

Conclusions and Recommendations of the Third Session of the Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa III)

18-23 January 2012 (Cape Town, South Africa)

Preamble

1. *Acknowledging that* the theme of this third session of StatCom-Africa, “Harmonizing Statistics in Support of Economic, Monetary, and Social Integration in Africa,” is timely as we are identifying statistical data requirements for the African integration process;
2. *Considering* reports from seven working groups namely on (i) Data Management, (ii) Development Indicators, (iii) Gender Statistics, (iv) National Accounts, (v) Employment and Informal Sector, (vi) Harmonisation of statistics and (vii) Statistical Training;
3. *Considering* reports from the seventh Africa Symposium on Statistical Development (ASSD) and fifth Forum on Statistical Development (FASDEV);
4. *Further Considering* other ongoing and emerging issues namely: (i) the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses, (ii) the International Comparison Programme, (iii) Africa’s Implementation Plan of the Global Strategy on Improving Agricultural and Rural Statistics, (iv) the Implementation of NSDS, (v) Civil Registration and Vital Statistics; (vi) Infrastructure Statistics Programme;
5. *Having examined* reports on (i) the Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity-Building in Africa (RRSF), (ii) Measuring Progress towards Statistical Development in Africa: The African Statistical Development Index, and (iii) the African Charter for Statistics;
6. *Having examined* reports on (i) Gaborone Action Plan on Geographical Names Activities in Africa and (ii) Data Collection and Management Proposal for Africa; (iii) Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Africa; (iv) Assessment of the Status of CRVS;
7. *Taking cognizance* of a number of programmatic issues including (i) the implementation of the 2010-2011 and the planned 2012-2013 work programmes of the African Centre for Statistics (ACS); (ii) the Strategic Action Plan for the Implementation of AfricaInfo;
8. *Recognising* the importance of Statistical Training Centres (STC) in conducting systematic and sustainable training programmes in the area of official statistics;
9. *Noting with satisfaction* the participation of young statisticians in the discussion of the Commission;
10. *Recognising* that SHaSA integrates major statistical initiatives in Africa, and can serve as a document for communication, advocacy, and as a basis for monitoring of progress on statistical development on the continent;
11. *Acknowledging* efforts by the AfDB to improve the availability and quality of infrastructure statistics in view of their importance in advancing the regional integration agenda;
12. *Recognizing* the crucial role of agricultural statistics in dealing with the challenges of food security and climate change;

13. *Recognizing* the continuing importance of population and housing censuses as important sources of demographic and social statistics;
14. *Recognizing* the support extended by the development partners in supporting the activities of training through the AGROST;
15. *Welcoming* the mobilization of resources by the AfDB for its Statistical Capacity Building III Programme, and encouraging this continental institution to further foster its efforts in mobilizing resources for statistical development in Africa;

A. General

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

16. **Adopts** the reports of the Working Groups and **endorses** the work programmes and action plans contained therein and **requests** the groups to find ways of communicating with each other to ensure that their activities are harmonized.
17. **Calls** upon all working groups to align their work programmes to SHaSA strategy template.
18. **Recommends** the establishment of a working group on Environment Statistics to be called “African Group on Environment and related statistics.”
19. **Endorses** report of ACS’s activities planned for the 2012-2013 biennium.
20. **Commits** to engage African members to efficiently use funds allocated by partners and account for resources according to agreed and signed memoranda of understanding, and to apply peer pressure to ensure integrity and proper compliance.
21. **Requests** AfDB and ECA to extend the coverage of the ongoing exercise of the evaluation of the NSDSs and RRSF to include all countries and share the outcome with PARIS21.
22. **Invite** les partenaires techniques et financiers à mobiliser les ressources financières nécessaires au bon fonctionnement des groupes et à l’atteinte des résultats attendus d’eux.
23. **Adopts** the recommendations of the 7th ASSD and 5th FASDEV.

B. On the African Charter on Statistics:

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

24. **Adopts** the standards and guidelines on the implementation of the African Charter on Statistics and commits to work towards its implementation.
25. **Calls upon** countries to take the necessary steps to sign and ratify the African Charter on Statistics; incorporate its principles into statistical laws and strategies.
26. **Calls upon** the AUC to develop a management framework for the implementation of the Charter, specifically, to finalize the self-assessment questionnaire and training manual; develop an action plan for its implementation; develop a monitoring and evaluation framework; and train NSO staff in statistical leadership.

27. **Calls upon** AUC to lobby Ministers for Foreign Affairs in countries to expedite the process of signing and ratifying the Charter on Statistics.
28. **Calls upon** AGSHa to monitor, report and evaluate the implementation of the Charter by conducting independent peer-review assessments and compiling annual reports.

C. On the Strategy for the Harmonisation of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA)

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

29. **Adopts** the action plan of SHaSA.
30. **Commits** to identify lead countries for the specialized technical groups defined in the Strategy and make them function, and to recommend SHaSA to Committee of Directors General of NSOs.
31. **Urges** countries to incorporate the provisions of SHaSA into their NSDSs, and RECs into their regional strategies.
32. **Calls upon** AGSHa to monitor, report and evaluate the implementation of SHaSA.

