



National Accounts Workshop for SADC countries

16-19 June 2009, Windhoek, Namibia

Strengthening statistical capacity-building in support of progress
towards the Internationally Agreed Development Goals in the
Southern African Development Community region

Opening of workshop

By

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REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**OPENING SPEECH BY MR. MOCKS SHIVUTE
PERMANENT SECRETARY OF NATIONAL
PLANNING COMMISSION
WORKSHOP NATIONAL ACCOUNT – SADC
REGION,
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**

17 JUNE 2009

SAFARI HOTEL

**Check Against Delivery*

Director of Ceremonies
Mr Herman Smith, UNSD
Representatives from the IMF
Representative from the ADB
Representative from the UNECA
Representative from the SADC Secretariat

Dear participants
Ladies and gentlemen

I am honoured to take this opportunity on behalf of the Government to welcome you all to Namibia. Namibia is indeed honored and takes pride in hosting this very important workshop.

I would like to welcome you all to ^{this} workshop on National Accounting on "Strengthening capacity building in support of progress towards the Internationally Agreed Developments Goals in the SADC region" I am delightful to see senior staff from National Statistical Offices as well as International Offices at this workshop, a clear testimony to the importance that our governments collectively attach to the capacity building in this field.

As you are all aware, various quality assessment of statistical development in Africa have pointed out some shortcomings in the compilation of economic statistics and national accounts in particular in many of our countries. These shortcomings ranged from development of basic data sources to inadequate level of human and financial resources.

As a result of the above, most of our countries are still finding themselves on the first milestone of the 1993 SNA implementation, namely the development of basic data sources, and the compilation of GDP by expenditure and by industry.

I am informed that the intention and objective of this workshop is among others to assess the quality of national accounts data in our respective countries and to provide participants with an opportunity to learn from each other's experiences – in a South to South exchange style.

The usefulness of national accounts can not be overemphasized more so in the context of ongoing economic crisis whose ultimate depth appears unknown to us all.

Ladies and gentlemen, the national accountants are in this respect challenged not only to produce quality data but most importantly timely quarterly estimates, of course along with annual production.

The National Accounts are the centre of macroeconomic analysis and policy-making in ~~in~~ any country. They are used in a broad assortment of applications by a wide range of persons and groups in society. They are a means by which citizens can view and assess the performance of the national economy. The accounts provide both a planning framework for governments and a report card on the results of the plans that governments carry out.

In the case of Namibia, a tradition has been adopted whereby quarterly national accounts estimates have been produced and disseminated since 2002 thanks to the support from the IMF under the auspices of the GDDS phase 1. At the same time, annual estimates are produced twice a year i.e the Preliminary estimates are released in March to support the annual budgetary process and the final estimates are released in August. I must admit, ladies and gentlemen, that the release of these figures do not only support policy but provoke sharp debates around the socio economic development agenda. These debates tend to zero in on the question – are these estimates of good enough quality to be trusted for the various purposes? I am therefore extremely pleased to note that the themes of this workshop evolve around data quality improvement and therefore will promote more trust and use of the national accounts estimates.

Thus ladies and gentlemen, it is reasonable to conclude that at collective regional level our governments should endeavour to avail more resources both human and financial to improve national accounts in terms of statistical capacity. This will ultimately lead to the enhanced quality of statistics i.e better conceptual compliance and improved comparability across countries.

I would like to thank the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) for the organization of this workshop in terms of technical ~~support~~ as well as ~~provision of~~ financial support. I would also like to thank the presenters who are going to make contributions to the success of this workshop.

Ladies and gentlemen, having carefully reviewed the agenda and the program for the coming four days and noting the seniority of the participants, I am confident that you will achieve the objectives you set yourself to achieve.

Finally, permit me to wish you the best deliberations and declare the workshop on National Accounts officially opened

Thank you very much