessary steps to do so. StatCom, among other things, should assess the current state of implementation of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (ShaSA).

18. Dr. Dlamini-Zuma observed in a recorded statement that the situation of inadequate civil registration and vital statistics in Africa had led to poor planning and development efforts. The poor state of civil registration systems was, in South Africa’s case, the result of colonialism and apartheid, which had considered Africans as sub-humans. Statistical tools would help countries to better plan basic education, health, infrastructure and other development issues.

19. The Statistician General of Statistics South Africa and Chair of ASSD, in his statement, said that the sixth ASSD held in Cairo marked a watershed in the ASSD journey, as stocktaking had revealed that all countries, except Somalia, had either undertaken or committed to undertake a census in the 2010 round. To date, 31 African countries had undertaken a census with the remaining 19 having made firm commitments. South Sudan would outshine everyone, as it would conduct a second census in 2013. With that achievement, it was time for a strategic shift in focus from censuses to another area of need, namely, Civil Registrations and Vital Statistics (CVRS). That shift was congruent with the decision taken by Ministers responsible for CRVS, in August 2010 in Addis Ababa.

Awards ceremony

20. On behalf of the African statistical community and with the concurrence of the African Statistics Coordination Committee, the African Centre for Statistics (ACS) honoured African statisticians for playing leading roles in the development of statistics in Africa. Professor Biyi

Afonja was awarded the Africa Statistics Award. Certificates of recognition were also awarded to Mr. Timothy J. Marchant, Dr. Jean-Louis Bodin and Mr. Gérard Chenais.

Professor Biyi Afonja

21. Professor Afonja contributed to the development of statistics at both the national and international levels. At the national level, he served, among others, as Professor of Statistics at the University of Ife and the University of Ibadan, Head of the Department of Statistics, University of Ibadan and consultant to various Government agencies. He also served as President of the Nigerian Statistical Association from 1985 to 1987 and Editor-in-Chief of its journal from 1983 to 1985 and Chairman of Nigeria's National Advisory Council on Statistics from 1977 to 1980. At the international level, Professor Afonja was the Chief Statistical Training Adviser and Project Manager for the Statistical Training Programme for Africa from 1980 to 1981 and Vice-President of the International Statistical Institute (ISI) from 1987 to 1989, serving on its Advisory Task Force on Statistical Education, the Task Force on Tertiary and Technical Education and the Nomination Committee.

22. In his acceptance remarks, Professor Afonja observed that being honoured for his contributions to statistical development in Africa was a great lesson for the younger ones to do their best to make a difference. He had spent the greater part of his working life in academia. In accepting the award, he must not fail to recognize the giant steps that had been taken in the last two decades to lift the level of statistics in Africa. He recalled the near abandonment of statistics in the scheme of things at ECA. Lastly, he reminded the meeting that they must not rest on their oars, but should relentlessly consolidate the gains made so far and continue the work of advocacy.

Mr. Timothy J. Marchant

23. Mr. Timothy J. Marchant had contributed greatly to African statistical development, mainly through methodologies for the measurement of social and economic outcomes of development policies and projects. His contributions had consistently emphasized the importance of sound statistical information for promoting transparency and good governance. His technical expertise had been most visible in the area of large-scale sample survey design and implementation. This had included household budget surveys, agricultural surveys and various forms of integrated and poverty monitoring surveys.

24. In his acceptance remarks, Mr. Marchant said that he was honoured to receive the award that recognized his contribution to the strengthening of statistics and statistical systems in Africa, particularly because it came from his peers and fellow statisticians. He felt privileged to have been granted a life incredibly full of excitement and to have worked with truly dedicated colleagues and partners. He recalled some of the key social and economic

issues that currently challenged Africa. They included measuring poverty, monitoring and minimizing the risk of famine, estimating the prevalence of AIDS, implementing programmes of economic adjustment without imposing intolerable hardship on the most vulnerable population groups and monitoring and evaluating the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). He had contributed to addressing those challenges.

Dr. Jean-Louis Bodin

25. Dr. Jean-Louis Bodin was one of two visionaries who conceived and founded the Economic and Statistical Observatory of sub-Saharan Africa, better known as AFRISTAT. He oversaw the drafting of the treaty signed in Abidjan on 21 September 1993, and chaired the Scientific Council from 1996 to 2006. He continued to participate actively in that important body in aspects concerning organizational governance and carried out various missions for the observatory. From 1989 to 1997, he undertook several missions aimed at coordinating French technical assistance in Kenya and almost all French-speaking African countries, and represented France as observer at the ECA joint conferences of planners, statisticians and demographers, the precursor to the Statistical Commission for Africa.

26. Dr. Bodin thanked ACS for honouring him with the certificate of recognition. He stressed the importance of harmonizing statistics in Africa, adding that the process would eventually develop a true African statistical system. He commended ACS for inviting young statisticians to StatCom-Africa, noting that they represented the future generation of statisticians. Through that exposure, those statisticians would have the courage and passion to tell the truth through the statistics that they would produce in the future.

Mr. Gérard Chenais

27. Mr. Gerard Chenais served as adviser in the field of statistics in many African countries, including Niger, Djibouti, Côte d'Ivoire and Mauritania. It was during his time in Djibouti that he initially thought about national strategies (including the data processing master plan) - ideas that he fully developed during his time in Côte d'Ivoire. After more than 35 years of service, it was in Paris, at the PARIS21 Secretariat, that he found the ideal place to continue supporting countries and keeping the link with Africa. At PARIS21, he contributed to the development of the National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) Guide, organized regional workshops and played a lead role in advocacy for statistics.

28. Mr. Chenais said that he associated the distinction with those he closely worked with for 20 years in Africa and five years at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), especially the Directors General of NSOs, who had made the French cooperation possible. Some general questions remained unanswered even for him, especially, the relationship that statisticians had with statistical legislation and the lack

of statistics on statistical activities. To ensure consistency of all statistics, there should be collective and firm engagement in the development and implementation of a comprehensive strategy for statistical development.

