**African Conference:**

**Transformative Agenda for Official Statistics**

Co-organized by the African Development Bank (AfDB), Statistics Canada and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)

With the support of the African Union (AU), the African Centre for Statistics (ACS), and the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat)

**Libreville, Gabon**

**November 2015**

**Breakout Sessions:**

**Modalities and Questions**

**Modalities for the breakout sessions**

For breakout sessions, participants will be split in 5 groups. These groups remain the same for the 3 breakout sessions (sessions 1, 2 and 4).

The groups are as follows (in bold countries that registered to the Conference as per 18/11/2015):

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group 1** | **Group 2** | **Group 3** | **Group 4** |
| **Botswana** | **Egypt** | **Algeria** | **Benin** |
| Eritrea | **Ethiopia** | **Burkina Faso** | **Chad** |
| **Ghana** | **Gambia** | **Burundi** | **Congo (Brazzaville)** |
| **Lesotho** | **Kenya** | **Cameroon** | Djibouti |
| **Liberia** | **Malawi** | Central African Republic | **Gabon** |
| **Libya** | **Mauritius** | Comoros | **Madagascar** |
| **Nigeria** | **Namibia** | **Cote d'Ivoire** | **Mali** |
| **Rwanda** | **Sierra Leone** | **DRC** | **Morocco** |
| **Somalia** | **South Africa** | Guinea | **Senegal** |
| **Southern Sudan** | **Sudan** | **Mauritania** | **Togo** |
| **Swaziland** | **Uganda** | **Niger** | **Tunisia** |
| **Tanzania** | **Zambia** | **Seychelles** |  |
| **Zimbabwe** |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Group 5** | For each breakout session, groups will have 45 minutes to discuss a specific set of 3 questions prepared in advance (see following pages)  Each group will nominate a rapporteur that will present the outcome and conclusions of the discussions back in plenary sessions.  The rapporteur can be the same for the 3 breakout sessions or different  Delegates from bilateral and multilateral partner organisations and other stakeholders may decide in which group they wish to participate | | |
| **Angola** |
| **Cape Verde** |
| **Equatorial Guinea** |
| Guinea Bissau |
| **Mozambique** |
| **Sao Tome & Principe** |

**For session 3, discussions will take place in plenary (no breakout). Questions and issues to be discussed can also be found below in this document.**

**Questions for the breakout sessions**

**Session 1: Coordination at and between the global, (sub-) regional and national statistical systems; and Communication and advocacy**

**Group 1 Drivers:**

- What are the main drivers for the transformation and modernization of national statistical systems in the framework of the 2063 Agenda, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Africa Data Consensus? Are there differences in the drives and how do to the global drivers differ from the regional and national ones for the African continent?

* Can the response to the drivers be met with a cross cutting programme with a limited but common number of themes on transformation and modernization of statistical systems for the African continent? What would these common cross-cutting themes be for the transformation and modernization of national statistical systems?
* How could these common cross cutting themes be operationalised in existing work programmes and what would be the main objectives, outputs and outcomes of new common cross cutting programmes?

**Group 2 Mechanisms:**

- Which strategic and operational mechanisms and tools, like dedicated regional and national roadmaps for cross cutting themes on transformation and modernization could be put in place to get gradually the Pan-African institutions to lead and coordinate the process of modernisation and integration of statistics efficiently and effectively?

* What are the internal and external factors (i.e. legal, institutional, organisational factors) that could hamper any initiatives for a coordinated implementation of a transformative and modernization agenda for official statistics and the Africa Data Consensus?
* How could current and future National Strategies for the Development of Statistics be revised or even revamped to become catalysts for the transformation and modernization of national statistical systems? Can assessments and reviews be made more effective in stimulating dialogue on the transformation and modernization of the national statistical systems?
* Which additional strategic guidance beyond the NSDSs such as data compacts, data quality assurance frameworks and other operational tools could be developed to support for different maturity levels of national statistical systems the transformation towards standardised institutional arrangements and statistical production processes at and between the regional, sub-regional and national levels?

