



**Economic Commission for Africa**  
**Statistical Commission for Africa**  
Sixth meeting  
Addis Ababa  
1 – 4 October 2018

## **Capacity development in statistics in Africa**

### **African Centre for Statistics**

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## **I. Background**

1. Notwithstanding the fact that the African statistics system has improved in recent years, the availability of high-quality statistics remains a chronic challenge to most African countries owing to the vulnerability of their statistics systems.

2. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and development partners are supporting capacity development in statistics in member States. ECA systematically produces reports on such development in Africa. The most recent report was endorsed in September 2016 at the fifth session of the Statistical Commission for Africa, followed by a recent report<sup>1</sup> on regional development in statistics in Africa, submitted to the Statistical Commission at its forty-ninth session, in March 2018.

3. The present report provides an update on the status of capacity development in statistics in Africa for the period 2016-2018 with respect to achievements, key challenges and lessons learned. The scope of the report covers the following topics:

(a) Update on strategic frameworks for statistics at the national, subregional and regional levels;

(b) Capacity assessment: the present report is an examination of the data needs at the national level within the context of the monitoring and evaluation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. The materials on this topic cover mainly studies and desk reviews done by the African Centre for Statistics, in addition to the voluntary national reports;

(c) Capacity supply: this section is devoted primarily to the role of the statistics training centres in improving the capacity of employees of the national statistics systems;

(d) Methodological work: with regard to the measurability of the statistical capacity in African countries, this report introduced a new tool developed by ECA, known as statistical development indicators, and a handbook on the role of civil society organizations in the statistical process;

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<sup>1</sup> See Economic and Social Council, "Report of the Economic Commission for Africa on regional statistical development in Africa" (E/CN.3/2018/9, 1 December 2017).

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(e) Conclusion and points for discussion: the report concludes with proposals for a set of recommendations and points for decisions to be taken by the Statistical Commission.

## **II. Strategic frameworks for statistics**

4. The recently endorsed comprehensive strategy on statistics, which is the revised Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa for the period 2017-2026, has three levels to guide statistical activities, namely, the regional level, subregional level and national level. This section highlights the achievements, key challenges and lessons learned on capacity development in statistics within the framework of, respectively, the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics, the regional statistical programmes or strategy frameworks and the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa.

### **A. National level**

5. This section contains an exploration of the impact of the pan-African institutions and other partners in promoting the design and the implementation of the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics or similar activities in Africa. The lessons learned in the evaluations of the implementation of the Strategy carried out by the pan-African institutions, together with other partners, are highlighted.

#### **1. Reflecting results**

6. The implementation at the country level of the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics is continuously supported by the pan-African institutions, the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century and the Observatoire économique et statistique d'Afrique subsaharienne. The countries that benefited from this support include Benin, Botswana, Chad and Malawi. Several institutions, agencies and other partners, including United Nations programmes, the World Bank and bilateral partners, are also involved.

7. The World Bank has contributed to strengthening national statistics systems in several countries, including Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Senegal and Sierra Leone. This support is done mainly through two projects: the Statistics for Results Facility Catalytic Fund and the Statistical Capacity-Building Programme. The World Bank is also assisting regional economic communities, such as the East African Community, in the implementation of their regional statistical programme.

8. United Nations programmes such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have provided support to some countries in the revision of their legal and institutional environment for example, through the support given to Madagascar. UNDP has also supported the work on several indicators, including reports on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals at the country level.

9. In 2016, the African Union began the implementation of the Pan-African Statistics Programme for the period 2016-2019, with the support of the European Union. The overall objective of the peer review undertaken by the Programme is to contribute to enhancing the African statistics system with respect to integrity, independence and accountability. In collaboration with ECA, the African Capacity-Building Foundation, the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Observatoire économique et statistique d'Afrique subsaharienne and the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century, the peer review of the national statistics systems of 14 countries was planned for 2018, followed by 2 countries in 2019. The Programme has also built the statistical capacity of countries and regional economic communities in several areas, including migration statistics, migration to the 2008 System of

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National Accounts and the compilation of trade, labour and governance and peace statistics.

