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Statistical Commission for Africa
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Partners Statistical Capacity Building Programmes

African Group on Statistical Training and Human Resources

Report of activities during the period 2017–2018

I. Introduction and background

1. While there are a number of projects and programmes currently in place that are aimed at improving statistical capacity in Africa, they face a wide variety of challenges, which include human resource capacity, the availability of adequate courses and curriculums and the low capacity of training centres.

2. The African Group on Statistical Training and Human Resources was established in 2009 under the aegis of the Statistical Commission for Africa to coordinate various initiatives on statistical training in Africa. It is a group formed in response to the proliferation of groups and initiatives on statistical training in Africa, which was leading to the duplication of efforts and an inefficient use of already scarce resources. The primary objective of the Group is to ensure the coordination of activities and initiatives in support of statistical training and human resources development in Africa. The Group achieves its objective through centralizing information on initiatives and programmes in support of statistical training, ensuring that such initiatives and programmes are monitored and providing a permanent forum for the exchange of information and best practices on statistical training and human resources development in African national statistics systems. In doing so, the Group also promotes the development and dissemination of statistical training curriculums and courses to support the training portfolios of all statistics training centres in Africa. In order for the Group to fulfil its role and mandate, it is recommended that meetings be held annually for the purposes of reporting to the Commission, monitoring and evaluating the Group's activities and providing direction to the Group in terms of the strategic orientation of its activities.

3. On a similar note, a global strategy was prepared in response to the challenges of meeting user needs for agricultural statistics in developing countries. In February 2010, the Global Strategy for Improving Agricultural and Rural Statistics was endorsed by the Statistical Commission. The purpose of the Global Strategy is to provide a framework and methodology that helps to improve the availability and quality of national and international food and agricultural statistics to guide policy analysis and decision-making

* E/ECA/STATCOM/6/1.

in the twenty-first century. Following that, the Global Strategy provided a basis for the Action Plan for Improving Statistics for Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in Africa, which was prepared by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the African Development Bank and the African Union Commission. The Action Plan has three components: technical assistance, research and training. The training component is to be spearheaded by the African Centre for Statistics in collaboration with the African Group on Statistical Training and Human Resources.

II. Objectives

4. The main objective of the African Group on Statistical Training and Human Resources is to coordinate statistical training and human resource development activities and initiatives in Africa by monitoring ongoing activities and initiatives, conducting project planning and aligning the support of technical and financial partners with statistical training. The specific objectives are the following:

- (a) Centralize information on initiatives and programmes on statistical training and ensure that they are monitored;
- (b) Ensure the existence of a permanent forum for exchanging information and best practices on statistical training and human resource development in African national statistics systems;
- (c) Include initial training and continuous learning (e.g., on the job).

III. Activities report

5. The activities of the African Group on Statistical Training and Human Resources during the period 2017–2018 focused on continued support for the successful implementation of the training component of the Action Plan for Africa of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics in Africa. In addition, activities included forging additional partnerships on promoting topics in statistical training that had been identified as priorities on the continent. To this end, the following activities were undertaken:

- (a) Implementation of training of trainers on various topics in the field of agricultural statistics;
- (b) Establishment of the Scholarship for Specialization Studies in Agricultural Statistics;
- (c) Involvement with the twenty-fifth Session of the African Commission on Agricultural Statistics;
- (d) Development of additional training-of-trainers syllabuses and training materials on agricultural statistics;
- (e) Launch of new partnership for household survey on capacity development;
- (f) Annual review meeting of 2017;
- (g) Communication and advocacy activities.

Implementation of training of trainers on various topics in the field of agricultural statistics

6. In 2017, training-of-trainers workshops were organized on the topics of agricultural statistics production and processing mentioned below. The prime aim of the training workshops was to transfer the needed skills to statistical training centres so that they could further provide training courses on the same topics. In addition, the training of trainers also included regional and subregional universities supporting the provision

of technical support to training in various topics of agricultural statistics in Africa. Staff members from some national statistics offices and ministries of agriculture were invited to share experiences and provide insights into the practical applications and the existing demand for such topics in their countries and institutions.