Report by StatCom-Africa working groups (Agenda item 5)

Documents: E/ECA/STATCOM/3/20; E/ECA/STATCOM/3/2; E/ECA/STATCOM/3/6; E/ECA/STATCOM/3/3; E/ECA/STATCOM/3/4; E/ECA/STATCOM/3/5; E/ECA/STATCOM/3/7

29. The reports of the working groups had been distributed before the meeting. The chairs of the respective working groups introduced the reports for discussion. Also under this agenda item, ECA presented a summary of the status of the implementations of the resolutions of the second meeting of StatCom-Africa, noting that substantial progress had been made on the resolutions.

Summary of StatCom-Africa II

30. South Africa presented a report on the activities that had been undertaken by the Bureau since StatCom-Africa II. While the African Charter on Statistics had been adopted by member States, it still had to be ratified. For there to be economic integration, there was the need for reliable quality statistics. Although many actions had been proposed, there was lack of coordination in the general strategy. The presentation concluded that African institutions must help in producing reliable statistics. For SHaSA, lead countries should be assigned to the different thematic groups.

Follow-up on the resolutions of StatCom-Africa II

31. Much progress had been made on the resolutions adopted at the second meeting of the Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa II), especially through the working groups. With regard to activities of the group on statistical data management, an ad hoc expert group meeting had been organized as recommended by StatCom-Africa II. The quality of data had been discussed as well as the strategy that allowed the data to be compiled and validated. Also recommended was an association of statisticians at the regional level. The group had also concerned itself with the use of geo-spatial technologies and pointed out the need to understand the instruments that could be used in Africa. A workshop that had taken place also produced the Gaborone Plan of Action in November 2011.

32. With regard to the group's activities on development indicators, the target date was 2015. The statistical community had set up a think-tank for identifying the indicators that would be needed after 2015. ECA, AfDB and the AUC had jointly prepared a report on Africa's progress on the MDGs. AfDB had requested countries to name a focal point on the MDGs and set up committees to discuss them. With specific focus on statistics, a manual had been developed to see how to use data on household surveys.

33. With regard to gender statistics, a manual had been prepared and would be available in the second half of 2012. Funds were available for work on training materials. Compendium statistics could also be prepared. A regional strategy had been recorded on gender statistics in StatCom-Africa II and a document prepared on the subject and discussed and engaged. No progress had been recorded for the activities of the African Association of Statisticians. An action plan was thus needed to address the problem.

African Group on Statistical Data Management

34. The report of the group was presented by Uganda, the Chair. The group handled capacity building activities. Two different training workshops on innovative tools for data management had been held, one for Anglophone and the other for francophone countries. Following the recommendations of the ASK-Net workshop on data management, which was endorsed by StatCom-Africa II, a handbook had been prepared to assist countries in selecting the best platform for managing and disseminating data to users. In the ensuing discussions, ACS was requested to finalize the handbook and make it available to countries. Collaboration between NSOs and institutions involved in producing statistical data should improve so as to ensure the completeness and quality of data, and production of objectively verifiable indicators. African countries were encouraged to develop statistical data management and dissemination policies. It was recommended that the African Statistical Association should be represented in the working group in order to strengthen its activities.

35. The meeting was requested to consider the following courses of action: (a) endorse the handbook on statistical data management prepared by the ad hoc expert group; (b) request ECA and partners to study data flows within the national statistical systems (NSS) and propose a framework for countries to adapt from; (c) study and recommend an optimal statistical information system architecture for NSOs; (d) request the working group to advocate and build capacity in the use of geo-spatial tools in undertaking census and surveys and other aspects of official statistics; (e) request the working group to coordinate data collection attempts by regional and subregional organizations to reduce the reporting burden on countries; (f) request ECA and partners to develop an open-source platform for data management and dissemination - to be done collaboratively by experts in Africa and partners in statistics, and owned by African NSOs.

African Group on Development Indicators

36. The report was presented by Zimbabwe. The main problems encountered had to do with data quality and timelines. In the past few years, there had been much improvement in availability of data on development indicators from African countries. The meeting was requested to consider the following action points: (a) inclusion of other United Nations agencies, regional economic communities (RECs) and statistical training centres; (b) training of statistical personnel in country offices on various handbooks and manuals developed at the regional level; (c) improvement of metadata standards and writing of metadata; (d) improvement of data reporting mechanism from the countries. That included reporting data and metadata on MDGs in a systematic and uniform manner, through a coordinated and uniform platform, and exploring the use of SDMX for data and metadata transfer on the continent.

37. With regard to institutional issues, it was agreed that the group should meet twice a year. ECA and AfDB should allocate funds for such meetings. A network should be created on the ECA website for exchanging information and knowledge, with a facility for translation. Lastly, there was a need to develop a monitoring framework with clearly identified performance indicators for systematic reporting of activities undertaken by the group.

African Group on Gender Statistics

38. The African Group on Gender Statistics (AGGeS) addressed the challenges related to lack of gender statistics. Ghana, which chaired the group, presented activities undertaken in past two years. They included (a) development of a handbook on gender mainstreaming in the statistical process; (b) compilation of a report on data gaps in capturing data on women's cross-border trade; (c) national studies on violence against women in a few African countries. AGGeS also reported on ongoing activities, including: (a) development of a compendium on gender statistics, as recommended by StatCom-Africa II; (b) review of gender statistics programmes in African countries; (c) development of a gender statistics training toolkit. A draft of the African Programme on Gender Statistics (APGS) was prepared and presented in Accra. The group recommended the following actions for consideration by the meeting: (a) approval of APGS for its implementation; (b) inclusion of the gender dimension in the work of other groups; (c) holding of a special session at all StatCom-Africa meetings; (d) inclusion of RECs, selected statistical training centres and several United Nations agencies in the AGGeS.

