

Editorial

We welcome readers to Volume 4 of the Journal and thank all those readers who sent us comments on Volume 3. This volume has a special focus on the 2005 round of the International Comparison Program (ICP) whose implementation in Africa has been coordinated by the African Development Bank (AfDB). The ICP-Africa program has made a great contribution to capacity building in economic statistics in particular and statistical development in general.

Furthermore, the current volume features a special article relating to African Statistics Day which has been celebrated on 18th November of each year since the 1990s. Readers would recall that African Ministers responsible for Economic Planning and Development adopted the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa (AAPA) in the 1990s in an effort to reverse the decline in statistical production in Africa. The Plan set aside the 18th of November as *African Statistics Day* to be celebrated each year in order to “*increase public awareness about the important role statistics play in all aspects of social and economic life*”. In the past, celebrations of this day have by and large been intermittent and generally unsatisfactory. However, 2006 witnessed an upsurge in activities to mark African Statistics Day. We are publishing a paper on these celebrations and lessons learnt.

A key high point in the first half of 2007 has been the second Africa Symposium on Statistical Development which was successfully held in Kigali, Rwanda in January 2007. The symposium was officially opened by His Excellency Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, who shared his thoughts on the importance of statistics as a basis for effective policy-making in Africa. With permission of the symposium organizers, we are publishing the speech.

The 2007 ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development held in Addis Ababa from 2-3 April, 2007 provided yet another high point for statistical advocacy. The first ICP results were disseminated at the scientific meetings of the conference and the Ministers reaffirmed their strong support for building statistical capacity in Africa. The Ministerial Resolutions are published in this volume for general information.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission for raising the profile of statistics at the Commission by upgrading the statistics function into a fully fledged Research and Statistics Department.

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