7. The following training-of-trainers workshops were held:
- (a) Use of New and Emerging Technologies in Agricultural Statistics
Ndamena, 22-26 May 2017
 - (b) Effective Use of Administrative Data in Agricultural Statistics
 - (i) Gaborone 7-11 August 2017
 - (ii) Tunis, 3-6 October 2017
 - (c) Effective Production of Food Balance Sheets in Agricultural Statistics
 - (i) Rabat, 22-25 August 2017
 - (ii) Lusaka, 19-23 June 2017
 - (d) Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Livestock (Transhumant) Statistics
 - (i) Dakar, 7-10 November 2017
 - (ii) Addis Ababa, 11-15 December 2017.

8. The countries involved in the training-of-trainers workshops were Angola, Algeria, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, the Congo, the Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Libya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, the Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, the Sudan, South Sudan, South Africa, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Provision of a scholarship for specialization studies in agricultural statistics

9. There was a memorandum of understanding with the statistics training centres selected for the administration of the scholarship programmes that ended on 31 December 2016. Taking the continued support planned to financing additional students both in the long term and the specialization studies, it is imperative that this memorandum be revised and renewed in the coming years. As a result, it has been revised for servicing additional scholarship for studies in the specialization of agricultural statistics. Based on this, a total of 33 scholarships of the 40 places for 2017-2018 academic year have been allocated. The remaining will be provided for additional countries in respect of the rolling intake per training centre. For the academic year 2018, an additional 40 scholarships have been envisaged.

Engagement at the twenty-fifth session of the African Commission on Agricultural Statistics

10. The twenty-fifth session of the African Commission on Agricultural Statistics was held from 13 to 17 November 2017 in Entebbe, Uganda. That Commission brought together senior statistics officials from FAO member States on the African continent who are responsible for the development of agricultural statistics in their countries. They review and exchange ideas on the state of food and agricultural statistics in the continent and advise member States on the development of their agricultural statistics systems within the FAO programme of work and budget for Africa. At the session, the African Commission on Agricultural Statistics and its support activities on the Global Strategy were presented. As a result, the gathering of national statistics offices, ministries of agriculture and other agencies engaged in the production, use and dissemination of agricultural statistics in Africa reviewed the provided information and made the

recommendations outlined below with regard to the agricultural statistics training activities.

11. The African Commission on Agricultural Statistics and its members commended the results achieved to date with regard to the implementation of the three components of the Global Strategy and its action plan for Africa. Further appreciation was extended to the efforts made by the implementation partners to finalize implementation of the first phase of the action plan while preparing for the second phase. The Commission also:

(a) Recognized the need to strengthen resource allocation for scholarship support within the training component of the Global Strategy, while lobbying national governments to mainstream statistical training into national statistics systems;

(b) Encouraged the implementing partners of the Global Strategy to exercise caution in identifying country beneficiaries of their training programmes by taking into account the institutional arrangements of countries' agricultural statistics systems;

(c) Recommended that the Global Strategy's implementing partners, in particular ECA, consider diversifying their training programme to provide continuous capacity development opportunities to professional staff currently employed in national agricultural systems so that they receive on-the-job hands-on training and short-term training on specific topics or medium-term technical training on agricultural statistics;

(d) Called upon the partners of the Global Strategy to continue their efforts to increase the pool of trained trainers in the region, a key condition to accelerate the transfer of know-how to agricultural statistical systems. In this context, continued investment and the allocation of resources to ensure an equitable amount of trained staff in specialized agricultural statistics areas and the availability of enough trained personnel in all countries in the region were essential.