African Group on National Accounts

39. The African Group on National Accounts (AGNA) met five times after StatCom-Africa II to ensure the progress of its work. Actions undertaken included: (a) developing a regional strategy for the implementation of the System of National Accounts (SNA) 2008 adopted by all stakeholders; (b) drafting the current regional project document on the

implementation of the 2008 SNA in Africa during the period 2011-2015; (c) assessing by ECA of the state of production, compilation and dissemination of national accounts in African countries; (d) raising awareness on the part of AfDB, the AUC and ECA, to mobilize the financial resources needed to launch the operational strategy for the implementation of the 2008 SNA. A study on the impact of the 2008 SNA in African countries was launched in Pretoria in July 2011 in four pilot countries (Cameroon, Guinea, Morocco and Rwanda). The meeting expressed support for the project document for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and recommended that AGNA should collaborate with the African Group on Informal Sector.

African Group on Employment and Informal Sector (Formerly African Group on Informal Sector)

40. The main achievements of the group were: (a) establishment of a technical secretariat; (b) development, by ACS, of a technical note on integrating the informal sector into national accounts; (c) editorial by AFRISTAT of a technical note on innovations in measuring the informal sector, (d) development by AFRISTAT of a methodological note on comparability of statistics on employment and the informal sector and the development of a common minimum module for data collection.

41. However, several problems had impeded the activities of the group. They were: (a) lack of financial resources; (b) low participation in meetings; (c) insufficient coordination between the activities of the group and other groups.

42. The group had announced its intention to hold pilot surveys in five countries and had called on those willing take part in the surveys to do so. It asked the meeting to decide on: (a) continuation of the action plan of the working group for the period 2012-2014; (b) the proposal to rename the group “African Group on Employment and the Informal sector”; (c) chairing of the group by a country rather than an international organization.

43. The meeting approved the request for the change of name to African Group on Employment and the Informal Sector, and urged countries to submit documents requested by AFRISTAT to complete the African document on the methodology.

African Group on Statistical Training

44. The report of the African Group on Statistical Training (AGROST) was presented by ENSEA, the Chair. The report covered activities carried out during the past two years, the challenges and the group’s priorities. The AGROST secretariat had fostered the establishment of a coordination mechanism. The group had organized four meetings and carried out the following activities: (a) analysing the training component in national strategies for the

development of statistics; (b) updating the list of statistical training centres (STCs); (c) assessing statistical training needs and capacities; (d) outlining strategy for harmonizing and standardizing programmes and diplomas; (e) establishing an online portal; (f) mentoring young statisticians. The report recommended that AGROST should be the sole window for statistical training, advocated for mobility of students to break linguistic barriers and acknowledged the support of ECA, GIZ, Paris21 and AfDB. The meeting welcomed the interest of ISI in becoming a technical and financial partner of AGROST. It also called on STCs to continue their efforts in the training of statisticians by taking the guidance for the harmonization of curricula into account.

Proposal for African Group on Environment Statistics

45. The meeting received a proposal for the formation of the African Group on Environment Statistics with the objectives of promoting the use of international standards, coordinating existing activities in the region and providing assistance and guidance to countries in the area of environment statistics. The group would also be a vehicle collating views of African countries to be collectively tabled at international level. The group should be connected to the proposed technical group mentioned in SHaSA. The proposal to establish the African Group on Environment Statistics was approved.

Reports of the Seventh Africa Symposium on Statistical Development and the Fifth Forum on Statistical Development

46. The meeting received and adopted the recommendations of the Seventh Africa Symposium on Statistical Development and the communiqué of the Fifth Forum on Statistical Development.

Support for economic, monetary and social integration (Agenda item 6)

Statistical data requirements for integration

47. The importance of trade statistics was highlighted. Trade statistics helped to understand trade dynamics and its use for direct interpretation of economic processes such as the gross domestic product (GDP) and trade flows. Intra-African trade was not as vibrant as that of other continents. Monitoring and evaluation of the establishment of the African Custom Union by 2017 required harmonized trade statistics at the continental level.

48. In the ensuing discussion, participants underlined the lack of resources for the production and harmonization of statistics for the integration agenda. Countries should be encouraged to allocate more resources for that purpose.

Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa and integration of sector strategies

Document: E/ECA/STATCOM/3/10)

49. The presentation highlighted the process of socio-economic and political issues and the priorities that are required for statistics. The policy framework structuring the African integration process was highlighted. The presentation also assessed political, economic and social integration. It also highlighted the strategic themes of SHaSA, namely: (a) producing quality statistics for Africa; (b) coordinating the production of quality statistics for Africa; (c) building sustainable institutional capacity of the African statistical system; (d) promoting the culture of quality decision-making; and (e) emphasizing the need for mapping the various ongoing institutional frameworks and strategies onto SHaSA. The specialized technical working groups were called upon to align their work programmes to the SHaSA strategic template.

Ongoing and new/emerging issues (Agenda item 7)

Documents: E/ECA/STATCOM/3/9, E/ECA/STATCOM/3/12, E/ECA/STATCOM/3/13

Report on the 2010 round of population and housing censuses

50. The meeting received two presentations related to the report on the 2010 round of population and housing censuses (PHCs) and the uses and operations of the census information programme. The first presentation discussed progress made, and outlined a few points for consideration. As many as 29 countries had already conducted their censuses and 23 had planned to do so before the end of 2014. The activities undertaken were: (a) advocacy for increased participation of African countries in the 2010 round of PHCs; (b) workshops on census planning, enumeration, analysis, census data dissemination and archiving; (c) advisory services in census cartography and data processing; (d) preparation and dissemination of census materials and software.

51. The second presentation was on the CensusInfo software, including a background on the uses, application and the different outputs from the software. The software provided compatible census data technology and could generate population pyramids and other

graphs. It included maps to drill down data to different administrative levels. Partner organizations were ready to provide technical support for the programme.

52. It was proposed that an assessment of the 2010 round of PHCs should be undertaken in 2013 on various aspects such as the questions asked, the outputs generated and the processes followed in the collection and processing and dissemination of data. Also, manuals and handbooks on PHCs already developed by ECA could be distributed and integrated into the curricula of the STCs for greater outreach

Implementation of the International Comparison Programme 2011 for Africa

53. The presentation highlighted the rationale for having the programme and reviewed: (a) the platform for capacity building; (b) the responsibilities at the national level and implementation status of the 2011 International Comparison Programme (ICP)-Africa; (c) household consumption data collection, including data processing tools at the national level and national accounts-related activities regarding metadata required for 2009 and data quality and questionnaire. Lastly, data collection, through main and special surveys and national accounts activities were proposed as the way forward.