10. The European Union provides support in strengthening the institutional arrangements for the production, dissemination and use of statistics in targeted countries. For example, Guinea received support in the production of routine administrative statistics to support decision-making processes, in particular in the social sector, decentralization, justice and security.

11. In the framework of the action plan for Africa of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics, AfDB provided 24 countries with technical assistance to develop their strategic plans. The Training Component being implemented by the UNECA provided training of trainers for over 450 staff and experts for Ministries of Agriculture, Universities, National Statistical Offices, and Statistical training centres on the newly developed methods and techniques in the production and dissemination of agricultural statistics. With the aim of increasing the mass of crucial trained staff in agricultural statistics, the UNECA continued providing scholarship for specialization in agricultural statistics for 40 students and additional 65 students will benefit from the same during the 2018/19 academic year. In order to augment the technical capacities of statistical training centres in the various parts of the continent, staff and lecturers have been twinned amongst each other to share experiences and good practices on agricultural statistics training. Training infrastructure for these centre have also been further augmented through the provision of finance for the procurement of the state of the art technology in agricultural survey, census and data processing infrastructure to further aid the training platform. The various training materials, guidelines and manuals in improved methods and techniques in agricultural statistics will be further disseminated to improve the current curricula of the regional and national statistical training centres. The same will also be made available for ease of training via eLearning platforms.

12. In the area of geospatial information, a number of actions in promoting the development of spatial data infrastructure were carried out by ECA, together with partners. Those efforts raised the awareness of stakeholders and facilitated the formulation of policies and strategies for the region, as well as promoted the integration of geoinformation policies into other national strategies of member States. That action led to the development of the African regional spatial data infrastructure.

13. A comprehensive report to determine the current status of the preparedness of countries for the 2020 round of the World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses and a matrix identifying the geospatial data sets for the monitoring and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators were prepared by ECA. In addition, the Second Administrative-level Boundaries project was updated following the work of ECA in eight countries, in collaboration with national mapping agencies.

14. In general, the implementation of the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics allowed most African countries to improve their statistical governance, notably in putting in place legal frameworks for statistical activities. Efforts to produce statistics respecting international standards are undertaken as part of the implementation of the Strategy in many countries.

15. Progress in the production of statistical data in many countries, however, remains constrained by many difficulties, including the mobilization of financial resources, the limited capacities of human resources and a lack of technical resources (mainly in information and communications technology (ICT)).

16. With regard to the strengthening of the dissemination of statistics and the promotion of the culture of the use of statistical data, very few achievements have been realized owing to the absence of a dissemination strategy.

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## 2. Key challenges

17. The major bottlenecks that hamper the development of statistics at the national level are the following:

- (a) Poor coordination with the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics team;
- (b) Inadequate resource mobilization to implement the statistics programmes and the Strategy;
- (c) Weak leadership in the statistics office at the national level;
- (d) Inadequate technical and human resources in line ministries;
- (e) Statistics are not systematically mainstreamed as a stand-alone sector into national development plans. Only a few countries have succeeded, for example, Uganda.

## 3. Lessons learned

18. The analysis of the implementation or evaluation reports of the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics reveals an implementation rate that can be improved in large part. To this end, the lessons learned include the following:

- (a) The Strategy should have a strong monitoring and evaluation mechanism with annual progress reports;
- (b) An annual statistics programme based mainly on the Strategy should be produced;
- (c) The capacity of the national statistical system coordination team should be improved for its effective and efficient coordination;
- (d) Statistics should be mainstreamed into national development plans as a stand-alone sector;
- (e) The national statistical system should develop strategies to mobilize sustainable resources for the implementation of statistics programmes.

