



United Nations  
Economic Commission for Africa

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# REPORT ON STATISTICAL DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

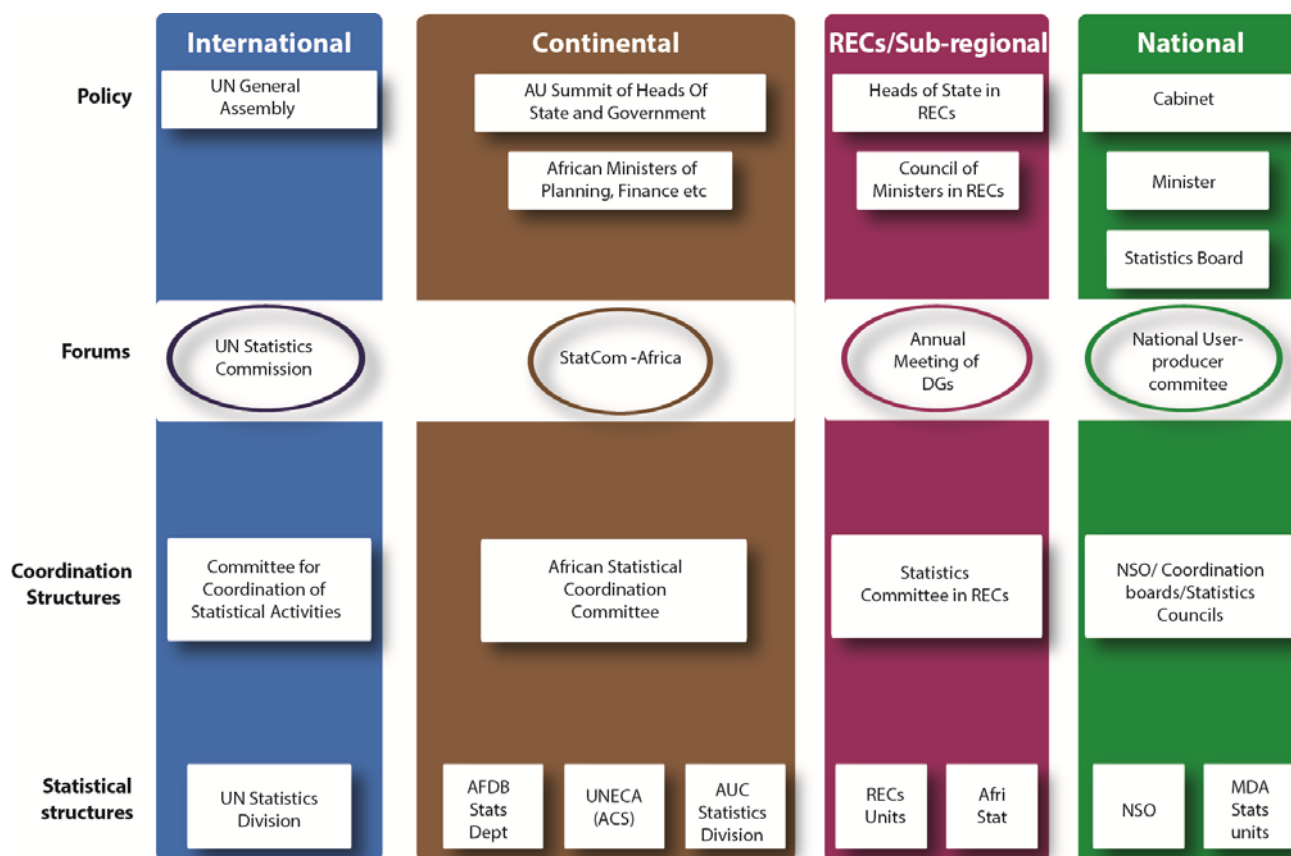
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*ANNEX: THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK  
FOR STATISTICAL DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA*

## I. STATISTICAL GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA

It is useful to recall the statistical governance in Africa (policy, forums, coordination and statistical structures) at different levels – international, continental, regional and national. The map of statistical governance in Africa is given in Chart I below:

**CHART I: STATISTICAL GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA**



### 1.1. Policy

At the international level, the UN General Assembly is the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. Comprising all 192 Members of the United Nations, it provides a unique forum for multilateral discussion of the full spectrum of international issues covered by the Charter. Statistics as an enabler for development is also discussed at this level. For instance, the UN General Assembly passed resolution 64/267, declaring 20 October 2010 World Statistics Day to be celebrated by all the UN member states under the general theme “Celebrating the many achievements of official statistics”.

