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DATA REVOLUTION ESSENTIAL TO SUPPORT AFRICA'S QUEST FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, SAYS PRESIDENT TESHOME *by Sandra Nyaira*

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DAY

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01 October 2018. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia — The success of the sustainable development agenda calls for a data revolution to support Africa's developmental endeavors at all levels, Ethiopian President Dr. Mulatu Teshome, said Monday.

In a speech to officially open the Sixth Meeting of the Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa-VI), Dr. Teshome said quality statistical information was crucial, not only to provide the evidential basis for design and implementation of policies at national, regional, continental and international levels, but also to monitor and evaluate their impacts on economic growth and social improvements.

"The data revolution promotes embracing technology and innovation at all levels of statistical processes such as collection, processing, analysis and dissemination," he said.

National statistical systems are the main sources of such data, the President said, adding as a result they face an urgent need to reposition, adapt and strengthen

their statistical production processes in order to meet widening, increasing and evolving needs of data users.

The four-day meeting is being held under the theme; Enhancing the capacity of the National Statistical Systems to support policies for Africa's economic diversification and industrialization.

Since most SDGs require geospatial data, the President said it was imperative for the continent to focus on 'the use of technology in this new era of the data revolution to incorporate a geospatial data revolution in Africa'.

Dr. Teshome said commendable efforts had been made by several African countries to create ownership by domesticating the SDGs using the multi-sectoral or participatory approach.

He said the theme of the 13th Africa Symposium on Statistical Development (ASSD); Strengthening Population Census and National Accounts to support Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063, was crucial as it harnessed two topics; National Accounts and the 2020 Round of Population and Housing Censuses.

The President had a busy morning, touring an exhibition of statistical stands put up by partners, government departments and the Economic Commission for Africa. He was accompanied on the tour by ECA's Deputy Executive Secretary and Chief Economist, Mr. Abdalla Hamdok, African Centre for Statistics Director at the ECA, Mr. Oliver Chinganya and others.

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UN-GGIM: AFRICA: SDGS DEMAND NEW DATA ACQUISITION AND INTEGRATION APPROACHES

by Sandra Nyaira

01 October 2018. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia — The Fourth Session of the Regional Committee on the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa (UN-GGIM: Africa) opened Monday with participants discussing sustainable development goals' demands for new data acquisition and integration approaches to improve the availability, quality, timeliness and disaggregation of data.

ECA's Andre Nonguierma said geospatial information management was increasingly contributing to build the data foundation that is required and thus, creating understanding and solving problems facing the continent.

Presentations were made by partners and industry providers of Earth Observation data that demonstrated the visible benefits that can be accomplished through the adoption and sound application of GIS, Remote Sensing and other geospatial solutions, tools and techniques in the creation, analysis and presentation of the foundational data required for the SDGs.

The presentations informed participants on how African nations can leverage revolutionary new cloud-based imagery solutions to address statistical challenges, develop smart spatially-enabled census and improve the reporting on SDG in Africa.

DigitalGlobe's Alex Fortescue said the new cloud based imagery solutions can play a major role in addressing Africa's major challenges, in particular ensuring the SDGs are successfully implemented for the full benefit on the continent's citizens.

"There's a lot that we can do with imagery that is very accessible to our end users as they make crucial decisions on the continent's development be it planning a census, disaster management or emergency planning, food security or mining. We can help solve our continent's major challenges," he said.

Tamy Wild of Deimos Imaging emphasized the need for partnerships for Africa to achieve the SDGs.

"We can find solutions if we sit and work together as we harness Earth Observation for a better tomorrow by boosting sustainable development; monitoring and managing our natural resources," she said.

The UN-GGIM will this week look at policies, measures and steps that African countries can take to ensure a successful implementation of the UN-GGIM initiative in the region; share knowledge and best practices on the development of geospatial information in the continent; and raise awareness on the benefits to be derived through the utilization of geospatial information for sustainable development.

At the end of the meeting, delegates hope they would have managed to consolidate the consensus and drive the political will in leveraging the enabling capabilities of geospatial information technology to meet the African development agenda and in support of the emerging global challenges.

They also hope to foster the integration of geospatial and statistical information.

UN GGIM: Africa was set up to address the issues of developing the capacities of African nations in the generation and dissemination of authoritative, accurate and sustained geospatial information in the continent.

UN GGIM: Africa facilitates and advocates the availability and capability of geospatial information as well as proposes work-plans and guidelines to promote awareness of how geospatial information can contribute, common principles, policies, methods, mechanisms and standards for geospatial information interoperability.

It also works to develop effective geospatial capacity in African countries and promotes the use of that information to meet key global challenges such as sustainable development.

Participants include members of the Executive Bureau of UN-GGIM: Africa, national officials in mapping, cartography, surveying, statistics; high-level experts selected from academia, research institutions, government, and the private sector, and representatives from sub-regional and regional organizations.

