

African Statistical Coordination Meeting

Tunis, Tunisia, September 23-25, 2007
Venue: Abou Nawas Tunis Hotel

COMMUNIQUE

Preamble

Representatives of the African Development Bank (AfDB), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), as well as the Statistician General of Statistics South Africa and the Director General of the National Bureau of Statistics of Nigeria met in Tunis, Tunisia, from 23 to 25 September, 2007 to discuss the coordination of statistical capacity building work in Africa. The meeting was a follow-up of the one held on 4 to 6 September, 2006 in Tunis and whose outcome was incorporated into a cooperation Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Chief Executives of AfDB and ECA.

The objective of this second meeting was to discuss mechanisms for achieving greater synergy between regional institutions, and for coordinating statistical programs and activities within the Regional Reference Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa (RRSF), with a view to enhancing and sustaining the effectiveness of statistical support to African countries. The specific objectives of the meeting were: (i) focus on statistical capacity building; (ii) exchange information on activities in statistical development in Africa; (iii) reach consensus on coordination and mechanisms for achieving synergy between the regional institutions as well as with statistical offices of member countries, with a view to harmonizing statistical databases, improving African statistics and making them more relevant to development policy design and monitoring.

Proceedings

The meeting reaffirmed the need to undertake statistical capacity building activities in Africa within the RRSF.

- 1 Regional Reference Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa (RRSF)** It was noted that little progress has been achieved in terms of coordination of the RRSF implementation because the two coordinating institutions were undergoing institutional reforms. However, individual organisations were able to undertake some of the agreed activities on their own.

To enhance coordination, it was agreed that a working group on the setting up the RRSF coordination mechanisms led by ECA be set up as follows:

- 1.1 Objective: To operationalize the RRSF coordination
- 1.2 Expected outputs/results: A functional structure for the coordination of the RRSF in place
- 1.3 Tasks :
 - Nominate the coordinators at the regional level (AfDB, ECA, AUC, ACBF)
 - Nominate the coordinators at the sub-regional level
 - Nominate the coordinators at the national level
 - Establish an RRSF coordination secretariat at ECA
 - Prepare reporting format and propose monitoring tools (including an African statistical development index (ASDI)) and design advocacy plan around the RRSF
- 1.4 Verifiable indicators/Timeframe:
 - Regional coordinators appointed by 6 October, 2007
 - Sub-regional coordinators appointed by 15 January, 2008
 - National coordinators appointed by 15 January, 2008
 - RRSF coordination secretariat established at ECA by 6 October, 2007
 - Reports on RRSF reporting delivered by 15 January, 2007
 - Reports on the ASDI:
 - Progress report delivered by 15 January, 2008
 - First draft consultancy report on the ASDI delivered by 15 May, 2008
 - Final consultancy report on the ASDI delivered by July 15, 2008
 - Plan on advocacy around the RRSF by March 2008

- 2 National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS)** Some progress has been achieved in terms of designing or updating NSDS in African countries with the assistance of some regional institutions.

The meeting urged African countries which have not designed their NSDS or updated their statistical plans to do so following the NSDS principles developed by PARIS21 as well as guidelines formulated by the African Development Bank, PARIS21 and Intersect on mainstreaming sectoral statistics in the NSDS.

It was agreed that a working group on NSDS design and implementation be set up and led by AfDB as follows:

- 2.1 Objective: To increase the pace and rate of NSDS design and implementation in African countries
- 2.2 Expected outputs/results: NSDS designed and being implemented
- 2.3 Tasks :
 - Follow-up on reporting on the status of NSDS design and implementation
 - Determine the desired implementation pace and rate
 - Present best practices on mainstreaming sectors into the NSDS design process at the meeting of the African Symposium on Statistical Development (ASSD) in December 2007.
- 2.4 Verifiable indicators/Timeframe:
 - Presentations made at the Meeting of the 2007ASSD
 - Status report of NSDS designing and implementation finalized by March, 2008

3 Support to fragile States It was agreed that a working group on designing a statistical strategy and framework for supporting statistical development in fragile states and led by AfDB be set up.

- 3.1 Objective: To build/enhance statistical capacity
- 3.2 Expected outputs/results: concept note by 15 January, 2008, statistical strategy by 15 March, 2008 and framework by June, 2008

4 ICP-Africa The meeting noted with appreciation the progress made in the implementation of the ICP Africa programme which is coordinated by AfDB. However, the meeting underscored the need for better packaging and dissemination of the results from the programme in order to optimize their policy usefulness.

5 Statistical Capacity Building – Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA) The meeting received and discussed a draft document on Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA). It was agreed that a consultancy service for the preparation of a comprehensive programme document on statistical training in Africa led by ECA/ACBF be procured as follows:

5.1 Objective: to enhance Human Resources development in statistics and in related areas

5.2 Expected outputs/results:

- programme document by March, 2008;
- establish an African task team on statistical training and human resources by December, 2007
- detailed proposal on the promotion of African statistical expertise by May, 2008

The meeting urged the PARIS21 Task Team on Training and Human Resources to join this regional initiative.

6 Making the African Statistics Charter effective The meeting acknowledged the desire of the AUC to play a greater role in statistical development in the context of the RRSF. In particular, it was appreciative of the initiative taken by the AUC to design, with regional partners, the African Charter on Statistics.

It was agreed that a consultancy assignment for the preparation of a comprehensive implementation plan for the Charter led by AUC be set up as follows:

6.1 Objective: to prepare an implementation plan for the Charter

6.2 Expected output/result: Implementation plan and Programme document by March, 2008

7 Measuring and Fostering Progress of African Societies The meeting agreed that the four institutions - AU, ACBF, ECA and AfDB) - jointly organize a forum every two years bringing together statisticians and other experts involved in analysing the dynamics of African societies, and undertake related studies. AfDB was to take the lead.