At continental level, we have the African Union Summit of Heads of State and Government as well as the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development taking political and policy decisions on

statistics and related matters. In the recent past, the two bodies have endorsed a number of initiatives including the African Charter on Statistics to serve as a legal instrument to regulate statistical activities and to serve as a tool for advocacy and development of statistics in Africa.

At the regional level, meetings of Heads of Member States and meetings of Councils of Ministers of various Regional Economic communities (RECs) take political and policy decisions on statistics and related matters.

At national level, there is a lot of variation in modalities for policy making on statistics. However, in many countries, the Cabinet and the Minister responsible for statistics make policies that regulate statistical activities within the provisions of the national statistical legislation. Some countries have Statistics Boards or Councils that also make policies on statistical matters.

## **1.2. Forums**

At the international level, the UN Statistical Commission is the apex entity of the global statistical system. The Commission was established in 1947 as one of ten functional commissions of the UN Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. It brings together the Chief Statisticians from member states from around the world. It is the highest decision making body for international statistical activities especially the setting of statistical standards and nomenclature, the development of concepts and methodological best practice and their implementation at the national and international levels. As well as its normative function it is responsible for championing statistics in the UN system, for coordinating the international statistical system to allow comparison across countries and for promoting the development of national statistical systems worldwide. It reports to the UN General Assembly through the UN Secretary General.

The different UN regions of the world have statistical commissions. The Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa) was established by the Conference of African Ministers of Finance and Economy in April 2007 as the apex inter-governmental body in charge of statistics and statistical development in the continent. Membership of StatCom-Africa comprises African countries as represented by their Directors General. StatCom-Africa is shepherding a statistical renaissance in Africa. It reports to the ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and, like other regional statistical commissions, it also reports to the UN Statistical Commission. StatCom-Africa meets every two years.

Currently, a Committee of Directors General (CoDG) meets every year under the AUC aegis since 2006 to discuss some statistical development issues in Africa including the implementation of the African Charter on Statistics and the Strategy for the Harmonisation of Statistics in Africa. Since its creation, it has been reporting to the AU Conference of African Ministers of Economy and Finance and then after to the joint AU-ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Planning and Economic Development since 2008. Membership of CoDG and the StatCom-Africa is the same, Director Generals of National Statistics Offices. StatCom and CoDG are jointly organized every two years.

At the level of RECs, there are Meetings of Directors General of National Statistics Offices that are convened to deliberate on issues of statistics and statistical development in the REC. Finally, at national level, there are different national committees that bring together key data users and producers to deliberate on statistical development in a country.

## **1.3. Coordination**

At the international level, an inter-agency committee, the Committee for Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA), was established in September 2002 to promote coordination, integration and complementarity among the statistical programmes of the international organizations, including the avoidance of duplication and reduction in reporting burdens on Member States and to promote coordination and consistency in statistical practices and development.

The members of the Committee comprise UN organizations, certain non-UN intergovernmental organizations, regional development banks and the International Statistical Institute. Other organizations can participate by invitation. The UNSD is the permanent Secretariat. The CCSA endorsed the Principles Governing International Statistical Activities on 14 September, 2005 and these principles were reaffirmed by the Committee with a new preamble in March 2014.

At continental level, an African Statistical Coordination Committee (ASCC) was established in 2007 to, inter alia, promote overall coordination, integration and complementarity of statistical programmes of Pan-African institutions, RECs and continental joint initiatives in statistics. It has been observed (EGM, October, 2016) that the draft TOR of the ASCC need to be self-sufficient. For the Coordination among the three pan African institutions, a Joint secretariat should be established to ensure the alignment of activities (to avoid duplication); the three partners need to sit together and come up with a clear plan that works for the continent; and critical stakeholders should be identified.

In RECs, there are Statistics Committees which were established by respective Councils of Ministers with the mandate to provide policy and strategic guidance to the implementation of the REC's statistical programme and projects. Members of the Committee are Directors General or Heads of National Statistics Offices of the member states.

At National level, different arrangements obtain depending on administrative and political set up of each country. However, it may be observed that in most cases, the National Statistics Office is mandated by the national statistical legislation to coordinate statistical activities in the country. For some countries, this function resides in specially established Coordination Boards or Statistics Councils.

#### **1.4. Statistical structures**

At the international level, the UN Statistics Division is the permanent secretariat of both the UN Statistics Commission and the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities.