D. On National Accounts

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

33. **Urges** pan-African institutions, regional economic communities, and member States to take ownership of the Regional Project Document for the Implementation of the 2008 SNA and for all African countries to work together to adopt the 2008 SNA.
34. **Urges** African countries to allocate, and development partners to mobilize, necessary funds to support the implementation of the five-year Regional Project as laid out in the Regional Project Document;
35. **Recognises** the importance of sectoral statistics such as industrial, trade and service statistics and recommends countries to improve their sectoral statistical system as an essential part of SNA implementation
36. **Requests** ECA to continue to coordinate the activities of monitoring, evaluating, and reporting the status of the implementation of the SNA.

E. On the International Comparison Programme for Africa

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

37. **Encourages** AfDB to continue with the remaining part of the ICP programme implementation as scheduled, including the release of 2009 and preliminary 2011 ICP results.
38. **Calls upon** heads of NSOs of ICP participating countries to continue providing quality data for ICP for the remaining part of the programme in time, to allow release of final results as scheduled.
39. **Calls upon** heads of NSOs to re-commit to the implementation of the 2007 Accra Declaration to integrate ICP into national statistical activities in general, and CPI in particular.

F. On Agricultural Statistics

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

40. **Supports** the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics, endorses the related “Action Plan for Africa (2011-2015) for Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture, and Rural Development” and commits to support its implementation.
41. **Recommends** that NSDS include provisions for developing Sector Strategic Plan on Agricultural statistics, producing agricultural statistics, with technical expertise and funding in the area of agriculture statistics being channelled through the appropriate country institutions that have the infrastructure for producing them.

G. On African Infrastructure Knowledge Programme

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

42. **Endorses** and supports the African Infrastructure Knowledge Programme as a long-term framework for generating knowledge on infrastructure statistics on a sustainable basis.
43. **Recommends** the *Handbook on Infrastructure Statistics* to African countries and regional institutions as a reference document for collecting standardized and comparable data on infrastructure.
44. **Calls upon** countries to build adequate capacity into the NSDS process to collect, process, manage and disseminate infrastructure statistics.

H. On the Informal Sector

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

45. **Renames** the African Group on the Informal Sector as the “African Group on Employment and Informal Sector” to better reflect the scope of its work.
46. **Recommande** au Groupe de finaliser le manuel sur la méthodologie africaine sur l’emploi et le secteur informel au plus tard en fin 2012 et demande aux pays d’envoyer les informations sur leurs méthodologies au secrétariat technique du Groupe (CAS/CEA, AFRISTAT) le plus tôt possible.
47. **Recommends** that the AGEIS works closely with AUC as the methodology being developed by the Group feed into the work of the development of indicators being undertaken by AUC on Labour Market Information System (LMIS), and urges the AUC to coordinate all activities on LMIS at the regional level.

I. On Population and Housing Censuses

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

48. **Urges** ECA and other partners to undertake an assessment of the 2010 round of Population and Housing Censuses (PHCs) in Africa in terms of the questions covered, the outputs generated, use of technology in collection, processing and dissemination of censuses.

49. **Encourages** ECA to continue offering advisory services in support of census taking in partnership with other international agencies; and disseminate manuals and handbooks on PHCs and integrate them in the curricula of the STCs for greater out-reach.
50. **Urges** countries and development partners to provide necessary resources for conducting population and housing censuses.

J. On Civil Registration and Vital Statistics

The Statistical Commission for Africa **recommends that:**

51. NSOs actively support their country level coordination group to align and integrate all the technical and financial resources from interested partners into the common plan of action developed and implemented at national and regional levels.
52. NSOs work with all stakeholders to integrate vital statistics derived from civil registration into their national strategies for development of statistics.
53. AUC channels the recommendation of the 2010 ministerial conference on civil registration calling for the institutionalization of the Conference of Ministers responsible for civil registration as a permanent forum meeting every two years to review the progress of work in CRVS, to the AU for consideration.
54. ECA reinforce the CRVS Secretariat at the African Centre for Statistics with a suitable staffing complement as recommended in the declaration of the first ministerial conference on civil registration.
55. HMN and WHO continue their support to the regional Medium Term CRVS Plan, specifically in the improvement of causes of death recording and compilation of the statistics and support the next ASSD that will focus on causes of death.

K. On Development Indicators

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

56. **Requests** ECA to develop metadata standards on development indicators and improve the capacity of countries to write proper metadata by exploring the possibility of applying systems such as SDMX. In this regard, ECA should conduct two workshops on the subject at the regional level in collaboration with international agencies and experts.
57. **Calls upon** Countries to provide data and metadata on development indicators including those of MDGs in a systematic and uniform manner to the regional organizations through a much more coordinated and uniform platform.
58. **Welcomes** the participation of UNESCO, UNICEF and FAO to AGDI and encourages other UN agencies, RECs and STCs to express their interest;
59. **Requests** AGSHa to work with the Pan-African organisations to revisit the methodological needs for development of the AGDI and take into consideration other initiatives that are developing similar indicators for socio-economic sectors.