54. In the ensuing discussion, participants emphasized the need for countries to own the programme and decide on the governance structure.

Africa Infrastructure Knowledge Program

55. The presentation described the Africa Infrastructure Knowledge Program (AIKP) as a long-term framework for generating knowledge on the African Infrastructure. It aimed to have coordinated common quantitative baseline data to monitor improvement of knowledge at the country level. The AIKP strategy is to carry out special studies and provide knowledge to policy makers to improve capacity building. It is a long-term framework based on collection and analysis of data which covered institutional arrangement and sector performance. AfDB would undertake capacity building activities. The handbook on infrastructure statistics is an important instrument for obtaining more statistics and facilitating the AIKP strategy. The handbook was based on five years of experience and directed towards data providers, collectors, managers and users.

Improving statistics for food security, sustainable agriculture and rural development

56. The presentation described the general background of the global strategy and the Action Plan for Africa (AP-Africa). The governance mechanisms, technical assistance component and country assessment for AP-Africa were presented. Progress made so far

were: (a) preparation of the strategy document to improve statistics for food security, taking the technical components and advocacy among policy and decision makers into consideration; (b) development of the action plan implementation strategy; (c) establishment of secretariat; (d) holding the first regional steering committee meeting of the Action Plan; (e) preparation for country assessment; (f) meeting of resource partners. The next steps would be to undertake country assessments and work towards the integration of agricultural statistics into NSDS. The meeting endorsed the action plan with a recommendation that steps should be taken to ensure ownership of the strategy and plans by countries.

Report on civil registration and vital statistics

57. The presentation covered some background information on the major initiative taken by the pan-African institution and United Nations partners to improve the civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) system through a continent-wide programme called the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics system (APAI-CRVS). Substantial progress had been reported, including: (a) constitution of a core group for coordinating implementation of APAI-CRVS; (b) a medium-term plan finalized by the core group, based on comments from the expert group meeting held in January 2011; (c) ongoing comprehensive assessment of CRVS systems in Africa, through questionnaires; (d) development of a clear and concise conceptual framework for APAI-CRVS. The role of NSOs was clearly identified and presented, highlighting the need for NSOs to play a more active and rejuvenated role in the process of revamping CRVS in countries. NSOs were encouraged to compile and disseminate civil registration-based vital statistics on a regular basis, even if the registration levels were not complete. They were to produce reports on vital statistics obtained from the civil registration system at least once annually.

International Statistics Institute partnership with the African Group on Statistical Training

58. The presentation outlined four strategic portfolios to which ISI could contribute and requested the meeting to consider the following recommendations: (a) ISI applies for membership of the technical and financial partners of AGROST; (b) ISI is called upon to create mechanisms for exposing its brain trust to African institutions of higher learning, research institutes and mentoring young statisticians; (c) ISI is called upon to avail its resources to NSOs and academic institutions to strengthen that branch of official statistics; (d) ISI is called upon to continually work with the continent on a code of practice, implementation of the Statistics Charter and underpinning principles.

Coordination of statistical activities (Agenda item 8)

Report on the Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa

59. The presentation highlighted the fact that while the mid-term review of the Reference Regional Strategic Framework (RRSF) for statistical capacity building in Africa had been undertaken in 2011, its final review was expected in 2015. The following 12 strategies were outlined: (a) Advocacy: it should be present at all echelons of country governance; (b) Strategic planning: mainstreaming of NSDS into the development framework must be done properly; (c) Statistical legislation: its frameworks need to be updated in most of the countries; (d) User needs: an assessment and prioritization of user needs is necessary; (e) Data production: it should be enhanced, not only through census and survey but also via more effective use of administrative records; (f) Coordination and partnership: it should occur at all levels (subregional, regional and national); (g) Statistical infrastructure: progress must be made in that area; (h) ICT: geo-spatial tools should be better promoted; (i) Human capital: the workforce of NSOs should be increased; (j) Data analysis: enhanced collaboration with universities and research centres is advisable; (k) Data dissemination: multiple communication channels are possible (including workshop and Internet portals); (l) Statistical financing: the share of national resources should be increased.

RRSF coordinators should be designated at national and subregional levels to: (a) to take the necessary steps to monitor RRSF implementation; (b) allocate adequate resources for monitoring RRSF at all levels; and (c) undertake an independent evaluation of the implementation of RRSF by 2015.

Report on implementation of the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics in Africa

60. The report was on the AfDB and ECA evaluation of the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) using an approach based on the international principles of NSDS development. The approach first entailed analyzing the documents of NSDS and then interviewing the key players of the NSS. For that purpose and for practical reasons, countries were divided into two linguistic groups, English and French. Analysis of the French-speaking countries had been completed and preliminary outcomes were available. The analysis found that in general, the process of designing NSDS was aligned to international standards and its integration into the processes of decision-making and policies was in progress. The participative and inclusive aspect of the process of designing NSDS had been fulfilled in almost all the countries and the “traditional” areas were well covered in the plans of action. NSS had undergone diagnosis and the elements of the strategic framework (vision, missions, strategies, objectives, plans of action and mechanism

of monitoring and evaluation) were present. Nevertheless, political commitment was weak and demand for statistics results at subregional and regional levels were rarely pointed out.

61. In the ensuing discussion, it was observed that the initiatives were far too many; and those that were no longer useful should therefore be dropped. Also, PARIS21 had not been involved in those preliminary reviews. It was explained that the Partnership would be provided with details of the preliminary results by March 2012 at its meeting on the topic. It was further explained that efforts were being made to ensure that PARIS21 had access to the final reviews as soon as they had been completed. It would be consulted before reports were made publicly available. As lusophone countries were not included in the evaluations, it was recommended that concrete actions should be taken to ensure their inclusion.