**Group 3 Partnerships:**

* Who are the stakeholders outside official statistical community that could generate the political commitment for transformation and modernization of national statistical systems based on a common vision, statistical production architecture and related mechanisms. Should there be regional synergies with the World Forum on Sustainable Development Dara and the Global Partnership for Development Data?
* What could the partnership with the data communities, users and other stakeholders offer towards promoting and sustaining the modernisation and integration of statistics?
* What should be the role and responsibility of official statistics towards such partnerships with the broader data community and what is the competitive strength of the official statistical community in this partnership?

**Group 4 Communication and advocacy:**

* How could a targeted communication strategy on the value of and principles for official statistics redress the vicious circle of insufficient funding and dependence on external sources; weak data governance and accountability; lack of timely, accurate, comparable and relevant data; and weak demand and capacity in the use of data for decision making at regional, national and local level?
* What are the key elements and themes to be advanced in the African communication and advocacy strategy for official statistics to promote the transformation and modernization of the national statistics systems?
* What could be the concrete measures in the short and medium term at global, regional and national level to address a communication and advocacy strategy? How could national statistical offices implement a communication strategy taking into account the different levels of maturity?

**Group 5 Role of national statistical offices:**

- How can national statistical offices play a constructive role in in the transformation and modernization of the national statistics systems in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development? How are the broad based 2030 Agenda and Africa Data Consensus translated into operational work plans/ roadmaps?

* What partnership with the data communities, data producers and users and other stakeholders is needed for promoting and sustaining the modernisation and integration of statistics? What are the role, comparative advantage and responsibilities of official statistics towards such partnerships?
* What could be the selection criteria and what should remain the responsibility of official statistics (i.e. quality certification, assessment of compliance against the fundamental principles and methodological standards) in support of the modernization of the national statistical system over the information produced by other producers such as private data producers.

**Session 2: Innovation and modernisation through standard-based statistical business architecture**

**Group 1 Common Statistical Production Architecture:**

- What are the “low hanging fruits” and the challenges in introducing common statistical production architecture for different levels of maturity of the national statistical systems?

* To which extent the experience of advanced national statistical systems can be applied as good practice in the African context and what cannot apply?
* To what extent could the collection, processing and dissemination processes for business, environmental, demographic and social statistics be harmonised and integrated by adopting common statistical production architecture? Can we formulate a common integrated programme for household and business statistics at national level and what is the role of the global and regional statistical system to advance this vision with common survey and IT tools?

**Group 2 Technology transfer:**

- What are/should be the pre-conditions in Africa to implement standard based tools and applications, including IT technology, for assessment, design, collection, processing and dissemination phase in national statistical systems? How could the development of these standard tools be taken up?

* What kind of coordination/cooperation mechanism would be needed to foster integration and modernisation and in particular to develop standard IT architecture and technologies across the continent?
* How can the transfer of technical and managerial skills on modern and innovative data collection, production and dissemination technology and tools be better coordinated at the sub-regional, regional and global level?

**Group 3 Use of administrative data:**

- What is the potential to further develop the use of administrative data for the production of official statistics? Are there some initiatives that could be taken at regional and sub-regional level to standardise, and harmonise administrative data and metadata, transmission protocols and nomenclatures across African countries (e.g. African metadata registers and catalogues)?

* How could be the data communities at regional, sub-regional and national level be mobilised to secure access to administrative information for the production of official statistics and ultimately to promote the open data initiative?
* When it comes to alternative data sources for official statistics what are the challenges in terms of the use of Big Data? What are the specific challenges to Africa?

**Group 4 Relevance and trust:**

- According to the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and quality assurance frameworks, official statistics must be comparable, timely, accurate, relevant and accessible to all. How should statistical systems at all levels and respective production processes be adjusted to deliver information according to these quality criteria (fit-for-purpose) in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 2063 African Agenda?