## 4. Solutions

19. To address the main challenges identified, several programmes and activities were undertaken during the past two years. They include the following:

- (a) Since January 2017, the African Centre for Statistics has implemented a programme on high-quality statistics and data to strengthen the statistical capacity of African countries to measure, monitor and report on the 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063 and other agendas for evidence-based policymaking. This programme enhances the capacity of countries to strengthen institutional environments for statistics; strengthen the capacity to improve statistical production processes to address increased data needs in multiple statistical domains and measure and monitor indicators and targets in emerging areas;
- (b) The Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century conducted three subregional leadership training workshops to improve and strengthen the leadership, management, governance and coordination capabilities of leaders within statistics offices.

## B. Subregional level

20. The regional economic communities have increasingly recognized the need for an overall vision and strategy for the development of a regional statistics system. The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have developed a regional strategy or programme on statistics. The commonalities of

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the regional strategies or programmes are to provide high-quality statistics to inform regional policy formulation and to monitor and evaluate the convergence criteria and the integration process.

## **1. Reflecting results**

21. The COMESA statistics programme for the period 2017-2020 is intended to improve and harmonize the production of statistical data and the capacity at the secretariat and national statistics offices. The programme has resulted in the capacity-building of member States to produce foreign trade statistics and to harmonize merchandise trade statistics, in line with international standards and COMESA council decisions. The other areas of support include the harmonized consumer price index, infrastructure statistics, environment statistics, foreign direct investment statistics and statistics relating to the international comparison programme.

22. The first EAC regional statistics development plan, during the period 2012/13-2016/17, was focused on the harmonization of statistics and accurate and up-to-date statistics to inform both national development processes and the process of regional integration. The implementation of the plan recorded a number of achievements, including establishing a regional statistics policy, movement towards the establishment of an EAC statistics bureau and the development, harmonization and dissemination of community statistics, capacity-building economic statistics and the consumer price index. The second regional statistics development plan covers the period 2017/18-2021/22 and is anchored to the fifth EAC development strategy. It is intended to broaden and deepen the production of high-quality and harmonized community statistics; promote easy access to and use of community statistics; and build statistical capacity in priority areas of national accounts, agricultural statistics, poverty statistics, household surveys, trade statistics, financial statistics and price statistics.

23. The ECCAS regional strategy for the development of statistics serves as a framework for taking into account the realities and specificities of its member States in capacity-building on statistics. Under this framework, the regulation on the collection and processing of foreign trade statistics and a regional action plan for environment statistics were adopted and the capacity of the member States was built for the collection and processing of environment statistics.

24. The ECOWAS support to its member States, under the framework of the regional statistics programme for the period 2014-2018, has covered several domains. These include the harmonization of public finance statistics, support for the adoption of government financial operations tables, external trade statistics, balance of payment and the international investment position. The capacity-building activities were also conducted on international merchandise trade and environment statistics.

25. The SADC regional strategy for the development of statistics for the period 2013-2018 is intended to raise awareness of the critical role of statistics, promote its greater use and improve the capacity for statistical production and the sustainability of statistics information systems in the region, in line with international best practices and norms.

## **2. Key challenges**

26. The implementation of the subregional programmes or strategies on statistics highlighted is constrained by several challenges, including the following:

(a) Inadequate and unsustainable statistical capacity to coordinate statistical activities in statistics units in some regional economic communities. For example, the EAC secretariat has had only one established position in its statistics department;

(b) There is a shortage of statisticians with expertise and skills in specialized areas, such as national accounts and agriculture statistics;

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(c) The nonexistence of a legal framework for the subregional statistics system.

### **3. Lessons learned**

27. At the subregional level, the best practices may be informed by the following:

(a) Priority should be given to resource mobilization for the implementation of statistics programmes. This requires conducting activities to increase literacy on statistics among policymakers and other stakeholders;

(b) A proper monitoring and evaluation framework for the effective implementation of statistics programmes;

(c) The need to increase development training programmes to improve staff skills and the improvement of working conditions to address the challenge of high staff turnover.

