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Economic Commission for Africa
Statistical Commission for Africa
Sixth meeting
Addis Ababa, 3 and 4 October 2018

Item 9 of the agenda*

Consideration of main conclusions and recommendations

Main conclusions and recommendations

Introduction

1. The sixth meeting of the Statistical Commission for Africa was held in Addis Ababa on 3 and 4 October 2018, the theme of which was “Enhancing national statistical system capacity to support policies for Africa’s economic diversification and industrialization”.
2. Three related meetings took place in the same week, also in Addis Ababa: the African Symposium on Statistical Development, the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa and the Forum on African Statistical Development.
3. The joint opening ceremony of all these meetings took place on 1 October 2018. The opening statement was delivered by His Excellency, Dr. Mulatu Teshome, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. His statement was preceded by the statement of the Chair of the African Symposium on Statistical Development and Statistician General of South Africa, Mr. Risenga Maluleke, and the remarks from the Deputy Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Mr. Abdalla Hamdok; the Chief of the National Accounts and Economic Statistics Section of the United Nations Statistics Division, Mr. Greg Scott; and the Director of the Statistics Department of the African Development Bank, Mr. Charles Leyeka Lufumpa.
4. On 1 and 2 October 2018, the thirteenth meeting of the African Symposium on Statistical Development was convened under the theme “Strengthening population censuses and national accounts to support the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063”.
5. The fourth meeting of the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa took place from 3 to 5 October 2018. The theme of this meeting was “Linking people to place: Statistical Geospatial Integration in support of the 2020 Census round and the Agenda for Sustainable Development”. A joint session with the sixth meeting of the Statistical Commission for Africa was held on the global trend of mainstreaming geospatial technology into national statistics offices.
6. The eighth Forum on African Statistical Development was held on 2 October 2018 on the theme of “Innovative financial solutions to improve data quality and credibility to support Africa development agenda”.

* E/ECA/STATCOM/6/1.

Preamble

On the sixth meeting of the Statistical Commission for Africa

7. *Acknowledging* that the theme of the meeting had been adopted to highlight the role of the national statistical system, as the backbone of the transformative agenda for Africa, in supporting economic diversification and industrialization policies and promoting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union,
8. *Also acknowledging* the request by the keynote speaker to African statisticians to take ownership of their data and use it for the continent's prosperity and to do more to explain and sell their work in order to ensure that their product helps African Governments to make informed policies that can change communities and democracies for the better,
9. *Considering* the new strategic framework of ECA and its new strategic areas and statistical programme,
10. *Also considering* the statutory reports by ECA on:
 - (a) statistical capacity development in Africa,
 - (b) the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,
 - (c) population and housing censuses,
 - (d) civil registration and vital statistics,
 - (e) 2008 System of National Accounts,
11. *Taking note of* the reports and recommendations of the thirteenth African Symposium on Statistical Development, the eighth meeting of the Forum on African Statistical Development, and the fourth meeting of the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa,
12. *Also taking note of* the reports and recommendations of the following side events: a meeting of the African Group on human resources and statistical training; a course on training in multidimensional poverty; a leadership training course; and a presentation on harnessing Earth observations: satellite data to support sustainable development in Africa,
13. *Acknowledging* the importance of agricultural statistics in measuring African economies,
14. *Considering* the outcomes of the forty-ninth session of the United Nations Statistical Commission and Africa perspectives on key areas of the global statistical agenda,
15. *Also considering* the integration of statistics and geospatial information and how next-generation smart censuses supported by fresh imagery base maps and geospatial data can be used to address statistical challenges and facilitate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,
16. *Acknowledging that* geospatial information science and technology and related disciplines, which are now used in numerous applications and services to foster industrial, social and economic development, offer radically different ways to produce and use information with a view to promoting economic and community development,
17. *Noting that* an in-depth knowledge of the links among individuals, economic activities and geographic locations can result in a deeper understanding of key social, economic and environmental issues than is possible through an assessment of socioeconomic data alone, and can therefore facilitate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

18. *Noting* the progress achieved at the global and continental levels towards the development of a global statistical and geospatial framework,
19. *Having taken note of and exchanged views on* statistical capacity-building programmes in support of the African statistical system,
20. *Considering* preparations for the fiftieth session of the United Nations Statistical Commission,
21. *Having taken note of* the ongoing comprehensive review of the intergovernmental structures of ECA and, in that context, the completed questionnaire seeking the views of the members of the Statistical Commission for Africa,

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The Statistical Commission for Africa