Measuring progress towards statistical development in Africa: the African Statistical Development Index

62. The report dealt with the African Statistical Development Index (ASDI) for measuring progress made by African countries in terms of statistical development. The number and nature of the components of ASDI emanated directly from the 12 strategies and 79 recommendations of RRSE. However, many of the variables were difficult to quantify. It was therefore decided that 42 variables should be selected and organized into five components as follows: (a) functioning of NSS; (b) statistical infrastructure; (c) data dissemination; (d) human capital development; (e) funding. The variables and components of ASDI were selected by taking into account the conceptual framework, statistical tools and methodologies, and data availability. ASDI amply covered the components of the PARIS21 Statistical Capacity Building Indicators with given dataset and correlated with the Statistical Capacity Indicators developed by the World Bank.

63. In the ensuing discussion, support was expressed for the idea of creating an index on statistical development. However, the reviews could be done on a biennial basis, rather than annually. Questions were raised about the methodology and lack of information on reliability analysis. It was therefore suggested that a technical meeting should be held to discuss the methodology. Some delegates also expressed concern that countries had not been given prior notice of the exercise before being ranked.

Report on the African Charter for Statistics

64. The meeting received a presentation on the African Charter on Statistics. The Charter was adopted in February 2009 as the professional code of ethics and best practice for statisticians. Its main objective was to serve as the policy framework and advocacy tool for statistical development in Africa. It was based on the following six principles: (a) professional independence; (b) quality; (c) mandate for data collection and resources; (d) dissemination; (e) protection of individual data, information sources and respondents; (f) coordination

and cooperation. So far, 21 nations had signed and five had ratified. They were Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritius and Mozambique. Standard guidelines were being proposed to indicate how to implement the Charter (implementation plan). In that context, several recommendations had been formulated. First, countries must take the necessary steps to sign and ratify the African Charter on Statistics. Secondly, StatCom-Africa and the Committee of Directors General of Statistics (CoDG) had to adopt the standards and guidelines of the Charter. Thirdly, AUC should develop a management framework for the implementation of the Charter. Fourthly, countries must implement the Charter after ratifying it. Lastly, the African Group on Statistical Harmonization could play a role in monitoring, reporting and evaluating the implementation of the Charter.

Information management in Africa (Agenda item 9)

Gaborone Action Plan on geographical names activities in Africa

65. As background for the Gaborone Action Plan, the presentation recalled that the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) defined a geographical name as one applied to a feature on earth, for example: populated areas (cities, villages), civil divisions (districts, states) or natural features (streams, mountains). Geographical names were important mechanisms for linking location-specific statistical data to meaningful identifiers. Moreover, their standardization was critical to enhancing the development of location-based applications and services. Actions for tackling the challenges associated with geographical names could be defined as follows: improving national institutional arrangements; conducting capacity building and knowledge sharing activities; enhancing cooperation and coordination at all levels and making progress in technology and communication. In response to the resolution of StatCom-Africa II that encouraged ECA to liaise with UNGEGN and UNSD and prepare a work programme on geographical names, ECA and the UNGEGN task team for Africa organized a consultative workshop that reviewed the situation in Africa and developed the Gaborone Action Plan.

66. StatCom-Africa III was requested to: (a) endorse the Gaborone Action Plan; (b) refer and recommend the Action Plan to the Committee of Development Information, Science and Technology (CODIST) and the Committee of Directors General (CoDG) for consideration; (c) call on NSOs to participate actively in the work of their national committees, commissions or appropriate geographical names coordinating bodies; (d) call on ECA, AUC, AfDB and other partners to support the work of the Task Team for Africa in particular, and geographical names activities in general.

67. The meeting adopted the report and its recommendations, with particular emphasis on calls for (a) NSOs to participate actively in the work of their national committees, commissions or appropriate geographical names coordinating bodies; and (b) ECA, AUC, AfDB and other partners to support the work of the Task Team for Africa in particular, and geographical names activities in general.

Data collection and management proposal for Africa

68. The StatCom-Africa III theme, “Harmonizing Statistics in Support of Economic, Monetary and Social Integration in Africa”, highlighted the need for quality statistical data by regional organizations in general, and the three pan-African organizations in particular. The domains of need ranged from economic to social statistics, with a large range of other topics such as finance and monetary statistics, trade and infrastructure data and information on poverty and MDGs. The onus was on member States to ensure that their statistical data products were disseminated to organizations that made decisions that would affect them, and that those decisions were based on correct data. The pan-African organizations had consistently experienced difficulties sourcing data from the majority of member States for regional-level decisions; and as a result, were constantly looking for ways to improve the situation. In 2011, a meeting held in Abidjan discussed various issues related to data collection and management and made several recommendations, which StatCom-Africa III was asked to consider. Recommendations included the need for: (a) ECA, AUC, AfDB, RECs, intergovernmental organizations and other regional organizations to work together to improve data collection; (b) NSOs to increase their efforts to highlight the importance and role of statistics in socio-economic development and strengthen data collection and dissemination.

AfricaInfo strategic action plan

69. One of the efforts to improve the availability of data for regional-level decision-making was to develop a pan-African database called AfricaInfo. AfricaInfo was to be built on DevInfo, which was being used by United Nations agencies, as well as by 45 African countries, as a tool for monitoring development goals. The objectives of the AfricaInfo initiative were to: compile and standardize national and subnational data across the region; increase the AU capacity to use and analyze data; increase transparency and support planning and decision-making; reinforce national efforts to improve statistical information systems; and harmonize data with RECs and member States. The initiative had been endorsed by the joint AU Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance and ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. The Ministers charged ECA, AUC and AfDB to work together with UNICEF to produce a strategic action plan for implementing AfricaInfo. The strategic action plan had been produced and StatCom-Africa was requested to support AfricaInfo. The meeting endorsed the plan.