### **4. Solutions**

28. Subregional authorities should provide solutions to the following issues: a weak legislative framework for statistics, limited human and statistical capacities and inadequate financial resources for statistics.

## **C. Regional level**

29. The main objective of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa for the period 2017-2026 is to harmonize statistics produced in Africa in order to inform the regional integration agenda, as well as the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and the “high fives”, of the pillars of the transformative agenda for Africa. The Strategy is built on the following four strategic themes: (a) the production of quality statistics for Africa; (b) coordinating the production of quality statistics for Africa; (c) building sustainable institutional capacity in the African statistics system; and (d) promoting a culture of quality decision-making.

30. The Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa and its supporting documents have been developed through an extensive consultative process involving all African countries, the regional economic communities and development partners. They were also revised and updated by the pan-African institutions. The Strategy was approved by the Committee of Directors-General of National Statistics Offices in March 2017. The African Summit of Heads of State and Government adopted the Strategy in January 2018.

### **1. Reflecting results**

31. Notwithstanding the fact that the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa for the period 2017-2026 was recently adopted, some specialized technical groups established during the first generation of the Strategy continued their activities during the past two years, for example, the work done on government peace and security, the African Group on Statistical Training, finance statistics and civil registration and vital statistics. The capacity of countries and regional economic communities to mainstream the Strategy into the national and regional strategy for the development of statistics was enhanced. A guideline in that respect has been developed.

### **2. Key challenges**

32. Several problems may hamper the implementation of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa for the period 2017-2026 at the national level. These include political and security issues, in particular a lack of political will; difficulty in financing statistical operations; a lack of human resources in terms of quantity and quality; a lack of technical capacity; and inadequate use of new ICT in the production of statistics.

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### 3. Lessons learned

33. The revision and updating of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa identified the following key lessons learned:

(a) Without a coordination mechanism at all levels (i.e., at the country, regional economic community, continental and international levels) with clear roles and responsibilities defined for each stakeholder, the implementation of the Strategy will be heavily compromised;

(b) Without clear and continuous political will at all decision-making levels, the African statistics system will lack resources to implement the Strategy for the period 2017-2026;

(c) If emphasis is not placed on the use of administrative data and civil registration and vital statistics, the establishment of business and population registers and the adaptation of statistical production to changes in the structure of economies and the broadening of the coverage of statistics to take account of all aspects of development, the African statistics system will not be able to produce sufficient quality statistical data to meet the continent's development needs.

### 4. Solutions

34. Given the key challenges at the regional level, the immediate solutions required are to mobilize sufficient financial resources for the implementation of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa for the period 2017-2026 and to promote strong coordination among all the actors engaged in the statistical development in the continent.

## III. Capacity assessment of statistics

35. In order to successfully implement the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, the status of capacity development in statistics will have an impact on the monitoring and tracking processes used to report on the progress made in realizing the development agenda. This part of the report is a consideration of the most common challenges and lessons learned to identify capacity gaps to meet data demand in the context of the two agendas.

36. To explore the needs in statistical capacity, in July 2018, ECA requested that member States voluntarily hand over data to validate the methodology of statistical development indicators. Eleven national statistics offices provided data that reflected the development dimensions that needed to be prioritized. The dimensions that have shown no satisfactory development performance (i.e., data demand) include the existence of and use for data quality assurance tools, funding, statistics programming and dissemination.<sup>2</sup>

### 1. Reflecting results

37. Although the Sustainable Development Goals are universal in character, they need to be rolled out and incorporated at the national level. In this respect, several African countries performed the following:

(a) Creation of ownership achieved by incorporating the Goals using a multisectoral or participatory approach,<sup>3</sup> for example, in Benin, Botswana, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria and Togo;

(b) Development of a national sustainable development framework to allow the Goal indicators to be mainstreamed and integrated into and aligned with the national vision and national development plans and policies. For

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<sup>2</sup> The piloting countries are Botswana, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Togo, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

<sup>3</sup> Includes all stakeholders, such as government, the private sector, civil society organizations, academia, traditional leaders, media and international development partners, including those of the United Nations system.



