United Nations	African Union

Economic and Social Council	African Union

Statistical Commission for Africa Fifth session Abidjan, 28 November-2 December 2016	**Committee of Directors General of National Statistics Offices** Tenth session

The Solution Exchange for the African Statistical Community

1. Solution Exchange for the African Statistical Community is offered by UNECA's African Centre for Statistics (ACS) as a service to African statistical professionals and other professionals providing or using statistical information for effectively planning, managing, monitoring and assessing Africa's national and interregional development efforts.

2. The Community is moderated by a full-time Facilitator and a Research Associate located in ACS. It is guided by an Advisory Group, comprised of senior representatives from key statistical organizations and thought leaders, whose role is to promote professional membership in Solution Exchange and to increase the value of the Community to its members and to the statistical profession in Africa as a whole. The Advisory Group sets Solution Exchange performance targets, reviews progress, provides guidance, direction and support for the Community's broad thematic priorities, and helps mobilize resources to ensure sustainability.

3. The Solution Exchange Statistical Community was launched in August 2015 and currently has around 525 members (19% female). 10 topics have been addressed to date, through more than 140 member contributions citing over 50 country experiences and recommended resources.

➢ **Mobile technology for data collection,** from Freeman Amegashie, AFRISTAT Mali. *Country experiences and lessons learned from the implementation of mobile technologies for collecting data*

➢ **Ensuring quality of census data collection**, from Isaac Njiemoun, IFC Experts Cameroon**.** *Country experiences on work done to improve census data collection methods to ensure quality*

➢ **Informal cross-border trade in Africa,** from Samba Kanoute, ECOWAS Commission Nigeria. *Experiences with existing practices, methodological options and challenges to measuring ICBT in Africa*

➢ **A mechanism to make statistical data more accessible,** from Issoufou Seidou Sanda, ECA Ethiopia. *Reactions to using a decentralized approach to make statistical data more accessible to professionals*

- ➢ **e-Discussion: Implementation of the African Data Revolution,** from Steve Glovinsky, ECA Ethiopia. *Insights on key issues and challenges to implementing the Data Revolution for Africa.*

- ➢ **Public demand for civil registration and vital statistics, from Gloria Mathenge, ECA Ethiopia.** *Country experiences and advice for increasing demand for civil registration records and vital statistics*

- ➢ **For Comments: Programme Document for Implementing the African Data Revolution, from Steve Glovinsky, ECA Ethiopia.** *Feedback and suggested revisions to a draft document to be submitted to donors and for identifying ten start-up champions.*

- ➢ **Leveraging the power of GIS in National Statistical Systems, from Papa Djibril Ba, National Agency for Statistics and Demography, Senegal.** *Experiences and challenges for National Statistical Offices and other government agencies with applying GIS to enhance data quality*

- ➢ **Official Statistics and other statistics, from Gerard Chenais, consultant, France.** *Experiences on differentiating Official Statistics from other statistics, and terms of use and re-use of official statistics*

- ➢ **Fragile states and SDGs, from Albina Andrew Chuwa, National Bureau of Statistics, Tanzania.** *Strengthening capacities for providing credible, accurate, timely and relevant statistics to contribute to the SDGs*

- ➢ **Ongoing query:**

  - o Assessment of the quality of data before dissemination *of Freeman Amegashie, independent consultant, former senior expert in strategic organization and dissemination AFRISTAT, Mali. Experiences and successful examples of countries and organization in the implementation of the mechanisms to assess the quality of the statistical data.*

  - o Establishing the Statistical Institute of the African Union (STATAFRIC), from Imani Younoussa, Statistics Division of the African Union Commission, Ethiopia. *Views on the Pan-African Statistical Institute proposed by the AUC, for coordinating and harmonizing statistical methods and services*

"Consolidated Replies" to all completed queries can be viewed at http://www.solutionexchange-un.net/africa/stat/STAT-RFKnowledge.

Community Performance

4. Solution Exchange tracks six performance indicators – Community growth, Community vibrancy, organizational and regional balance, number of Consolidated Replies, CR turnaround time, and user satisfaction. The first five indicators are recorded quarterly, and the last one – a sample survey – recorded periodically. Indicators are measured against targets set by the Advisory Group.