Development of additional training-of-trainers syllabuses and training materials on agricultural statistics

12. Maintaining similar momentum in the implementation of training-of-trainers activities and making use of financial support from the European Commission, additional training-of-trainers on various topics in agricultural statistics is being organized, together with existing and additional partner statistical training centres. With the aim of expanding its support to more statistics training centres, the training component has included INSEA-Rabat and Makerere University in Kampala as additional partners to undertake regional training activities. These two additional training centres, as well as ENSEA-Abidjan and EASTC-Dar es Salaam, will be implementing the training-of-trainers on the following topics before the end of 2018 on newly developed methods and techniques in agricultural statistics:

- (a) Gender in agricultural statistics;
- (b) Decent work-employment of young people in agriculture;
- (c) Crop statistics;
- (d) Post-harvest loss statistics;
- (e) Basic skills in agricultural statistics;
- (f) Fisheries and aquaculture statistics;
- (g) Cost of production statistics;
- (h) Master sampling frame.

Launch of a new partnership for household survey capacity development

13. A new partnership for institutional capacity development in household surveys for welfare analysis was launched. Its aim is to contribute to developing a sustainable system for monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development and other key development policy goals by supporting capacity development on household surveys in statistics training centres and national statistics systems. The implementation began with the signing of a memorandum of understanding by nine institutions in June 2017. It comprised African institutions (EASTC, ECA, ENSEA) and will expand its regional focus. Initial financial support from the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation and the World Bank and is seeking supplementary funding. The entire project is managed by the World Bank Center for Development Data and it promotes best practices and harmonization in household surveys.

14. With regard to the African Group on Statistical Training and Human Resources, the project is aimed at the following:

- (a) Building on already existing curriculums on household surveys at statistics training centres;
- (b) Building a network of household survey experts breaking the language barrier;
- (c) Enabling the trainees to have a better command of recent literature and evidence on designing household surveys to measure consumption;
- (d) Upgrading existing household survey courses with up-to-date material on measuring consumption aggregates;
- (e) Ensuring harmonization among statistics training centres on household survey courses.

Annual review meeting of 2017

15. The annual meeting of the African Group on Statistical Training and Human Resources for the year 2017 was postponed to the beginning of 2018. As a result, the meeting was held in Kampala from 17 to 19 April 2018, in partnership with the Ugandan Bureau of Statistics and the World Bank. The main objectives of the meeting were to present the progress and status of implementation of the training component of the Global Strategy for Improving Agricultural and Rural Statistics action plan for Africa during the period 2016-2017. In addition, the meeting participants also reviewed the envisaged workplan of the Group for 2018. The new intervention and partnership, titled “Towards modern and innovative household surveys: building capacity to respond to Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa”, was also presented by the World Bank Center for Development Data. Furthermore, the participants discussed the participation of various partners in the training component, reviewed the report on the activities of the Group since the previous meeting of the Statistical Commission for Africa, and discussed on the role of the Group in further promoting statistical training in the light of regional and global development goals. One of the most important activities at the meeting was the review of the role of Group in the light of the revised Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa and its implementation.

Conclusions and recommendations of the meeting

16. The meeting participants deliberated on the set annual agenda of the African Group on Statistical Training and Human Resources to discuss the progress made to date in advancing its goals and objectives, the performance of the secretariat in implementing the planned activities of the Group and communication strategies, supportive initiatives in statistical training development on the continent such as the new capacity development programme of the household survey and the proposals of the task team entrusted with the development of the second phase of the Global Strategy for improving Agricultural and Rural Statistics. The conclusions and recommendations outlined below were also endorsed.

17. On the overall work of the African Group on Statistical Training and Human Resources in monitoring and promoting statistical training in the region, the meeting participants appreciated the progress made to date in terms of keeping the Group vibrant and active and recommended the following:

(a) Strengthening the relevance of the Group, considering current regional and global dynamisms in statistics training;

(b) Expanding the Group membership to bring about more strategic partners. In order to bring in more exposure of the work of the groups and links with other potential partners, it was proposed to introduce the potential to make influential individuals as members;

(c) Strengthening the capacity of the secretariat to enable it to implement more activities in advancing the cause of the Group.