The meeting is being held under the theme; Linking people to place: Statistical Geospatial Integration in support of the 2020 Round of Population and Housing Censuses and the Sustainable Development Agenda.



13TH AFRICA SYMPOSIUM ON STATISTICAL DEVELOPMENT URGES AFRICAN COUNTRIES TO MOVE FAST IN PREPARATION FOR THE 2020 ROUND OF POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUSES *by Eyob Getahun*

01 October 2018. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia — The 13th Africa Symposium on Statistical Development and the 6th Statistical Commission for Africa, organized with the themes “Strengthening Population Census and National Accounts to support Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063” and “Enhancing the capacity of the National statistical systems to support policies for Africa’s economic diversification and industrialization”, officially kicked off on October 1, 2018.

The 13th Africa Symposium on Statistical Development is being held with the main goal of urging African Countries to move faster to arrest the 2020 Round of Population and Housing Censuses

In his opening speech, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Dr. Mulatu Teshome, said the Ethiopian government is committed to supporting statistical development in Ethiopia and in Africa, including the implementation of National Accounts and the Population and Housing Census.

The president said that the second Growth and Transformation Plan of Ethiopia is fed with data from different surveys and population and housing censuses conducted by the Central Statistical Agency.

He told the participants that Ethiopia is planning to conduct the 4th Population and Housing Census in the current Ethiopian calendar. He said the census will be fully digital. He noted that the Ethiopian government has completed its preparation for the upcoming census and is committed to supporting statistical activities in the country. “More than 80 percent of the survey and census budget is covered by the government,” the president said.

The President expressed his belief that the symposium will help to facilitate the participation of countries on the continent in the 2020 round of population and housing census and to advance the development of economic statistics and national accounts in Africa by identifying challenges, sharing country experiences and best practices, and coming up with resolutions on the way forward.

Deputy Executive Secretary and Chief Economist at the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Dr. Abdalla Hamdok, empha-

sized the need for enhancing the capacity of national statistical systems to further align with the ever-growing demand for statistics in support of the inevitable national, regional and global development agendas. The role that national statistical agencies and their respective sectoral partners play in supporting the realization of the global SDGs and the AU Agenda 2063 is paramount.

He said theme of the 6th Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa-VI), “Enhancing the capacity of the National Statistical System to support policies for Africa’s economic diversification and industrialization”, is timely. He stated that well-functioning statistical systems can only be achieved if countries engage in creative and innovative ways to overcome some of the key challenges faced by national statistical offices, such as insufficient financing, inadequate staff, poor IT infrastructure and inadequate legislative frameworks, among others.

Chairperson of the Africa Symposium on Statistical Development and Statistician-General of South Africa, Mr Risenga Maluleke, said that the ASSD was born out of a dire situation, at a time when Africa was not ready to participate in the global 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses.

“What at the time looked like a once-off gathering of African statisticians at the beginning of 2006, in Cape Town, South Africa, would unleash one of the most persistent programs in the world — the ASSD of fame. We had decided as Africans that we can no longer be measured by events, we wanted to be measured by how effective we could be. The ASSD’s first stride was to rally African nations to undertake their censuses with the highest distinction ever recorded in history. We heeded the clarion call of our Ministers of Planning, Finance and Economic Development who — meeting in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso — had said we should also focus on in-conflict and post-conflict countries. Indeed, Chairperson, fifty African countries conducted their censuses in the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses! This is not theory, it is a reality

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as we not only saw it happen, but we made it happen. We had put to rest the mantra which goes: united we stand," he further said.

The ASSD Chairperson called on the participants to learn from the lessons of the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses that victory is certain. "The ASSD is our vehicle that guarantees such certainty. We need to move faster to arrest the 2020 Round of Population and Housing Censuses. The 2020 Round is being conducted on digital technology platforms which will put Africa on a pedestal to the Fourth Industrial Revolution. We cannot fail to surpass the mark of our 2010 Round success, for we might inadvertently place our continent to lag behind on technological development," Maluleke said.

Maluleke said that South Africa has chaired the ASSD since its inception in 2006. However, he added, South Africa cannot be a permanent chairperson of this forum. "We need to address that. Failure to do so will render the ASSD not to be inclusive enough to tap on the leadership capabilities of other men and women of our countries on the continent," he noted.

Director of the Statistics Department at the African Development Bank, Dr. Charles Leyeka Lufumpa, said that African Development Bank, through its statistical development program, had invested immensely in the development of statistics in Africa. He noted that the lack of budget allocation for census and surveys diminishes their quality and effectiveness. He emphasized the need to enhance advocacy about the importance and use of statistics. He urged African states to invest more in statistics.