5. Annex 1 shows the performance over five quarters, to the end of September 2016. Areas where good progress has been made are Community growth and vibrancy; areas needing improvements are numbers of Consolidated Replies and CR turnaround time. User satisfaction ranks 4.1 "stars" out of five, with many favorable comments about the value of this service. The impression from these indicators that this service fills an important need for knowledge sharing ("it is great and useful to get different views and experiences") but performance should be improved.
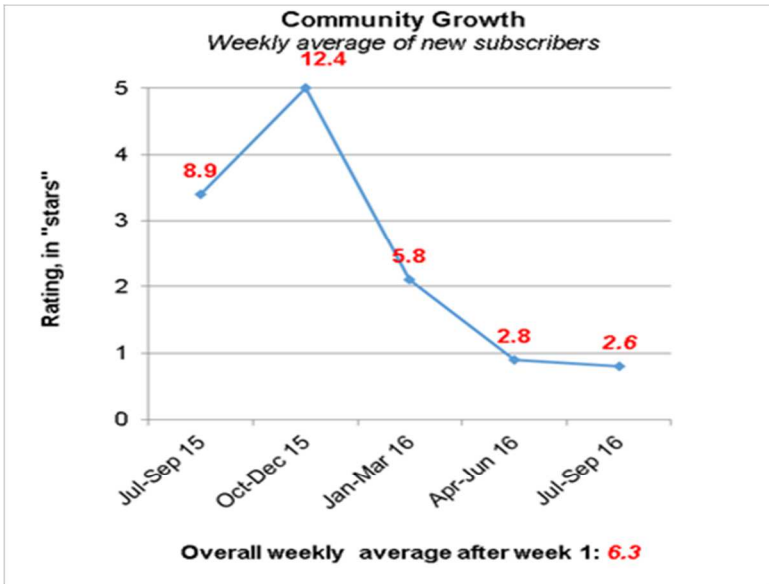
Challenges and the way forward

6. In addition to continuing to addressing member queries the Facilitation Team together with the Advisory Group, will strive to enhance the Statistical Community participation levels ("vibrancy"), promote regional, gender and organizational balance of Community members, increase the numbers of queries raised and produce more timely Consolidated Replies.

➢ To promote Community growth and balance, strategically targeted sign-up campaigns will be carried out by phone, emails and using occasional events related to statistics. Statistics professionals working in Government ministries and agencies, NGOs and CBOs, donors, academic and research institutes, and the private sector are all welcome to join the Community. They can request sign up forms over e-mail, or use the web site link at http://www.solutionexchange-un.net/africa/stat/JoinCommunity.

➢ To promote vibrancy and increase the numbers of queries posed by Community members, the Facilitation Team will use phone calls and e-mails to the most knowledgeable members to encourage their contributions.

➢ To reduce delays in preparing Consolidated Replies, the Facilitation Team will pay particular attention to ensuring timeliness in both finalizing summaries and translating them into English or French.

7. A new feature, "For Information" messages, will also be introduced to keep Community members informed of events and announcements of interest.

8. The next session of the Advisory Group is being scheduled for 29 November as a side event of STAT Com-Africa. The Advisory Group will review performance and consider adjusting performance targets, if warranted. They will also consider the top priority assignments for teams of Community members ("Action Groups") to address in the coming year. And they will begin to consider the issue of financial sustainability for the Community, based on their view of the Community's value to its members and the African Statistical profession in general.

9. Finally, the Community plans to host a side event of the UN World Data Forum taking place in Cape Town South Africa, January 2017, to demonstrate and share details about selected African success stories relating to data for sustainable development.

10. In addition to continue to address the issues, ACS, in concert with the Advisory Group, will endeavor to improve the levels of participation of the statistics Community, promote gender equality, the regional balance of the members of the Community, and to ensure the financial viability.
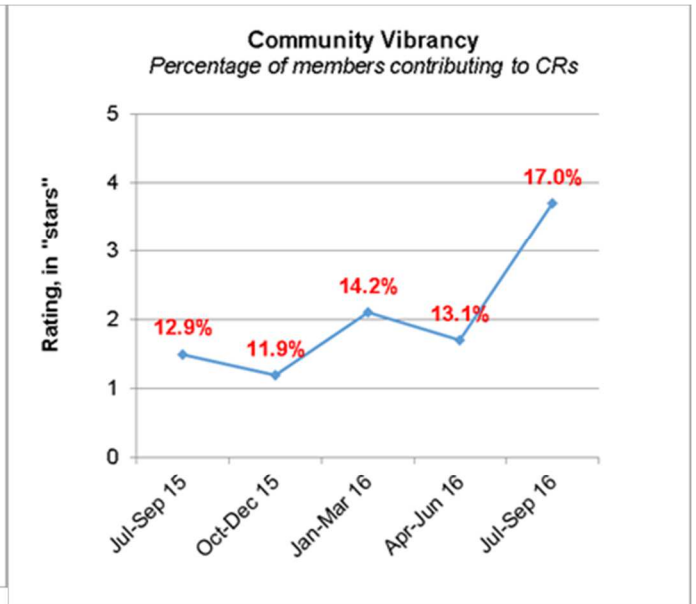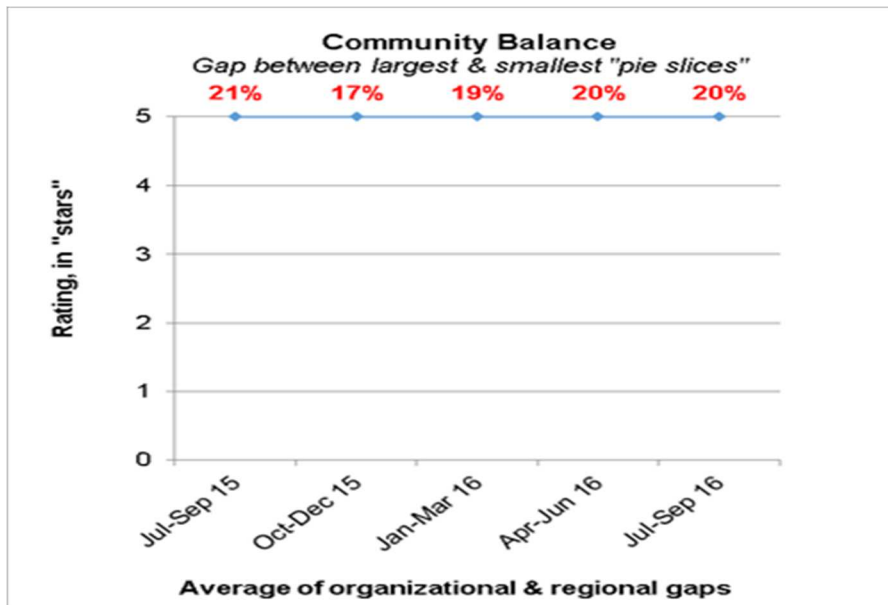
Points for discussion

