The African Charter on Statistics and the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

Issoufou Seidou
Statistician, ECA
Warm-up

Extract from a speech of a Head of State

“The actions implemented during my mandate have contributed to a significant reduction in poverty. The population living below the poverty line dropped from around 92% to almost 70%.”

The real facts

92% - National poverty line
70% - International poverty line

The two statistics are not comparable!

What do you think?

Case Study 2: Delay in dissemination

The Ministry of Hydraulics, Energy and Mines’ statistical yearbook is produced annually. We are in Y, and the yearbook for year Y-1 is being finalized. The one for year Y-2 is not yet published because the forward of the Minister is not yet signed.

Case Study 3: Data archive lost

Following a political and civil crisis in a country, the NSO was vandalized: computers and servers were stolen or destroyed, and the NSO’s data centre was set on fire. All data stored there is lost.
The Charter’s six principles

1. Professional independence
2. Quality
3. Mandate for data collection and resources
4. Dissemination
5. Protection of individual data, information sources and respondent
6. Coordination and Cooperation
**Principle 1: Professional Independence**

**Scientific Independence**
Methods, concepts and nomenclatures selected without any interference.

**Impartiality**
Produce, analyze, disseminate, and comment in an objective, professional and transparent manner.

**Responsibility**
Employ unambiguous and relevant methods. Make observations on erroneous interpretation and misuse.

**Transparency**
Provide information on sources, methods and procedures used. Statistics legislation made public.
## Principle 2: Quality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relevance</th>
<th>African statistics shall meet the needs of users</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accuracy and reliability</strong></td>
<td>African statistics shall be an accurate and reliable reflection of the reality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timeliness</strong></td>
<td>African statistics shall be disseminated in good time and according to pre-determined calendar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainability</strong></td>
<td>African statistics shall be conserved in as detailed a form as possible to ensure their use by future generations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Continuity</strong></td>
<td>Statistics authorities shall ensure continuity and comparability of statistical information over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topicality</strong></td>
<td>African statistics shall reflect current and topical events and trends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data source</strong></td>
<td>Data used for statistical purposes may be collected from diverse sources: quality, topicality, costs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coherence and comparability</strong></td>
<td>Internally coherent over time and comparison between regions and countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specificities</strong></td>
<td>Statistical data production and analytical methods shall consider African peculiarities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Awareness-building**

Sensitization of the public on the importance of statistics.
Mandate
A clear legal mandate empowering to collect data, Access to data used for statistical purpose

Resource Adequacy
Adequate and stable to resources, primary responsibility of Governments

Cost-effectiveness
Use of resources provided effectively and efficiently
**Principle 4: Dissemination**

**Accessibility**
Concomitant right of access for all users without restriction. Confidentiality maintained for microdata.

**Dialogue with users**
Mechanisms for consultation with users without discrimination in place.

**Clarity and understanding**
Statistics presented in a clear and comprehensible form with metadata and analytical commentaries.

**Correction**
Correct publications containing significant errors using standard statistical practices. Suspend dissemination in various serious cases.

**Simultaneity**
Simultaneous access to all users. Public announcement shall be made when certain authorities receive advance information under embargo.
Principle 5: Protection of individual data, information sources and respondents

**Confidentiality**
Ensure the confidentiality of the information collected and use such information for STRICTLY statistical purposes.

**Objective**
Data concerning individuals or entities collected shall be used EXCLUSIVELY for statistical purposes.

**Giving assurances to Data providers**
Inform interviewees of the objective of interviews and the measures put in place to protect the data provided.

**Rationality**
Embark in a statistical surveys only when pertinent information is unavailable from administrative records, or the quality of such information is inadequate.
Principle 6: Coordination and Cooperation

Coordination and collaboration essential in ensuring quality and harmonious statistical information; vital for harmonization, production and use of African statistics.

Cooperation
Bilateral and multilateral statistics cooperation shall be encouraged to upgrading African statistics production.
UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

1. Relevance, Impartiality, and Professional Standards,
2. Scientific Principles, and Professional Ethic
3. Accountability and Transparency
4. Prevention of Misuse
5. Sources of Official Statistics
6. Confidentiality
7. Legislation
8. National Coordination
9. Use of International Standards
10. International Cooperation
Thank you!

Questions and comments: ngogangwandji@un.org