At the continental level, the three leading pan-African institutions have their own statistics functions. At AfDB, the function is managed by a Statistics Department, at AUC it is managed by a Statistics Division and at UNECA, it is managed by the African Centre for Statistics which has a division status. The Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union held in January 2013 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia decided to create of the AU Institute for Statistics (STATAFRIC) based in Tunis, Tunisia.

At the level of REC, there is a Statistics Unit or Department responsible for the statistical programme of the REC. There is also Afristat at sub-regional level which operates in 19 countries in sub-Saharan Africa,<sup>1</sup> mostly French-speaking countries to harmonise concepts, standards and methods in the areas of national accounts, price and the informal sector statistics.

At national level, the National Statistics Office is the main government agency responsible for official statistics. However, different government ministries, departments and agencies (MDA) collect data in the areas of their mandate. Countries are being urged to make sure that the production of official data is done in a coordinated manner to, inter alia, improve assessment and prioritization of data user needs, avoid duplication of effort and the possibility of producing conflicting data on the same subjects, achieve synergy and cost-effectiveness, and improve the quality of produced data.

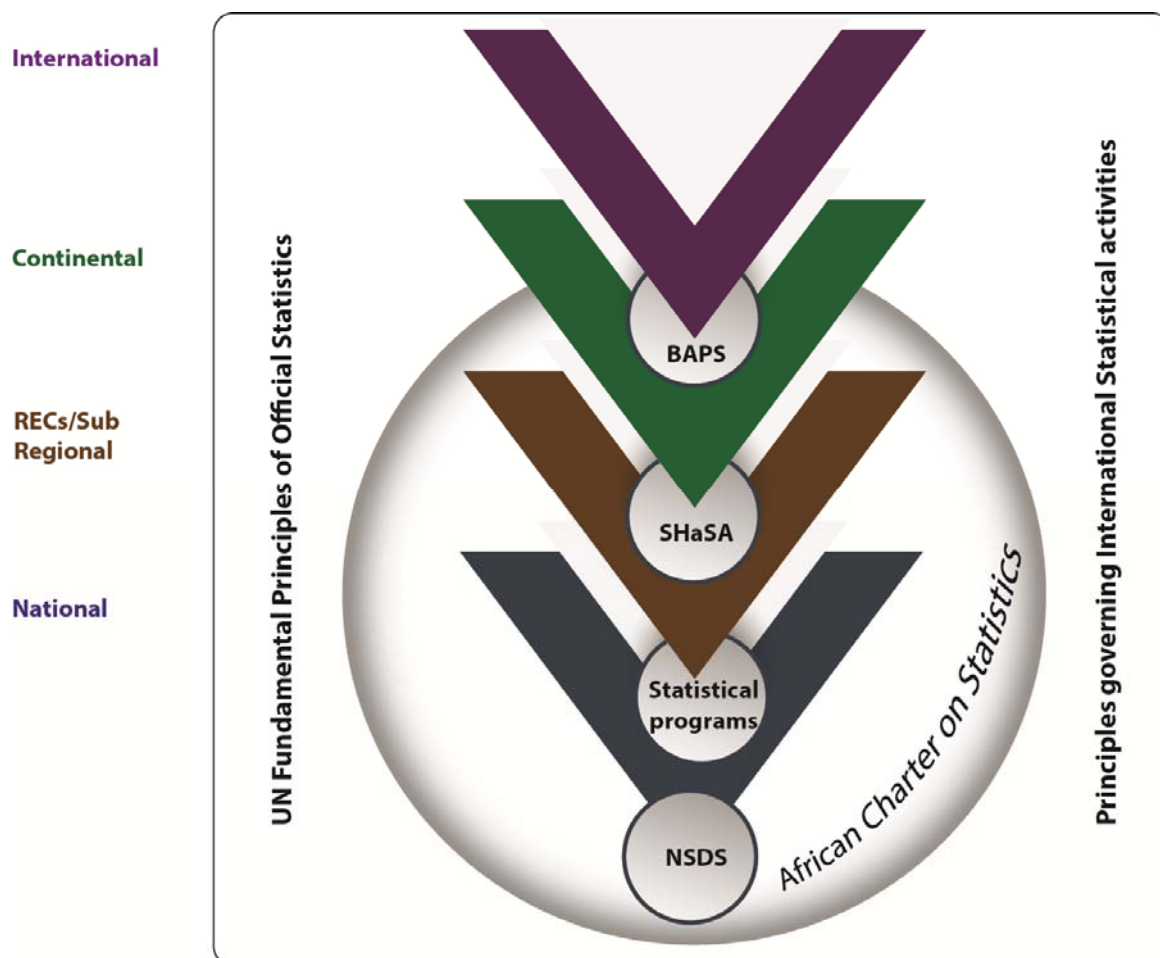
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<sup>1</sup> *Afristat member states are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, the Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Chad and Togo.*