22. *Urges* member States to allocate 0.15 per cent of their national budget in line with the decision of the African Union Heads of State and Government Summit held in January 2018 to support the production, dissemination and use of statistics for the implementation of national development plans, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Agenda 2063 of the African Union;
23. *Calls on* member States to engage in creative and innovative ways to overcome some of the key challenges faced by national statistical offices in order to achieve the objective of establishing a statistical system that functions well;
24. *Urges* development partners to enhance the capacity of national statistical systems to continue to align with the growing demand for statistics in support of development agendas that are evolving at the national, regional and global levels;
25. *Encourages* member States to mainstream geospatial information technologies as a basic framework for supporting statistical production and the dissemination of statistical data;
26. *Urges* stakeholders on statistical development in Africa to work together to meet the increasing demand of data for all development agendas;
27. *Calls on* the national statistics offices to prioritize the use of and improve the quality of administrative data, including by investing in civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems and in disaggregating indicators for monitoring basic human rights and in order to redress inequality;

On enhancing national statistical system capacity to support policies for Africa's economic diversification and industrialization

28. *Calls on* member States to collaborate in creative and innovative ways and create synergies across data ecosystems and forge partnerships among relevant stakeholders in order to overcome key challenges impeding the work of national statistical offices with a view to establishing an effective and efficient statistical system;
29. *Underscores* that effective political leadership, national ownership and adequate resources are needed in order to ensure the success of statistical transformation initiatives;

On new strategic areas and statutory issues of ECA

New strategic areas and the statistical programme

30. *Takes note of* new strategic areas of ECA, *endorses* its statistical programme and *urges* ECA to continue its efforts in support of statistical capacity-building by member States, in close cooperation with the Africa Union Commission, the African Development Bank and the African Capacity Building Foundation;

Statutory document on statistical capacity development in Africa

31. *Takes note of* ongoing capacity development in the area of statistics at the national, subregional and continental levels in Africa as part of efforts to promote sustainable development;

32. *Implores* African statisticians to take responsibility for ensuring that the public is well-informed and protects democracy in the era of attention economics propelled by the availability of technology, “fake news” and finance;

33. *Calls on* African countries to mainstream national strategies for the development of statistics into national development plans and budgeting processes, and underscores that doing so would facilitate efforts to monitor and evaluate the development of such national plans;

34. *Also calls on* African countries to give high priority to statistics by allocating adequate financial resources for the production and use of statistics, and to establish national funds for statistics, as recommended in the African Charter on Statistics;

35. *Further calls on* African countries to review their legislation on statistics and to align that legislation with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the African Charter on Statistics, and, further, to ensure the effective coordination of all actors involved in national statistics systems;

36. *Calls on* the regional economic communities to strengthen their capacities in the area of statistics and to strengthen coordination among their members of a national statistics system and harmonize statistics production mechanisms;

37. *Calls on* development partners to scale up their support to the African statistics system with a view to facilitating implementation of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa;

Regional report on indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals

38. *Takes note of* the work conducted by ECA on the integrated regional indicator framework and the handbook on that framework;

39. *Requests* countries to increase the availability of data relevant to the indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals and integrated regional indicators;

40. *Endorses* the conclusions and recommendations of the report on the implementation of the African Programme on Gender Statistics, contained in annex I to the report on indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals;

Statutory document on population and housing censuses

41. *Urges* member States to undertake the 2020 round of population and housing censuses in Africa in order to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union;

42. *Encourages* member States to consider emerging issues relating to census-taking activities in Africa, including the use of dwelling frames and building footprints in census cartography, the use of handheld devices, the use of spatial data

collected during census cartography activities and modifications to census chronograms following the introduction of mobile devices;

43. *Calls on* African countries to mobilize resources for census-taking activities and on development partners to support the efforts of member States;

Statutory report on civil registration and vital statistics

44. *Encourages* countries to strengthen civil registration and vital statistics systems to support inter-censal population estimates and projections through the regular and continuous collection of vital statistics compiled from civil registration systems on birth and death, which are the two key components of population change;

45. *Takes ownership of* the decision handed down by African Ministers responsible for civil registration to establish a committee of Registrars General for an intergovernmental forum that will deliberate on development issues relating to civil registration and work with the secretariat of the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems (APAI-CRVS) and the statistical community through the Statistical Commission for Africa and Committee of Directors General of National Statistical Offices to sustain the momentum that has been achieved with such Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems and to help sustain and accelerate progress;

46. *Encourages* countries to strengthen coordination between civil registration offices and national statistics offices to improve the following: the coverage and completeness of the registration of vital events; the quality of data on vital records; and the production of annual vital statistics reports by member States;

Statutory document on the 2008 System of National Accounts

47. *Acknowledges* the progress that member States have made on rebasing the gross domestic product and urges them to comply with the international recommendation that the gross domestic product be rebased every five years;

48. *Takes note of* the key factors that hindered member States from compiling supply-use tables in accordance with the 2008 System of National Accounts and urges member States to address those challenges, and to update supply-use tables more frequently;

49. *Urges* member States to make use of environmental accounts when drawing up policies on sustainable natural resource management and the environment;