- 7.1 Objective: improve the measurement of the progress of African societies
- 7.2 Expected outputs/results: detailed programme by May, 2008

8 Statistical Associations The meeting acknowledged with appreciation the ongoing work by ACBF on the revival of the African Statistical Association. However, the meeting also noted the need to revive/create National Statistical Associations. It was therefore agreed that a working group on Statistical Associations in Africa (national and regional) led by ECA and ACBF be set up as follows:

- 8.1 Objective: To create fora for exchange of information and best practices in the statistical profession
- 8.2 Expected outputs/results: well functioning statistical associations; Prepare ToR and by-laws of the African Statistical Association by March, 2008; Establish the Association by 18 November, 2008

9 African Statistical Journal The meeting commended the AfDB for funding the production and distribution of the African Statistical Journal. A mechanism should be put in place to get more articles from Francophone Africa and improve the journal distribution.

10 African Statistical Newsletter The meeting commended the ECA for the initiative to launch the African Statistical Newsletter to facilitate the exchange of information and best practices on statistical development in Africa. It is expected that the first issue will be released by December 2007.

11 African Statistical Award Programme It was agreed that consultancy services for the preparation of a detailed proposal on the African Statistical Award programme led by AfDB/AUC be procured as follows:

- 11.1 Objectives: to promote excellence and innovation in statistical practice
- 11.2 Expected outputs/results: detailed proposal by April, 2008

12 Third African Symposium on Statistical Development (ASSD) The meeting received a brief on the history and purpose of the symposium. It was reported that the first meeting was held in Cape

Town (South Africa), the second in Kigali (Rwanda) and that the third ASSD meeting will be held in Accra, Ghana, in December, 2007.

13 The 2009 International Statistical Institute (ISI) Conference: Durban, South Africa The meeting took note of the effort made by the Republic of South Africa to host the 57th ISI session in 2009 and congratulated the South African Government for having put up a successful bid to host the session. It was agreed that South Africa be fully supported in the preparation of the session and that every thing possible should be done to ensure maximum participation of African countries in the session.

14 STATCOM–Africa The meeting welcomed the formation of the Statistical Commission for Africa (STATCOM-Africa) and set up a working group to finalize arrangement of a paper on the functions and organization of STATCOM Africa meetings as follows:

14.1 Objectives: To enhance statistical capacity building

14.2 Expected outputs/results: successful STATCOM meetings, starting with the one to be held in January 2008; Consolidated paper by October 15, 2007.

15 Statistical Development in AUC The meeting acknowledged the desire of the AUC to play a greater role in statistical development in the context of RRSF. The meeting called upon the AUC to consider the establishment of a department of statistics in its ongoing restructuring process.

16 Statistical Development in Regional Economic Communities (RECs) The Meeting noted with concern the state of statistics in some of the RECs and recommended that specific actions to be taken as follows:

16.1 Objective: to enhance statistical capacity of RECs

16.2 Expected outputs/results: efficient Statistical Units in the RECs

16.3 Tasks:

- AfDB, AU and ECA directors in charge of statistics to undertake an assessment mission to selected RECs, starting with the SADC Secretariat
- The three institutions to communicate to the Executive Secretary (ES) of the SADC the outcomes of the assessment by the end of March 2008

17 African Statistical Coordination Committee It was agreed that a working group on the finalization of a paper on ASCC led by ECA be set up as follows:

17.1 Objective: To put in place mechanism for the coordination of statistical activities in Africa

17.2 Expected outputs/results: Detailed ToRs of the ASCC by January 2008

18 Joint African Statistical databases and publications In order to minimize duplication of effort and dissemination of conflicting data on African countries, it was agreed that a working group on databases and joint statistical publications led by AfDB/ECA be set up as follows:

18.1 Objectives: To harmonize regional statistical databases and publications

18.2 Expected outputs/results: joint publications and harmonized databases at regional level starting in 2008

19 Consolidated African Statistical programme It was agreed that a working group on the preparation of African statistical programme led by AfDB be set up.

19.1 Objectives: To achieve better coordination and synergy

19.2 Expected outputs/results:

- Concept note
- Template for regional statistical programme by June, 2008
- Draft of the first consolidated programme
- Draft of the second consolidated programme by July, 2008
- Note on the preparation of a calendar of statistical events by July, 2008

20 Reporting and working arrangements The Meeting agreed that all working groups/Task Teams above should report to the African Statistical Coordination Committee (ASCC) on progress made. The principals in this coordination arrangement will mobilize necessary resources to undertake identified activities.

Whenever necessary, consultancy services will be used to undertake some of the tasks of the working groups.

21 Other coordination issues The meeting received a brief on the 10th Meeting of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities held in Madrid, Spain on 10 and 11 September, 2007. This Committee brings together key players in statistical development in the global statistical system to discuss coordination and related issues. The meeting noted with appreciation the decision of the Committee to hold its next autumn meeting in Africa for the first time. It also appreciated the decision of the Committee to give the newly established Statistical Commission for Africa (Statcom-Africa) a slot to present a paper on statistical development in Africa at the UN Statistical Commission.



Prof. Ben Kiregyera sensitizing Her Excellency Ms. Uisa Dias Diogo, The Honourable Prime Minister of Mozambique during a review of the Scandinavian Programme support to the National Statistics Institute (INE) and the Draft Statistical Plan in May 2007. In attendance was Dr. Joao Dias Loreiro, President of INE.