## II. PRINCIPLES, FRAMEWORKS AND STRATEGIES

There are different principles, frameworks and strategies that have been put in place to foster statistical coordination and development. They cascade from the international, to continental, to regional and finally to national level. Establishing relationships between them will help policy makers and the statistical community in Africa to appreciate opportunities that exist to build partnerships and synergy among key stakeholders at different levels. The frameworks and strategies build on the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the African Charter on Statistics. The map of the principles, frameworks and strategies is given in Chart II.

CHART II: PRINCIPLES, FRAMEWORKS AND STRATEGIES



### 2.1. UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

These give a set of fundamental values which National Statistics Offices and indeed other data producers should have in order for the public to have trust in the statistics they produce, and to ensure that professional, technical and ethical standards are applied in data collection and management. They also outline the general criteria that statistical systems must meet. They cover various and interrelated topics including the following: relevance for society,

impartiality, freedom from political interference, accessibility for everyone under equal condition; use of professional methods and professional presentation of statistical outcomes; transparency of the sources, methods and procedures; prevention of erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics, education of users; cost-effectiveness and efficiency, balanced choice of data sources, reduction of reporting burden; confidentiality of basic data, respect for the privacy of respondents; transparent and adequate statistics legislation; coordination among statistical agencies within countries in order to achieve consistency and efficiency of the statistical system; use of internationally agreed concepts, classifications and methods; and bilateral and multi-lateral cooperation in statistics to improve official statistics and build statistical capacity worldwide.

## 2.2. Principles Governing International Statistical Activities

The Committee of Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) has endorsed the set of 10 principles governing international statistical activities which are similar to the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics on 14 September 2005. The principles intend to guide all statistical activities of international organizations and the practices, on which the main focus was placed, are phrased without an intent of creating a 'legally binding' framework. The emphasis is to recognize the importance of the "Principles and Practices" on guiding professional statistical activities in international agencies and agreed that the Principles and Practices could be used in different ways by agencies. Thus the main focus is to make a clear distinction between the principles and practices. For this reason attached to each principle a list of non-exhaustive recommendations of good practices. The "Principles and practices" were posted on the UNSD website. Subsequently, as of 1 September 2013, 25 members out of currently 39 members endorsed the Principles. The African Development Bank Group (AfDB) and the Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) were among the members that endorsed these Principles.

## 2.3. African Charter on Statistics

The charter works as a tool for statistical advocacy at the highest level of government and commits African governments to scale up support to statistic. It also commits countries to develop statistics in a consistent manner with best practices and international standards, and to use statistics for policy development and management and for decision-making at all levels. The AUC Chairman had stated "*The charter will serve not only as a legal instrument to regulate statistical activity but also as a tool for advocacy and the development of statistic in Africa. It stands as a code of professional ethics and best practices for the exercise of the profession of statistician in Africa. The Charter also beckons African policy makers to base the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of policies on facts observed. Statistics should be considered as an essential public asset in any decision-making process*". The charter came to power on May 2014 following its ratification by 16 countries.

## 2.4. The Busan Action Plan for Statistics - BAPS

Building on the Marrakech Plan of Action for Statistics (MAPS) and recent achievements and best practices, the Busan Action Plan for Statistics (BAPS) was proposed to further enable developing countries, providers of development co-operation, and other development stakeholders to address the following three objectives: (1) Fully integrating statistics in decision making; (2) Promoting open access to statistics; (3) Increasing resources for statistical systems. BAPS is an attempt to extend the progress made by developing countries in improving their statistical systems over the last decade and to provide direction for the decade ahead. For instance BAPS goes beyond MAPS, since it: (i) adopts a system-wide approach to capacity development to integrate national statistical activities with the requirements of planning, budgeting, monitoring, and results, (ii) recognizes the important synergies between survey and census-based data, administrative data, and vital statistics, (iii) It explicitly supports greater transparency and encourages the use of new methods and technologies to increase the reliability and accessibility of statistics, (iv) the action plan explicitly recognizes the statistical activities necessary to support key global commitments including on initiatives such as gender equity and the empowerment of women. The action plan

proposes a country-led process to address country-defined needs through existing institutions, agencies, and partnerships. The implementation of BAPS requires the establishing a global partnership to support the plan and encourage rapid implementation.