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example, this framework has been developed in Benin, Botswana, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Morocco, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Togo and Uganda;

(c) Establishment of an institutional mechanism for effective coordination of the Goals for data-tracking and progress-tracking (e.g., in Botswana).

38. Since 2016, the high-level political forum on sustainable development has invited countries to report on their performance with regard to selected Sustainable Development Goals. In 2016, six African countries participated: Egypt, Madagascar, Morocco, Sierra Leone, Togo and Uganda. Those countries shared their experiences in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

39. Another seven African countries (Benin, Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Togo and Zimbabwe) volunteered and shared their national reports during the 2017 session of the high-level political forum on sustainable development. The 2018 session of the forum was scheduled to be held in July 2018 to review the status of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals for a further 11 African countries (Benin, Cabo Verde, the Congo, Egypt, Guinea, Mali, Namibia, the Niger, Senegal and Togo).

40. ECA surveyed the economic indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa in 2017. As a result, the best practices were identified as follows:

(a) institutional strengthening of national statistics systems; (b) the building up and development of technical capacity; (c) the improvement in data collection and processing; and (d) the adoption of international standards on statistics and new technologies.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. Key challenges

41. Following the countries' reports, the data challenges at the national level include the following:

(a) Data gaps at the sectoral level, which include lack of or inadequate disaggregated data, for example, in Botswana, Egypt, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe;

(b) Capacity for measuring specific sectors, such as the informal economy, for example, in Egypt and Zimbabwe;

42. The key challenges regarding capacity-building in statistics are as follows:

(a) Inadequate monitoring and evaluation of government programmes, including those on sustainable development indicators,<sup>5</sup> for example, those in Botswana, Madagascar, Togo and Zimbabwe, which negatively affect data quality and timeliness;

(b) Shortage of financial resources, for example, in Benin, Botswana, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria and Togo;

(c) Insufficient availability of computer-assisted personal interviewing and other mobile devices for data collection.

43. Other challenges identified as a result of the ECA survey regarding economic indicators are the following:

(a) Institutional challenges include coordination between national statistics offices and line ministries;

(b) Technical capacity challenges within the offices, including understaffing and high staff turnover rates;

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<sup>4</sup> See Economic Commission for Africa, *Report on Economic Indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa: Data Gaps, Challenges, and Best Practices* (May 2018).

<sup>5</sup> This is the challenge of data gaps, that is, when surveys are conducted every 5 and 10 years, for example.

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(c) Data-collection and processing challenges, including an insufficient source of data, unsuitable data sources and data sources being inaccessible;

(d) Application of international standards on statistics and new technology challenges, including inconsistencies with the standards.

### **3. Lessons learned**

44. The most common lessons learned, as identified in the volunteer reports presented to the high-level political forum in 2016 and 2017, are the following:

(a) A multisectoral approach adopted for the enhanced policy implementation of the 2030 Agenda, for example, in Botswana and Egypt;

(b) Success in implementing the national development agenda and the 2030 Agenda depends on addressing both human and institutional capacity gaps and the existence of a robust institutional framework and accountability mechanisms;

(c) Indicators should be presented in a simplified manner to be understood by citizens and used by the media;

(d) Effective global and national partnerships are therefore vital for the 2030 Agenda implementation process.

### **4. Solutions**

45. The solutions to fill the gaps require that national authorities and development partners enhance the institutional mechanisms for evaluation and monitoring, develop innovative resource mobilization methods and invest more in capacity-building, including to strengthen the methodology for data disaggregation, in particular in those sectors in which it is difficult to capture their measurability, such as the informal sector.

## **IV. Capacity supply of statistics**

46. In order to implement the development agenda and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the statistics training centres have a crucial role to play by empowering staff to be equipped with and updated on the statistical knowledge required.