The Commission is invited to:

a) Take note of the guidance provided by the Advisory Group of the Solution Exchange African Statistical Community in their meeting that took place earlier in the week with respect to its future performance, priorities and suggestions to increase the value of the service to the Community;

b) Recommend that Commission members promote and take full advantage of this knowledge-sharing service for African statistical professionals, and encourage all professionals (producers and users of statistics) to subscribe and actively participate in network consultations and activities;

c) Express its appreciation to ECA for making the UN Solution Exchange service available to the African Statistical Community, and request that ECA continues to provide the necessary support for its continuation, including Advisory Group meetings and other events designed to promote the visibility and value of the statistical profession to Africa's development efforts.
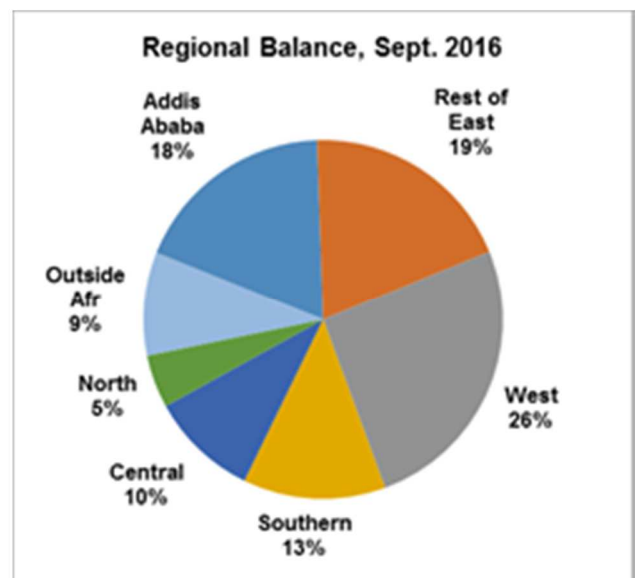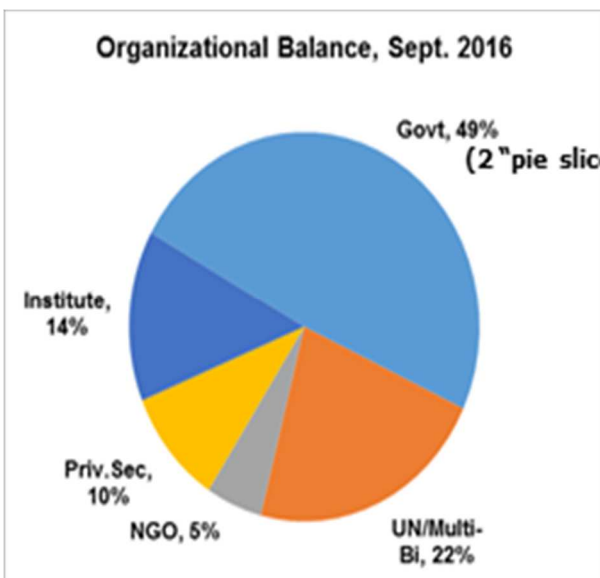
Community Growth
Weekly average of new subscribers