* How can we engage with third party information (both public and private) while maintaining public trust in Official Statistics without undermining our reputation for independence, objectivity and confidentiality?
* Is there the trade-off between standard-based statistical business architecture at and between the different levels (i.e. global, (sub-) regional and national) and the capacity of the data communities to adapt quickly to the evolving demand for statistical information? In other words could the standards based statistical business architecture in the future be both efficient and effective?

**Group 5 Clouds, data hubs and labs:**

- What are the challenges and opportunities (i.e. institutional, organisational and technical) for the development of “statistical clouds”/data hubs of anonymised micro data addressing the demand from researchers and the international community? Is such a development desirable and what could be other alternatives for improving the sharing and access to micro data.

* Is the access to the internet, web applications, cloud technology and mobile devices sufficient to invest in computer assisted collections, new online national data repository and innovative dissemination technology such social media or mobile applications?
* Is the creation of modern regional data labs for joint development of IT applications and training and capacity building a good instrument for sharing technology for official statistics? Are there other instruments for sharing innovations in support of the production of official statistics at the regional and national level?

**Session 3: Securing foundation for modernization and integrated statistical systems**

**Plenary -** What are the governance and management challenges faced by National Statistics Systems (NSS) and National Statistics Office (NSO) in modernizing official statistics and how can they overcome them?

* How should NSS and NSO adapt to secure governance and management foundations to integrate statistical systems?
* What type of tools and road maps can be adopted or adapted to better achieve statistical integration and ensure that transformation can be managed?
* What are the key elements and themes that should be advanced in the African communication and advocacy strategy to promote the transformation and modernization of the NSS?
* How can international, regional and development partners assist the NSS and NSO in the various building blocks (governance, tools, road maps…) of statistical modernization?

**Session 4: Capacity building and training**

**Group 1 Training and capacity needs and level of maturity:**

- In terms of capacity building what are the most pressing technical, organisation and management training needs in statistics in order to secure the transformation of national statistical systems in Africa?

* Are all proposed institutional and organisational frameworks and tools for the modernisation and integration of statistics equally relevant for all national statistical systems regardless of their “level” of maturity?
* How should the different levels of maturity of national statistical systems allow us to differentiate between the needs for technical capacity building and modes of cooperation?

**Group 2 Role of national statistical offices:**

- What is the role of the national statistical office to ensure technical capacity building and cooperation to be demand driven and nationally owned and to some extent less donor oriented?

* Is it possible to identify statistical domains for which substantial progress has been achieved at the level of the African continent and why this was possible? Would it be possible to apply these successful “recipes” to other statistical domains? How could South-South cooperation promote and contribute to further progress?
* How could technical capacity building and cooperation support a stronger coordination role of the national statistical office within the national statistical system?

**Group 3 Skill profiles of human resources in national statistical offices:**

- Transformation is not only IT driven but mainly relies on human capital. What is the profile of the statistician needed in 10 years?

* Is there a gap in present technical and managerial skills of national statistical offices’ human resources and how to close it (e.g. on the job training, university, professional training)?
* Beside managerial and technical skills, what culture shifts are required within national statistical offices’ human resources to modernize and how can they mobilize their employees to embrace the necessary cultural changes for this modernization?

**Group 4 Partnership in training and capacity building:**

- How could global, (sub-) regional and national partnership with academia and research institutes contribute to the development of training curricula that would provide producers of statistics with highly-qualified and fit-for-purpose manpower?

* What is the role of the African training institutions and South-South collaboration in the job training in advancing technical, organisation and management skills? How can we advance the use of e-learning and other technology driven programmes on the African continent?
* Are there other collaborative approaches among national statistical offices that could be developed to facilitate joint learning?

**Group 5 Allocation of adequate funding for training and capacity building:**

- How would it be possible to convince policy makers to allocate an adequate share of the national budget in order to secure proper funding of statistical activities, including salaries of staff? How could the international community support these initiatives?

* What are the employee benefits/incentives aside competitive market salaries that should be developed in order to retain competent staff within national statistical systems?
* In a world with scarce resources, should national statistical offices consider pooling or outsourcing resources in some key areas? What kind of mechanisms should be put in place for such initiatives and in which areas of competence?