

Editorial

During the past six months, different events and activities have contributed towards raising the profile of statistics in Africa. First, several meetings on national accounts were organized during this period. An international conference on the “International Outreach and Coordination in National Accounts for Sustainable Growth and Development” was organized in Luxembourg from May 6-8, 2008 with the objective of facilitating the outreach of the System of National Accounts (SNA) and international coordination to improve implementation of harmonized methodologies. The African Development Bank (AfDB) as a co-organizer of the conference ensured that the African voice was heard by assisting several African countries to be represented at the conference. A paper is published in this volume, proposing a framework for establishing an effective coordination mechanism among development partners for support to the compilation of national accounts in Africa. After its first meeting in Lusaka, Zambia in April 2008, the African Group on National Accounts (AGNA) established under the Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa) held a second meeting in Tunis, Tunisia from July 2-4, 2008 to prepare a strategy for the implementation of the revised SNA in Africa. The strategy is in its conceptualization phase and will cover the period 2009-2013. The proceedings of the second AGNA meeting are published in this volume.

Second, the African Development Bank hosted a series of meetings in Tunis, from September 9-12, 2008 on coordination of statistical activities at the global level as well as within Africa. The 12th session of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) brought together all UN Agencies, The World Bank, IMF, bilateral agencies and regional and subregional organizations involved in the development of statistics in the world. This was the first time the CCSA had met in Africa. The CCSA meeting was preceded by the third meeting of the African Statistical Coordination Committee (ASCC) which was attended by representatives from the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), the AfDB, AFRISTAT, the African Union Commission (AUC), and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) as well as the Statistician General of South Africa and the Advisor to the Director General of the National Statistical Institute of Niger. The two meetings offered an opportunity for improving synergies among the various activities

being carried out by international and regional organizations, and hence for increasing efficiency and cost effectiveness in the delivery of statistical capacity building assistance to countries for improved development results measurement, MDG monitoring and reporting. The Communiqué on the third ASCC meeting is included in this edition.

This volume presents different themes on statistical capacity building in Africa. It includes a paper on mainstreaming sectoral statistical systems into the National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS). The paper describes a framework aimed at more effectively incorporating sector issues in national statistical systems. One of the papers presents a Partnership Model for the implementation of regional statistical programs based on the ICP-Africa program implementation experience. Fundamental partnership principles, which are the pillars of creating synergy among the collaborating institutions and ensuring the sustainability of the whole partnership process, are presented.

Another paper presents selected measures aimed at addressing the challenges facing African countries in the production and use of gender-sensitive information in support of their development efforts. The paper highlights some aspects of engendering statistical processes and underlines ongoing efforts by African stakeholders in this respect. A paper on improving rural and agricultural statistics focuses on the selection of indicators using the logical framework. Two other papers on statistical capacity building address issues relating to (i) training young statisticians for the development of statistics in Africa and (ii) strengths, weaknesses, and options for improving the World Bank's framework for statistical capacity measurement. Another technical paper presents a methodology being developed for computing a progress composite MDG Index.

Finally, South Africa will host the 57th Session of the International Statistical Institute (ISI) in August 2009. On this occasion, the world's leading statisticians will convene to share knowledge, debate and ponder on advancements made and challenges faced in the global statistical arena. The 57th Session of the ISI promises to be a memorable conference; not only for its smooth execution, but for the far-reaching consequences it will have in terms of changing how Africa features in the international statistical

community. This volume includes information on the preparations and organization of the 57th Session of the ISI. We encourage our readers to make plans to attend this important event in large numbers.

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