African Development Bank data portal and open data for Africa

70. In line with the discussions on data availability for regional-level decision-making, AfDB informed the meeting that it had developed a data portal that allowed for: (a) visualizing data for a specific country or benchmark performance and measuring progress against a specific target/regional value; (b) performing calculations with built-in tools; (c) providing presentation-ready graphics; (d) performing comprehensive analysis at country, regional and global levels; (e) exporting report tables and graphics to popular formats. An iPad app version was also available. The software for the data portal could be shared with countries and organizations that needed it for use as a solution for data management, access and dissemination. AfDB also described its data collection, management and dissemination system which offered many facilities to users. They included collecting data from various sources, generating reports and automating statistical publications or facilitating dissemination and publication of collected data. In line with the Busan Action Plan for Statistics, AfDB had launched the Open data for Africa, a tool that provided modules for upload one's own data, create and share one's own content as well as create communities around relevant topics. The meeting took note of the tools and offers.

Statutory issues (Agenda item 10)

Documents: E/ECA/STATCOM/3/17; E/ECA/STATCOM/3/18

Report on activities of the African Centre for Statistics for 2010-2011 and proposed programme of work for 2012-2013

71. The presentation recalled that StatCom-Africa II had endorsed the activities programmed under the ECA Statistics subprogramme for the 2010-2011 biennium to be undertaken by ACS. All the 38 activities approved in that work programme had been implemented. Particular mention was made of the African Statistical Knowledge Network (ASK-Net), which was developed jointly by ACS and UNSD under a development account project. It entailed developing a knowledge sharing platform for African statisticians, with emphasis on: (a) facilities for knowledge communities to exchange information regularly; (b) improving the connectivity of eight selected NSOs to ASK-Net, by providing laptop computers for their designated officials to use in participating in the network, rather than relying on internet cafés that had been found to be a deterrent; (c) an e-library with deposited knowledge resources; (d) skill-sharing study visits between countries.

72. Several lessons had been learnt from the implementation of the work programme. First, the coordination with AUC, AfDB and other partners and stakeholders had turned out to be very beneficial. Secondly, the active interaction with the NSOs had helped

to significantly improve data sources and delivery. Thirdly, it was necessary to augment the amount of data from national sources in order to provide useful inputs to major African publications. However, ACS also faced challenges related to limited resources for coordinating meetings with partners and the six African Groups of StatCom, as well as difficulty in accessing national level data.

73. The work programme for the 2012-2013 biennium, which had been approved for ACS by the United Nations headquarters, was presented for information. In the programme, ACS had planned 68 activities, taking into account the synergies with the work of its partners and the continued need to work closely with member States. The meeting endorsed the 2012-2013 work programme and called on member States to continue to work together with ACS and other partners for statistical development in Africa.

Discussions on the forthcoming United Nations Statistical Commission session

74. The meeting emphasized the importance for Africa to speak with one voice at the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC), and setting up a committee to discuss issues of importance to Africa. The committee was composed of Botswana, Cameroon, Malawi, Niger and Tanzania. However, other member States who would be in a position to attend were invited to contribute to the work of the committee. The committee met and submitted several proposals, which StatCom-Africa III adopted. The proposals included: implementation of the global strategy for agricultural statistics, implementation of NSDS and data access and dissemination.

Proposed date and agenda items for StatCom-Africa IV

75. The meeting recalled that StatCom-Africa meetings were usually held every two years in the third week of the month of January, in Addis Ababa. Therefore, tentative dates for StatCom-Africa IV were 20-24 January 2014 in Addis Ababa. The sixth Forum on Statistical Development was expected to precede the meeting as was normally the case. However, given the positive experience of holding ASSD together with StatCom-Africa III in Cape Town, South Africa, it was proposed that efforts should be made to also combine the 2014 ASSD with StatCom-Africa IV. The exact dates and venue of StatCom-Africa IV, FASDEV VI and ASSD would be decided and announced in due course. A draft of the items for the agenda prepared by the secretariat had been received and discussed.

Any other business

76. Under this agenda item, the Government of South Africa, represented by Statistics South Africa, proposed that the closing session should be held on Robben Island to give

participants the opportunity to experience the historic site where Nelson Mandela had been held during the apartheid years. The proposal was adopted.

77. Tunisia offered to host the StatCom-Africa meeting in 2014 along with the ASSD meeting. Participants welcomed the offer.

78. Burkina Faso offered to host the StatCom-Africa meeting in 2016 along with the ASSD meeting. Participants welcomed that offer too.

Closing (Agenda item 11)

Presentation of main conclusions and recommendations

79. Under this agenda item, the meeting considered the main conclusions and recommendations compiled by the secretariat from the sessions. Several delegates made comments and proposed amendments to the draft document. After extensive discussions by participants, the meeting adopted the draft text for the resolutions (Annex 1).

Annex 1

Conclusions and Recommendations of the Third Session of the Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa III) 21-23 January 2012, Cape Town (South Africa)

Introduction

1. The third session of the Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa) was hosted by the Government of the Republic of South Africa at the Lagoon Beach Hotel in Cape Town, South Africa, from 21 to 23 January 2012. The session was preceded by the fifth Forum on Statistical Development in Africa (FASDEV-V) and the seventh annual Africa Symposium on Statistical Development (ASSD-7) as co-located events on 17 and 18-20 January respectively.
2. The last session of StatCom-Africa was convened in John Craig Hall on Robben Island to adopt the following conclusions and recommendations named as the «Robben Island Declaration».