He said that the 2020 round of Census is the first time Africa has the highest participation rate. He noted that the round comes with its own challenges as census evolves from paper to digital data collection by using handheld devices, which ensures better quality, cost effectiveness and timeliness of data collection, but which needs the right technical expertise and ICT infrastructure. Lufumpa said ongoing partnership should continue to be enhanced in building statistical capacity across Africa.

Gregg Scott, speaking on behalf of the Director of UN Development Statistics (UNDS), Stefan Schweinfest, expressed the UNDS's commitment to full professional support of all African countries to strengthen their national capacities. He said the UNDS will provided support during the 2020 round of census. The 2020 implementation will exceed the 2010 census round. Censuses are important for the monitoring of the 2030 UN development agenda. PHCs have evolved and changed significantly in the past decades. The majority of the 2020 round carried out the traditional census. Others combined surveys

There are two major recommendation coming from UN Statistical Commission for the 2020 Round of Censuses: the use of tablet computers and similar devices resulting in more timely and efficient production of census statistics; and the necessity of producing geo-referenced small area census statistics. This can be achieved by meticulous preparation for census field work and with the use of geo-referencing and geo-spatial information for housing using geographical coordinates.

He underlined the need for partnership among the different stakeholders to strengthen capacities, as well as the need for innovation. We are committed to delivering all the support for the success of the 2020 census program, he concluded.

INTERVIEWS

by Ernest Cho Chi



Mercy Kanyuka,
Commissioner of
Statistics,
Malawi National
Statistical Office

"So far we have shared experiences on conducting digital censuses and looked at each other's plans and levels of implementation. My takeaway from this meeting is that planning is critical. You need to plan well in advance to be able to successfully implement digital censuses. I've also learned that digital censuses are not necessarily cheaper than the traditional censuses although their advantages outweigh those of the traditional census in terms of timeliness and quality of date."



Risenga Maluleke
Statistician-General,
South Africa

Both StatsCom and the ASSD have the same objective of harnessing the energies of African statisticians on matters of statistical development. Census is something that the ASSD has been focusing on since its inception. We have moved from paper-based census to digital censuse. The biggest challenge now is that most of our countries are not ready in terms of infrastructure. So we need to invest in infrastructure because technology makes it a lot easier to cover difficult areas. Also we need to harmonize our numbers for purposes of comparability, because free trade and intra-regional integration will work better when you are able to compare the numbers.



Charles Lufumpa,
Director of Statistics,
AfDB

It's important to rally all stakeholders in the African statistical community to share experiences and draw consensus on the way forward. It is important that countries help each other through something like the peer review, which the bank finances. That's because on the one hand we have countries like Mauritius, South Africa, and Ethiopia that have strong statistical systems, but on the other hand many of our countries have weak systems. So it is incumbent upon us to make arrangements to support them.



AFRICAN GROUP ON STATISTICAL TRAINING AND HUMAN RESOURCES – AGROST ANNUAL REVIEW MEETING *by Ibrahim Mamma*

01 October 2018. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia — The African Group on Statistical Training and Human Resources is one of the regional technical working groups established by StatCom. The prime responsibility of the group is to coordinate activities and initiatives on statistical training and human resource development in Africa in terms of ongoing activities and initiatives; project planning; and synergy in assistance from various technical and financial partners supporting statistical human capital development in the continent.

The first continental forum in June 2009 in Bujumbura, held for representatives of Statistical Training Centers (STCs), National Statistics Offices (NSOs), Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Pan-African organizations and technical and financial partners (TFPs) concluded that the various groups responsible for statistical training should be merged under one umbrella, namely the Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa). The Bujumbura meeting result led to the establishment of the African Group on Statistical Training (AGROST). The group was proposed to be comprising the StatCom-Africa working group on statistical training, ACBF- Statistical training project (and its working group) of the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF); the African Statistical Coordination Committee (ASCC)-Working group on statistical training; as well as the PARIS21- working group on statistical training in Africa. The secretariat of the group is managed by the African Centre for Statistics at the UNECA.

AGROST meets annually and this meeting held today is the 7th round. In the annual activities and achievements of the group in promoting statistical training and human resources development are presented and the work plan for the ensuing period shared. For the period between January to September 2018, the performances of regional training activities under the Global Strategy for Agricultural Statistics, the capacity building programme of Household Surveys with the World Bank as well as the SDGs monitoring and reporting training programme with the FAO has been presented in detailed and discussed. Particularly with the Global Strategy, beneficiaries of the scholarship programme for masters in agricultural statistics have been featured as the main achievements of the programme and graduates from this programme have provided their testimonials.

With the aim of further strengthening the mandate of the group and its influence in promoting statistical training in the continent, the meeting has discussed a multitude of strategies for expanding the membership of the groups as well as forging partnerships with various regional and global financial and technical partners.

The meeting was attended by representatives of National Statistical offices, regional and National Statistical Training Centers and Universities, representatives of Ministries of Agriculture as well as the World Bank Group and FAO.



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