

Editorial

Africa has been making steady progress in statistical development and this has been boosted by recent significant initiatives. First, the African Charter on Statistics was adopted by the 12th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 3rd February 2009. As highlighted by the African Union Commission (AUC) Chairman, *the African Charter on Statistics "will serve not only as a legal instrument to regulate statistical activity but also as a tool for advocacy and the development of statistics in Africa. ... It stands as a code of professional ethics and best practices for the exercise of the profession of statistician in Africa. ... The Charter also beckons African policy makers to base the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of policies on facts observed. Statistics should be considered as an essential public asset in any decision-making process."* The full text of the Charter is published in this volume.

Second, the African Development Bank (AfDB) Board of Directors on 25 November 2008 approved about US\$37 million for the Bank's Phase II program aimed at supporting statistical capacity building activities in African countries over the next 2 years (2009-2010). Additional contributions will be provided by other development partners such as the U.K's Department for International Development (DFID), African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) and the Islamic Development Bank. The AfDB's first Phase program was implemented during 2004-2007 at a cost of about US\$ 36 million.

Third, in collaboration with the Angolan authorities, the AfDB, UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), and Statistics South Africa organized the 4th African Symposium for Statistical Development (ASSD-4) which was held in Luanda, Angola from 9-13 February, 2009. The theme of the Symposium was "*Processing Census Data in the Africa 2010 Round of Population and Housing Census*". The Symposium brought together census statisticians, Directors of National Statistical Offices from 52 African countries, and representatives of UN agencies, the World Bank, IMF, PARIS21 and bilateral donors to discuss statistical development issues in Africa and to assist African countries to prepare for the 2010 Population and Housing Census round. The symposium was opened by The Right Honorable Prime Minister of the Republic of Angola Mr Antonio Paulo Kassoma. Other keynote speakers were the Angolan Minister of Planning, Ms Ana Dias Lourenco, UNECA Deputy Executive Secretary, Ms Lalla Ben Barka and the Chief Economist of the AfDB, Dr Louis Kasekende. The 4th ASSD resolutions are also published in this volume.

Fourth, the International Labor Organization (ILO) in collaboration with the AfDB organized the 18th International Conference of Labor Statisticians in Geneva from 24th November to 5th December 2008. The main objective of the conference was to discuss and adopt international standards in the field of labor statistics and provide guidelines for future work. Very important resolutions were made concerning: the measurement of working time, child labour statistics, measures of labour underutilisation, measurement of decent work, statistics of the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment. These resolutions are published in this Journal.

Fifth, in the framework of the Phase II Statistical Capacity Building Program, the AfDB organized a Regional Workshop in Tunis, Tunisia from February 16-19, 2009 to discuss the program of activities of the International Comparison Program for Africa (ICP-Africa) to be conducted in 2009 and the preparations for the 2011 global ICP round. The workshop brought together price statistics and national accounts experts from 50 participating countries.

Five papers have been selected for this volume of the Journal. The first paper explains the importance of demographic factors in accelerating Africa's development agenda. The second paper presents the Ugandan experience in integrating the qualitative dimensions of poverty in household surveys by combining participatory approaches with statistical principles. The third paper proposes an approach for preparing a strategic report on ways and means to organize an effective African contribution to international statistical forums. The voice of Africa is particularly weak in the international conferences and working-groups that deal with the development of statistical methods and standards. It has now to be heard. The fourth paper discusses statistical and practical issues in relation to the use of hand-held computers for the collection of price data for the compilation of Consumer Price Indices (CPI). The fifth paper explores a method which attempts to process open-ended items using character functions built into statistical software.

Finally, we remind our readers that South Africa will host the 57th Session of the International Statistical Institute (ISI) in August 2009 and encourage everyone to make plans to attend this important event. We count on you to ensure that Africa is represented in large numbers at ISI 2009.

Dr. Charles Leyeka Lufumpa
Co-Chair, Editorial Board
Director, Statistics Department
African Development Bank Group
Tunis, Tunisia
Email: c.lufumpa@afdb.org

Professor Ben Kiregyera
Co-Chair, Editorial Board
Director, African Center for Statistics
Economic Commission for Africa
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Email: bkiregyera@uneca.org