Preamble

3. Acknowledging that the theme of this third session of the Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa), “Harmonizing Statistics in Support of Economic, Monetary, and Social Integration in Africa,” is timely, as we identify statistical data requirements for the African integration process;
4. Considering reports from seven working groups on (a) Data Management; (b) Development Indicators; (c) Gender Statistics; (d) National Accounts; (e) Employment and Informal Sector; (f) Harmonization of statistics and (g) Statistical Training;
5. Considering reports from the 7th Africa Symposium on Statistical Development (ASSD) and the 5th Forum on Statistical Development (FASDEV);
6. Further considering other ongoing and emerging issues such as: (a) the 2010 round of population and housing censuses; (b) the International Comparison Programme (ICP); (c) Africa’s implementation plan of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics, (d) the Implementation of the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics

(NSDS); (e) Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS); and (f) Infrastructure Statistics Programme;

7. Having examined reports on (a) the Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity-Building in Africa (RRSF); (b) Measuring Progress towards Statistical Development in Africa: The African Statistical Development Index; and (c) the African Charter for Statistics;

8. Having examined reports on (a) the Gaborone Action Plan on Geographical Names Activities in Africa; (b) Data Collection and Management Proposal for Africa; (c) Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Africa; and (d) Assessment of the Status of CRVS;

9. Taking cognizance of a number of programmatic issues including: (a) the implementation of the 2010-2011 and the planned 2012-2013 work programmes of the African Centre for Statistics (ACS); and (b) the Strategic Action Plan for the Implementation of AfricaInfo;

10. Recognizing the importance of Statistical Training Centres (STCs) in conducting systematic and sustainable training programmes in the area of official statistics;

11. Noting with satisfaction the participation of young statisticians in the discussions of the Commission;

12. Recognizing that the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA) integrates major statistical initiatives in Africa, and can serve as a document for communication, advocacy, as well as a basis for monitoring progress on statistical development on the continent;

13. Acknowledging efforts by the African Development Bank (AfDB) to improve the availability and quality of infrastructure statistics in view of their importance in advancing the regional integration agenda;

14. Recognizing the crucial role played by agricultural statistics in dealing with the challenges of food security and climate change;

15. Recognizing the continuing importance of population and housing censuses as sources of demographic and social statistics;

16. Recognizing the support extended by development partners for activities of training through the African Group on Statistical Training and Human Resources (AGROST);

17. Welcoming the mobilization of resources by AfDB for its Statistical Capacity Building III Programme, and encouraging this continental institution to intensify its efforts to mobilize resources for statistical development in Africa;

General

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

18. 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;

19. Calls upon all working groups to align their work programmes to the SHaSA strategy template;

20. Recommends the establishment of a working group on environment statistics, to be called “African Group on Environment and Related Statistics”;

21. Endorses the report of the activities of ACS planned for the 2012-2013 biennium;

22. 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;

23. Requests AfDB and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) to extend coverage of the ongoing 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;

24. 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;

25. Adopts the recommendations of the 7th ASSD and 5th FASDEV.

On the African Charter on Statistics:

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

26. Adopts the standards and guidelines on the implementation of the African Charter on Statistics and commits to work towards its implementation;
27. Calls upon countries to take the necessary steps to sign and ratify the African Charter on Statistics and incorporate its principles into statistical laws and strategies;
28. Calls upon the African Union Commission (AUC) to develop a management framework for the implementation of the Charter, specifically, to finalize the self-assessment questionnaire and training manual; develop an action plan for its implementation; develop a monitoring and evaluation framework; and train National Statistics Office (NSO) staff in statistical leadership;
29. Calls upon AUC to lobby Ministers for Foreign Affairs to expedite the process of signing and ratifying the Charter on Statistics;
30. Calls upon the African Group on Statistical Harmonization (AGSHa) to monitor report and evaluate the implementation of the Charter by conducting independent peer-review assessments and compiling annual reports.

On the Strategy for the Harmonisation of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA)

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

31. Adopts the action plan of SHaSA;
32. Commits to identify lead countries for the specialized technical groups defined in the Strategy and make them function, and to recommend SHaSA to the Committee of Directors General of NSOs;
33. Urges countries to incorporate the provisions of SHaSA into their NSDSs, and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) into their regional strategies;
34. Calls upon AGSHa to monitor report and evaluate the implementation of SHaSA.

On National Accounts

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

35. Urges pan-African institutions, RECs, and member States to take ownership of the regional project document for the implementation of the 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA) and for all African countries to work together to adopt the 2008 SNA;

36. Urges African countries to allocate, and development partners to mobilize funds to support the implementation of the five-year regional project as laid out in the Regional Project Document;

37. Recognizes the importance of sectoral statistics such as industrial, trade and service statistics and recommends that countries should improve their sectoral statistical system as an essential part of SNA implementation;

38. Requests ECA to continue to coordinate monitoring, evaluating, and reporting of the status of the implementation of the SNA.

On the International Comparison Programme for Africa

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

39. Encourages AfDB to continue with the remaining part of the ICP implementation as scheduled, including the release of 2009 and preliminary 2011 ICP results;

40. Calls upon heads of NSOs of ICP participating countries to continue providing quality and timely data for ICP, for the remaining part of the programme, to allow release of the final results as scheduled;

41. Calls upon heads of NSOs to re-commit to the implementation of the 2007 Accra Declaration to integrate ICP into national statistical activities in general, and the consumer price index in particular.

On agricultural statistics

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

42. Supports the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics, endorses the related “Action Plan for Africa (2011-2015) for Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture, and Rural Development” and commits to support its implementation;
43. Recommends that NSDS should include provisions for developing the sector strategic plan for agricultural statistics, producing agricultural statistics, with technical expertise and funding in the area of agriculture statistics being channeled through the appropriate country institutions that have the infrastructure for producing them.

On the African Infrastructure Knowledge Programme

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

44. Endorses and supports the African Infrastructure Knowledge Programme as a long-term framework for generating knowledge on infrastructure statistics on a sustainable basis;
45. Recommends the Handbook on Infrastructure Statistics to African countries and regional institutions as a reference document for collecting standardized and comparable data on infrastructure;
46. Calls upon countries to build adequate capacity into the NSDS process to collect, process, manage and disseminate infrastructure statistics.

On the informal sector

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

47. Renames the African Group on the Informal Sector as the “African Group on Employment and Informal Sector (AGEIS)” to better reflect the scope of its work;
48. Recommends that the Group should finalize the handbook on the African method of employment and the informal sector by end 2012 and requests countries to send in information on their methods to the group’s technical secretariat (ACS/ECA, AFRISTAT) as soon as possible;

49. Recommends that AGEIS should work closely with AUC as the methodology being developed by the Group feeds into the work of the development of indicators being undertaken by AUC on Labour Market Information Systems (LMIS), and urges AUC to coordinate all activities on LMIS at the regional level.