50. *Takes note of* the areas covered by economic indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals, and *calls on* stakeholders to adopt an integrated economic statistics approach with a view to making efficient and effective use of all relevant data sources when developing those indicators;

51. *Urges* member States to implement fully the 2008 System of National Accounts;

On side events

Thirteenth African Symposium on Statistical Development

52. *Endorses* the report and recommendations of the thirteenth African Symposium on Statistical Development and *urges* member States to update their population censuses and their economic statistics systems;

53. *Calls on* member States, supported by pan-African institutions, to sustain the African Symposium on Statistical Development vis-à-vis its management and particularly its funding model and, further, *welcomes* the establishment of a committee comprising select member States (Equatorial Guinea, Morocco, Rwanda,

Senegal and South Africa) and pan-African institutions (Economic Commission for Africa, African Development Bank and African Union Commission) for that purpose;

Eighth meeting of the Forum on African Statistical Development

54. *Endorses* the report and recommendations of the eighth meeting of the Forum on African Statistical Development and *urges* member States to develop innovative solutions to improve the quality and credibility of data;

Fourth meeting of the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management in Africa

55. *Endorses* the conclusions and recommendations of the fourth meeting of the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management in Africa and accepts the request to submit those recommendations to the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development for endorsement;

Side events

56. *Endorses* the reports and recommendations of the following side events:

(a) meeting of the African Group on human resource and statistical training;

(b) training in multidimensional poverty and its use in policy for transparency, engagement, accountability, planning, implementation, budgeting and especially for catalysing global private sector resources;

(c) leadership training sessions;

(d) harnessing Earth observations: satellite data to support sustainable development in Africa;

57. *Urges* member States to conduct a census of agriculture at least once during the 2016–2025 round of agricultural censuses and a programme of regular integrated surveys in the inter-censal period;

On the outcomes of the forty-ninth session of the United Nations Statistical Commission

58. *Takes note of* the efforts and contributions of representatives of African countries to the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for statistics for the 2030 Agenda and requested all countries to support those efforts and contributions;

59. *Also takes note of* Africa perspectives on key areas of the global statistical agenda emanating from the forty-ninth session of the United Nations Statistical Commission and encourages all member States to implement activities related to the global statistical agenda;

60. *Calls on* member States, supported by pan-African organizations, to establish an African Group to reflect on big data in official statistics;

On the integration of statistics and geospatial information

61. *Takes note of* the following: that in order to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to monitor progress effectively on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, decision makers must recognize that an in-depth knowledge of links among people, economic activities and geographic locations can promote a deeper understanding of key social, economic and environmental issues than is possible through an assessment of socioeconomic data alone;

62. *Recommends* that the Regional Committee of the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa (UN-GGIM: Africa) be established as an overarching governance framework in the field of geospatial information management, science and technology, in order to ensure that it has the capacity to

adapt policies and strategic actions to address issues of particular relevance to Africa and also to ensure that national bodies are capable of addressing the unique concerns of African countries;

63. *Calls on* the Economic Commission for Africa, and the African Union Commission and other pan-African institutions to work collaboratively in promoting and advocating the importance of geospatial information in the achievement of sustainable development objectives at national, regional and international levels among member States, non-governmental organizations, academia, the private sector and other stakeholders;

64. *Urges* member States to give priority to the dialogues that need to take place in order to ensure that national statistical, planning and mapping authorities collaborate effectively in the development of respective data infrastructures and systems, with a view to research optimal institutional arrangements for the shared benefit for all concerned;

65. *Requests* ECA and the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa to continue the development of the African spatial statistical framework and the development of guidelines for “geo-enabling” the national strategies for the development of statistics;

On partners’ statistical capacity-building programmes

66. *Takes note of* partners’ statistical capacity-building programmes and *recommends* that they foster synergies and *coordinate* actions in support of national statistical systems in financial, technical and human resources;

67. *Urges* member States to integrate the International Comparison Programme into regular price collection as best practice and use, especially in the light of the African Continental Free Trade Area process;

68. *Also urges* member States to advocate for the use of data and information from the International Comparison Programme for promoting trade and regional integration;

69. *Urges* all partners, including countries, regional and international agencies, and donors, to double down their collective efforts to complete the International Comparison Programme 2017 cycle in a timely manner;

On the preparation of the fiftieth session of the United Nations Statistical Commission

70. *Takes note of* the guidance provided, with a view to enhancing the contribution of Africa to the deliberations of the fiftieth session of the United Nations Statistical Commission and encourages all countries to participate actively in the preparation of an African common position;

On the proposed date and venue of the seventh session of the Statistical Commission

71. *Requests* ECA to make the necessary arrangements for the convening of the seventh meeting of the Statistical Commission for Africa, in October 2020 in Addis Ababa.