18. In addition, participants advised the African Group on Statistical Training and Human Resources and the secretariat managing the affairs of the Group to undertake the following:

(a) Devise mechanisms to integrate all institutions dealing with statistical training on the continent;

(b) Strive to mobilize resources to support statistics training in the region. This should include a training development fund that can serve training service providers in the region;

(c) Advocate more efficient coordination between national statistics development plans and statistics training service providers to have synergetic collaboration;

(d) Play an advisory role in the future for the pan-African statistics training centre;

(e) Play a role, in line with its role of harmonization and standardization, of quality assurance in statistics training programmes in the region;

(f) Have the annual workplan of the Group be more detailed, clarified and budgeted by the end of May 2018 at the latest;

(g) Consider coordinating the need to include the training of multidisciplinary themes linked with statistics training in the region;

(h) Assign, in the implementation of the terms of reference of the Group, partners of the Group specific roles and responsibilities in advancing the agenda of the Group;

(i) Envisage further action towards the development of statistical methodologies adapted to countries in crisis situations and fragility;

(j) Support and facilitate the mobility of students and the exchange of lectures between various regional training centres, irrespective of potential language barriers.

19. In specific consideration of the current multi-partner initiative on capacity-building in the household survey, the participants:

(a) Acknowledged and appreciated the support provided by the World Bank and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation;

(b) Called upon the Center Development Data to expand the invitation to involve more statistics training centres in their various training sessions;

(c) Proposed to make available the system of archiving and facilitating access to household survey data;

(d) Proposed for inclusion additional courses in the current training list, including the following: agriculture surveys data analysis, microdata documentation and dissemination, diaspora remittances and their role in welfare, resources from the informal sector's contribution to welfare and time series using household data;

(e) Entrusted the secretariat of the Group with engaging member States, informing them of the Center for Data Development training initiative. In that regard,

ENSEA and EASTC shall call upon member States to identify participants to a summer course on household surveys. Other Statistics training centres interested in joining the initiative should contact the Center for Data Development secretariat.

20. With regard to the development of the second phase of the Global Strategy for Improving Agricultural and Rural statistics, the Group:

(a) Appreciated the opportunity given to the Group to comment on the design of statistics training interventions to be incorporated in the second phase of the Global Strategy and to reflect the interests of the various institutions representing the Group;

(b) Commented on the exhaustiveness of the training and capacity development provisions made in the draft contents of the phase II intervention;

(c) Recalled that ECA should remain the implementing partner for the training component in the second phase of the programme with the close co-implementation role of regional statistics training centres, universities, other statistics training institutions, national statistics offices and global implementing partners;

(d) Proposed additional topics for the design of the interventions of the training component of the second phase of the Global Strategy programme;

(e) Strengthen the current intervention model of the training component and the advice to further augment the availability of training materials, the inclusion in regional forums such as that of the Group, and the training materials and scholarships for medium-term to long-term studies in agricultural statistics;

(f) Include the Group representative in the task team that is developing the ensuing programme intervention.

Communication and advocacy activities

21. As part of efforts to promote the activities of the Group and provide consistent communication on its annual goals and achievements, the website of the Group has been developed and launched on the Global Strategy web space under the training component of the action plan for Africa. The web link provides detailed information regarding the goals and objectives of the Group, its membership compositions and annual workplan and contact persons. The website can be accessed at the following link: <http://gsars.org/en/uneca-home/agrost/>.

IV. Matters for consideration by the Statistical Committee for Africa

22. The activities of the Group and its annual gatherings were vital in monitoring and reporting on the performance of the Global Strategy to improve the agricultural statistics training component. In addition, the Group has benefited from this role, given that its annual review gatherings were consistently financed by this programme. As the first phase of the training component comes to an end in December 2018, this meeting of the annual review in Addis Ababa is the last of the meetings to be financed under the Global Strategy, given that the funds are also coming to an end. As a result, the Statistical Committee for Africa is requested to reconsider resource mobilization for the following activities:

(a) Implementation of the annual workplan for promoting training activities in all areas of statistics on the continent;

(b) Implementation of the recommendations provided by the most recent gathering of members of the Group in order to strengthen the relevance and contribution of the Group for statistics training development in the continent;

(c) Finance the annual review meeting and gathering of the Group;

(d) Revamp the membership of the Group by including additional contributing institutions and individuals that could help to promote the work of the Group.