47. The statistics training centres are no longer limited to basic diploma training. Some of them work closely with national statistics systems to address the human resource gap, in particular in line ministries. To this end, partnerships need to be enhanced between these centres and national statistics systems to retrain statisticians in specific and new areas of statistics and to build the capacity of sectoral ministry staff in their production.

### **1. Reflecting results**

48. The Institut de formation et de recherche démographiques is supporting the implementation of the 2020 round of the World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses in its member States, mostly francophone countries, in the areas of quality assurance throughout the capacity-building of national experts, the development of a Population and Housing Census project document, the development of analytical tools and the drafting of thematic reports.

49. The subregional statistics training centre for Central Africa developed bilateral cooperation agreements with countries such as Cameroon and Chad to build the capacity of staff, in particular those working in ministries, departments and agencies.

50. The Eastern Africa Statistical Training Centre, in collaboration with the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, offered specialized short courses free-of-charge for the academic year 2017/18 on topics that include learning on

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big data, national accounts, economic statistics and international economic relations statistics.

51. Another national level collaboration in 2018 was between the Economic and Social Research Foundation to design training on data management and practical application for strategic planning through the utilization of public sector databases and indicators in the United Republic of Tanzania. The Eastern Africa Statistical Training Centre is also working on tailoring its academic programmes to suit the needs of member countries.

## **2. Key challenges**

52. The main challenges of most of the statistics training centres that are members of the African Group on Statistical Training are as follows:

(a) Insufficient advocacy on training programmes on official statistics; a shortage of local teaching staff, resulting in low enrolment rates; and insufficient teaching materials;

(b) Inadequate funding, including budgetary support from governments for training;

(c) Curriculum rigidity in the sense of not coping with the dynamic nature of official statistics and not harmonizing the requirements for accreditation;

(d) Limited accessibility of online training for national statistics office personnel and inadequate practical training.

## **3. Lessons learned**

53. The main lessons learned from the members of the African Group on Statistical Training are as follows:

(a) There is a need to create more awareness of the importance of official statistics and the need to have national statistics offices staffed by such personnel instead of theoretical statisticians;

(b) Statistics training centres must find ways to increase revenue from other sources, such as research and consultancies and development partners;

(c) More curriculums of a short duration need to be designed to cater to the dynamic nature of official statistics and their training requirements;

(d) Monitoring and evaluation frameworks need to be strengthened;

(e) The example of the subregional statistics training centre for Central Africa, which is funded by the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, is an example of the sustainability that other centres should learn from.

## **4. Solutions**

54. The following are proposed solutions:

(a) Increased awareness of the importance of human capital in the supply of high-quality statistics;

(b) Granting of diplomatic status to most statistics training centres can assist them in sourcing international support and in the operation of internationally accredited programmes;

(c) Encouraging partnerships with other national, regional and international partners will assist in securing funds and/or experts to train students;

(d) Strengthening and expanding networks for the benefit of the practical exposure of students and staff so as to improve the knowledge of official and agricultural statistics.

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## V. Methodological work

### Statistical development indicators

55. In measuring progress in capacity development in statistics, there are many initiatives and projects, including those of the World Bank and the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century. At the third session of the Statistical Commission for Africa, ECA presented a report to develop the **African Statistical Development Index**. During that session, revisiting the methodology of the Index, to be enhanced by the technical committee, was recommended. In response, ECA has revamped the methodology.

56. The new version of the **African Statistical Development Index** is titled “Statistical development indicators”, or StatDI,<sup>6</sup> to indicate its global scope. This will allow its methodology to be adopted by other regions outside Africa. As a result, the indicators have been recognized by some development partners and stakeholders, including the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century and the Mo Ibrahim Foundation.

57. The statistical development indicators were endorsed at the fifth session of the Statistical Commission for Africa in December 2016. During the session, pan-African organizations and African countries were called upon to put in place institutional mechanisms at the continental level in order to support the implementation of the **African Statistical Development Index**. In response to the recommendation, ECA has developed a manual and software. These two products have not yet been piloted by member States.