L. On Labour Market Information Systems:

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

60. **Urges** heads of statistical offices to work with national stakeholders to implement the AU Framework for Harmonization and Coordination of LMIS, mobilize resources for those activities, and undertake at least an annual labour force survey starting in 2012 (in countries where it is not yet done). [Provided French version: Recommande aux responsables des Instituts Nationaux de la Statistique (INS) de travailler avec les parties prenantes nationales pour mettre en œuvre la cadre d'harmonisation et de coordination des informations sur le marché du travail de l'Union Africaine, de mobiliser les ressources pour ces activités et, dans les pays qui ne le fait pas encore, de conduire au moins une enquête annuelle sur l'emploi à partir de 2012.]
61. **Calls upon** AUC to convene a meeting of partners to mobilise resources for the implementation of the Action Plan of the Harmonisation of LMIS, establish national frameworks for their coordination, develop training plans and support counties to undertake labour force surveys based on the harmonized framework. [Provided French version: Invite la Commission de l'Union Africaine à organiser une réunion des partenaires pour mobiliser des ressources pour la mise en œuvre du Plan d'Action pour l'harmonisation des Systèmes d'Information sur la Marché du Travail, de mettre en place des cadre nationaux pour faciliter la coordination, de développer des plans de formation et d'appuyer l'organisation des enquêtes sur l'emploi à partir de 2012 sur la base du cadre harmonisé.]

M. On Gender Statistics

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

62. **Endorses** the proposed Africa Programme on Gender Statistics (2012-2016) and requests the Working Group on Gender Statistics to coordinate its implementation.
63. **Requests** the working group to report to the commission at each of its sessions, on the progress in implementing the plan of action.
64. **Approves** the membership of the working group, including proposed countries, as well as all RECs, four STCs, and various other international agencies that are actively engaged in gender statistics, such as UN Women, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNESCO, WHO, UNAIDS, FAO.
65. **Endorses** the proposal that the programme of each year's ASSD include a session on gender statistics.
66. **Endorses** the proposal that gender issues should be reflected in all sessions of the programme, and if necessary to have a separate session on gender statistics.

N. On Data Management

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

67. **Calls upon** ECA to disseminate the handbook to NSOs to enable them decide on data management and dissemination platforms;
68. **Requests** ECA, AfDB, AUC and partners to undertake necessary studies to ensure optimal data flows within the various units of the NSO in particular, and among various components of the national statistical systems in general.

69. **Requests** the Working Group on Data Management to ensure that the role of geo-spatial tools in census and survey undertaking is included in its work, and urge ECA, AfDB, AUC and other partners to support capacity building activities for NSOs.
70. **Encourages** AUC, AfDB, ECA and partners to develop an open-source platform for data management and dissemination which will be collaboratively developed by experts in Africa and partners in statistics and owned by African NSO.

O. On Statistical Training

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

71. **Invite** les centres de formation à poursuivre les efforts pour la formation des statisticiens africains en prenant en compte les orientations d'harmonisation de programme et des diplômes, de mobilité des étudiants et enseignants etc., formulées par AGROST
72. **Encourage** les pays et les partenaires techniques et financiers à soutenir les centres de formation statistique en mettant à leurs dispositions des ressources humaines, matérielles et financières à l'effet de continuer à assurer une formation statistique de qualité.
73. **Requests** STCs, universities and in-service training centres to integrate the content of all prepared handbooks into their existing curricula and/or develop separate courses and/or build separate modules in the existing courses.
74. **Welcomes** the interest expressed by ISI to be part of the Technical and Financial Partners of AGROST.
75. **Calls upon** ISI to:
 - a. *Create* mechanisms for exposing its brain trust to the African institutions of higher learning, research institutes and mentoring young statisticians;
 - b. *Avail* its resources to national statistics offices and academic institutions to strengthen the branch of official statistics; and
 - c. *Continually work* with the continent on code of practice, implementation of the Statistics Charter and underlining principles

P. On Geographical Names

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

76. **Endorse** the Gaborone Action Plan
77. **Calls upon** NSOs to ensure that coding systems are provided in the assignment and standardization of geographical names and advocate the use of such codes whenever data systems are being developed.
78. **Calls upon** ECA, AUC, AfDB and other partners to support the work of the Task Team for Africa in particular and geographical names activities in general.

Q. On Data Collection and Dissemination

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

79. **Endorses** the outcomes of the Experts Group Meeting held in Abidjan in December 2011 on the development of a data collection mechanism for Africa. It therefore calls upon ECA, AfDB, AUC, RECs, IGOs, other regional organizations and international institutions to:
- a. *Establish* a data and metadata sharing mechanism to reduce the response burden to countries,
 - b. *Explore* automatic data exchange mechanisms in general and the use of SDMX in particular for data and metadata exchange,
80. **Requests** AfDB to provide all African countries with data portal and open data platforms, with a view to improve the dissemination of statistical information.
81. **Urges** NSOs to:
- a. *Strengthen* their data collection and dissemination for policy analysis and regional integration in Africa,
 - b. *Share* their data to enhance trade and regional integration analysis and monitoring
 - c. *Provide* information on their data release calendar (e.g. publications, database updates, etc.).