## 2.5. The Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa- SHaSA

The SHaSA is a continental effort that directly responds to these challenges and supports the African integration agenda, particularly the Minimum Integration Programme (MIP) which was adopted by the Heads of State and Government in July 2010 (Kampala, Uganda). Its objective is to provide the African Statistical System with a general framework for providing quality and harmonized statistics for the design and implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation of integration and development policies in Africa. More specifically, the SHaSA aims at: identifying priority areas of the African integration process based on decisions taken at the highest level by African leaders, as well as on policies and programs implemented at regional and continental levels that need to be underpinned by statistics; assessing the state of the African Statistical System and various initiatives on statistical harmonization both at regional and continental levels; and elaborating a global continental Strategy for the production and dissemination of quality harmonized statistics to inform the development and integration of Africa. In order to accommodate the new emerging issues, including Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030), the 9th Annual Session of the African Union Committee of Directors General of National Statistics Offices that was held in Libreville in November 2015 recommended to the African Union Commission (AUC), the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) to review and update the SHaSA.

## 2.6. Statistical programmes of RECs

Different RECs have developed medium-to-long term statistical programmes to support regional integration by making available relevant, timely and accurate statistical information to be used in the region for planning, policy formulation, and protocol monitoring and decision-making. The programmes generally focus on the availability of harmonized, comparable, reliable and up-to-date core statistics in the economic and social areas in particular economic, social statistics and cross statistical cutting issues.

## 2.7. National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS)

There is consensus internationally about the need for a holistic, strategic approach to improving national statistical systems and building statistical capacity to provide the information needed for poverty-focused development programmes. The NSDS is essentially a second-generation statistical plan that provides a comprehensive framework for statistical development at national level. It provides for, among other things:

- a. statistical advocacy to create greater awareness about the role of statistics, enhance demand for and use of statistics especially for results agenda;
- b. a vision of where the National Statistical System should be in the medium to long term;
- c. a framework to support production and use of better statistics now, and to accelerate sustainable statistical capacity building for the future;
- d. for mobilizing, harnessing and leveraging resources (both national and international); galvanizing individual energies into total effort; the creation of quality awareness and enhancement of national statistics;
- e. Introduction of modern and proven strategic planning and management principles and good practices in the handling of official statistics.

Assessment, alignment with other National Development plans; engagement of other partners and stakeholders from the initial stages, and address capacities at sub-national sectors are among the pertinent issues in the medium to long term NSDS.

## 2.8. Africa Symposium on Statistical Development - ASSD

The ASSD is a country-led initiative aimed at providing a forum where African countries can discuss issues pertaining to their statistical development on a regionally-coordinated basis. The Symposium is organized in African countries on a rotational basis. It considers a number of aspects relating to developing sustainable statistical systems, addresses the challenges of capacity-building and provides a platform for a comprehensive exchange of practical experiences and best practices among African countries.

So far, since 2006, six symposia have been organized successively in South Africa, Rwanda, Angola, Ghana, Senegal, and Egypt, under the theme of Population and Housing Censuses (PHCs). This effort has resulted in improved participation of African countries in the 2010 Round of PHCs. During its seventh session organized in Cape Town, South Africa, in January 2012, it was decided that the ASSD should now focus on the development of CRVS systems in all countries across the continent for the five coming years.

The 11th Africa Symposium on Statistical Development (ASSD) that was held in Libreville, Gabon in 2015 adopted a resolution to focus on economic statistics and national accounts for the next five symposia beginning 2016-2020, with the aim of improving the production of basic economic statistics in Africa. The 12th ASSD held in November 2016 in Tunis, Tunisia had overall objective of rallying Member States around a united statistical program aimed at improving basic economic statistics in Africa for the compilation of quality national accounts, and in support of monitoring the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2063.

## 2.9. Global Geospatial Information Management in Africa (UN-GGIM:Africa)

The need for a global coordination mechanism for Geospatial Information Management (GIM) has been further emphasized by two key programmes: the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063. At its July 2011 substantive session, following extensive consultation with geospatial experts of Member States, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted a resolution to create the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management. The United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) initiative was established to create a formal geospatial information coordination mechanism involving Member States as the key stakeholders. From Africa's perspective, the continent Regional Committee of the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management (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.