On population and housing censuses

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

50. Urges ECA and other partners to undertake an assessment of the 2010 round of Population and Housing Censuses (PHCs) in Africa, in terms of the questions covered, the outputs generated and use of technology in collection, processing and dissemination of censuses;

51. Encourages ECA to continue offering advisory services in support of census taking, in partnership with other international agencies; and disseminate manuals and handbooks on PHCs and integrate them in the curricula of the STCs for greater outreach;

52. Urges countries and development partners to provide resources for conducting population and housing censuses.

On Civil Registration and Vital Statistics

The Statistical Commission for Africa recommends that:

53. 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;

54. NSOs should work with all stakeholders to integrate vital statistics derived from civil registration into their national strategies for development of statistics;

55. AUC should channel the recommendation of the 2010 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;

56. ECA should reinforce the CRVS Secretariat at ACS with a suitable staffing complement, as recommended in the declaration of the First Conference of Ministers;

57. The Health Metrics Network and the World Health Organization (WHO) should continue their support to the Regional Medium-term CRVS Plan, specifically in the improvement of causes of death recording and compilation of statistics and support to the next ASSD that will focus on causes of death.

On development indicators

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

58. Requests ECA to develop metadata standards on development indicators and improve the capacity of countries to write proper metadata by exploring the possibility of applying systems such as the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX). In this regard, ECA should conduct two regional workshops in collaboration with international agencies and experts;

59. Calls upon countries to provide data and metadata on development indicators, including those of the Millennium Development Goals, in a systematic and uniform manner, to regional organizations, through a much more coordinated and uniform platform;

60. Welcomes the participation of the United Nations Education and Scientific Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) in the African Group on Development Indicators (AGDI) and encourages other United Nations agencies, RECs and STCs to express their interest;

61. Requests AGSHa to work with pan-African organizations to revisit the methodological needs for the development of AGDI and take into consideration other initiatives that are developing similar indicators for socio-economic sectors.

On Labour Market Information Systems:

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

62. Urges heads of statistical offices to work with national stakeholders to implement the AU Framework for Harmonization and Coordination of LMIS, mobilize resources for those activities, and undertake at least an annual labour force survey, starting in 2012 (in countries where it is not yet done).

63. Calls upon AUC to convene a meeting of partners to mobilize resources for the implementation of the Action Plan for the Harmonization of LMIS, establish national

frameworks for their coordination, develop training plans and support countries to undertake labour force surveys based on the harmonized framework.

On gender statistics

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

64. Endorses the proposed Africa Programme on Gender Statistics (2012-2016) and requests the Working Group on Gender Statistics to coordinate its implementation;

65. Requests the working group to report on progress in implementing the plan of action to the Commission, at each of its sessions;

66. Approves the membership of the working group, including proposed countries, as well as all RECs, four STCs, and other international agencies that are actively engaged in gender statistics, such as UN Women, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNESCO, WHO, the United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and FAO;

67. Endorses the proposal that the programme of each year's ASSD should include a session on gender statistics;

68. Endorses the proposal that gender issues should be reflected in all sessions of the programme, and if necessary, have a separate session on gender statistics.

On data management

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

69. Calls upon ECA to disseminate the handbook to NSOs to enable them decide on data management and dissemination platforms;

70. Requests ECA, AfDB, AUC and partners to undertake studies to ensure optimal data flows within the various units of the NSO in particular, and among various components of the national statistical systems in general;

71. Requests the Working Group on Data Management to ensure that the role of geo-spatial tools in census and survey undertaking is included in its work, and urge ECA, AfDB, AUC and other partners to support capacity building activities for NSOs.

72. Encourages AUC, AfDB, ECA and partners to develop an open-source platform for data management and dissemination which will be collaboratively developed by experts in Africa and partners in statistics and owned by African NSOs.

On statistical training

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

73. Calls upon training centres to pursue efforts to train African statisticians, taking into account guidelines introduced by AGROST on aspects such as harmonization of programmes and certificates, and mobility of students and teachers;

74. Urges countries and technical and financial partners to support statistical training centres by providing them with human, material and financial resources to enable them to continue giving good quality statistical training;

75. Requests STCs, universities and in-service training centres to integrate the content of all prepared handbooks into their existing curricula and/or develop separate courses and/or build separate modules in existing courses;

76. Welcomes the interest expressed by the International Statistical Institute (ISI) to be part of the technical and financial partners of AGROST.

77. Calls upon ISI to:

- (a) Create mechanisms for making its brain trust available to African institutions of higher learning, research institutes and also for mentoring young statisticians;
- (b) Avail its resources to NSOs and academic institutions to strengthen that branch of official statistics; and
- (c) Continually work with the continent on code of practice, implementation of the Statistics Charter and underlining principles.

On geographical names

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

78. Endorses the Gaborone Action Plan;

79. Calls upon NSOs to ensure that coding systems are provided in the assignment and standardization of geographical names and advocate the use of such codes whenever data systems are being developed;

80. Calls upon ECA, AUC, AfDB and other partners to support the work of the Task Team for Africa in particular, and geographical names activities in general.

On data collection and dissemination

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

81. Endorses the outcomes of the Experts Group Meeting held in Abidjan in December 2011 on the development of a data collection mechanism for Africa. It therefore calls upon ECA, AfDB, AUC, RECs, inter-governmental organizations, other regional organizations and international institutions to:

- (a) Establish a data and metadata sharing mechanism to reduce the response burden on countries;
- (b) Explore automatic data exchange mechanisms in general, and the use of SDMX in particular, for data and metadata exchange.

82. Requests AfDB to provide all African countries with a data portal and open data platforms, with a view to improving the dissemination of statistical information.

83. Urges NSOs to:

- (a) Strengthen their data collection and dissemination for policy analysis and regional integration in Africa;
- (b) Share their data to enhance trade and regional integration analysis and monitoring;
- (c) Provide information on their data release calendar (publications, database updates).