58. The commitment of the pan-African organizations and African countries is required to put in place institutional mechanisms at the continental level and resource mobilization in order to support the implementation of the statistical development indicators.

### Civil society organizations and statistics

59. In the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa for the period 2017-2026, there is consideration of the role of civil society organizations in most statistical activities, including building strong partnerships with foundations, civil society, partners and users, and their inclusion as members of specialized technical groups, as well as being recognized as emerging users of official statistics. In 2017, ECA developed a handbook on the role of civil society organizations in statistical processes in order to enhance the physical scope of official statistics. The handbook provides a clearer picture of possible partnerships between civil society organizations and official statisticians, as well as their difficulties and opportunities.

60. Key challenges relating to civil society organizations and statistics include a lack of advocacy to enhance the integration, coordination and dissemination of data provided by civil society organizations in national statistics systems and a lack of mechanisms for integrating and coordinating the contribution of civil society organizations to those systems.

## VI. Recommendations

61. The following action is recommended:

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<sup>6</sup> See Economic and Social Council and African Union, “Measurement of Progress in Statistical Development in Africa” (E/ECA/STATCOM/5/8, 14 November 2016).

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## **Statistics programmes and strategies at the national level**

- The National Strategy for the Development of Statistics should be mainstreamed into national development plans and sustainable funding should be made available for capacity development in statistics
- National sustainable development strategies should be developed and annual reporting on implementation should be done
- Legislation on statistics should be in alignment with fundamental principles of official statistics and the African Charter on Statistics, while the coordination of national statistics systems should be strengthened at all levels and sectoral administrative data systems developed as main sources for the production of statistics
- The Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa for the period 2017-2026 should be mainstreamed into the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics and awareness of the former should be raised
- Production of environment statistics should be strengthened
- National statistics offices should conduct regular and timely population and housing censuses and civil registration and vital statistics systems should be improved

## **Statistics programmes and strategies at the subregional and regional levels**

- Regional economic communities should strengthen their statistical capacities and ensure the effective coordination of national statistics systems in the subregion
- The Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa for the period 2017-2026 should be mainstreamed into subregional strategies for the development of statistics

## **Capacity assessment of statistics**

- National statistics offices should set up a committee responsible for identifying capacities needs
- National statistics systems should map indicators that respond to major agendas

## **Capacity supply of statistics**

- Sustainable funding mechanisms should be established for the statistics training centres and awareness raised on programmes offered by these centres, in addition to building the capacity of their staff
- A human resources strategy regarding the national statistics system should be developed that attracts and retains statisticians
- Comprehensive course on management of statistics systems should be developed, along with the coaching of young statisticians (e.g., training of trainers)

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## Methodologies

- Request other pan-African organizations to engage in further piloting of the statistical development indicators to enhance the manual and the software before implementing this new measuring tool
- National statistics offices should support the capacity development of civil society organizations, including on institutional issues, and encourage them to become users of official statistics
- National statistics offices should develop adequate channels to receive data generated by the civil society organizations

## VII. Recommendations for the Statistical Commission

62. The Statistical Commission is called upon to consider the following action:

(a) Take note of the ongoing capacity development on statistics at the national, subregional and continental levels in Africa in the context of sustainable development;

(b) Call upon African countries to mainstream their national strategies for the development of statistics into their national development plans and budgeting processes. Doing so will therefore help to provide adequate resources for the production of statistics in support of the monitoring and evaluation of the plans;

(c) Also call upon 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;

(d) Further call upon 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. They should ensure the effective coordination of all actors involved in national statistics systems;

(e) Call upon the regional economic communities to strengthen their capacities in statistics and to ensure an effective coordination of the national statistics systems under their membership and the harmonization of the production of statistics;

(f) Also call upon development partners to scale up their support to the African statistics system in the implementation of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa for the period 2017-2026.