12.4
8.9
5.8
2.8
2.6

Overall weekly average after week 1: *6.3*

Target (3 stars): *8/week*
Stretch target (5 stars): *12/week*

Community Vibrancy
Percentage of members contributing to CRs

17.0%
14.2%
12.9%
11.9%
13.1%

Target (3 stars): *16% contributing*
Stretch target (5 stars): *18% contributing*

Community Balance
Gap between largest & smallest "pie slices"

21% **17%** **19%** **20%** **20%**

Average of organizational & regional gaps

Target (3 stars): *30% gap*
Stretch target (5 stars): *25% gap*

Organizational Balance, Sept. 2016

Govt, 49%
(2 "pie slices")
Institute, 14%
Priv.Sec, 10%
NGO, 5%
UN/Multi-Bi, 22%

Regional Balance, Sept. 2016

Addis Ababa 18%
Rest of East 19%
Outside Afr 9%
North 5%
Central 10%
Southern 13%
West 26%

Number of Consolidated Replies
Average per month
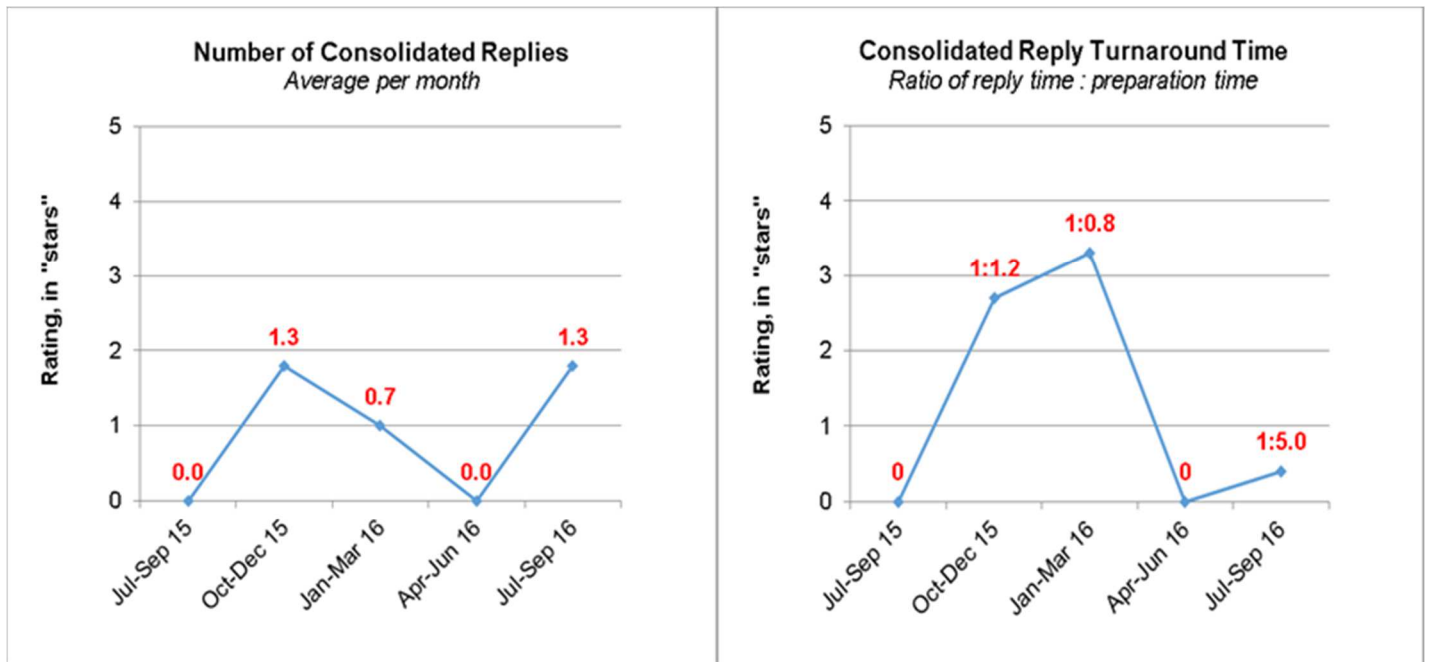
Target (3 stars): *2/month*
Stretch target (5 stars): *3 /month*

Consolidated Reply Turnaround Time
Ratio of reply time : preparation time

Target (3 stars): *1: 1*
Stretch target (5 stars): *1:0.5*

User Satisfaction Rating
How beneficial is your membership?

Question sent to 50 random members

Score, end September 2016	
Community Growth	0.8
Community Balance	5.0
Community Vibrancy	3.7
Number of CRs	1.8
CR Turnaround time	0.4
User Satisfaction	4.1
(user satisfaction 2x weight)	*4.1*
Total score	**2.8**