

**First meeting of the Sub-Committee on Statistics
Committee on Development Information**

R E P O R T

**Economic Commission for Africa
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
28 June-1 July 1999**

Sub-committee on Statistics

1. The CODI Sub-committee on Statistics met at the Headquarters of the Economic Commission for Africa, Addis Ababa, from 29 June to 1 July 1999.
2. The session was attended by the representatives of the following member States of the Commission: Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia. The Gambia, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Swaziland, Uganda and Zimbabwe.
3. The following member State, of the United Nations was represented by observers: Italy.
4. Observers from the following agencies attended the meeting: African Development Bank (ADB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), Institute of Statistics and Applied Economic (ISAE), Makerere University, Uganda, World Bank, Observatoire Economique et Statistique d'Afrique Subsaharienne (AFRISTAT), Eastern Africa Statistical Training Centre (EASTC), Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS), Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT), Statistics Sweden, United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), US Bureau of the Census, International Programmes Centre (IPC), United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), and United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD).

Election of Officers and Organization of Work (Agenda item 7.1)

5. The meeting elected the following bureau:

Chairperson	:	Uganda: Mr. J.W. Mubiru
Vice Chairperson	:	Republic of Congo: Mr. Marcellin Lebela
Rapporteur	:	Swaziland: Mr. D.M. Lukhele
6. The meeting decided (a) to receive the report of the CASD Task Force on the Evaluation of the Implementation and future of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s and (b) consider further, the plenary session panel presentations on statistical development in Africa under any other business.

The Addis Ababa Plan of Action of Statistical Development in Africa (Agenda item 7.2)

(a) Implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action

7. The Sub-committee considered this agenda item and had before it the following documents:
 - a) Implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development (E/ECA/DISD/CODI.1/15);
 - b) Progress report on the Coordinating Committee on African Statistical Development (CASD) (E/ECA/DISD/CODI.1/16) and Report of the 9th CASD meeting of the Coordinating Committee of CASD, E/ECA/DISD/CODI.1/33).

Actions taken by the Sub-committee

8. The Sub-committee:
 - (a) took note of (i) the results of surveys conducted by ECA, during 1997-1998 under the task force "Monitoring the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action" of the Coordinating Committee on the African Statistical Development (CASD) and efforts made in the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action at national, subregional, regional

and the global level; and (ii) the achievements made in the implementation of the Plan of Action at those levels;

- (b) noted also the recommendations which were not achieved in the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action as listed in the document;
- (c) considered that issues of data quality were beyond the mere consideration of the technical aspects of accuracy, reliability, relevance and timeliness, which data producers regularly addressed and noted that data quality could be affected if users and data suppliers were not adequately involved or sensitized.
- (d) recognized that in considering the terms of reference of the CODI, there was need to discuss the role of users of information;
- (e) noted that demand for data by users at the lower level of administrative unit should be addressed since it requires additional human and financial resources.
- (f) recommended that : (i) other sub-regional organizations in Africa such as AFRISTAT, ECOWAS, SADC, COMESA, etc. should be included in the coordination, by ECA, of technical cooperation in the field of statistics; (ii) ECA or other organizations including African countries should identify and disseminate precise and concrete examples of coordination mechanisms such as national statistical councils, users/producer committees, etc; (iii) ECA should sensitize African governments, at the highest level (ministerial level), on the importance of statistics for policy, planning and research purposes;
- (g) recommended further that: (i) African governments should incorporate statistical components in programmes/projects as was observed to be the case in some international agencies; (ii) a study of legislation for statistical services of all African countries should be made to enable a prototype to be developed which countries could review in the preparation of their statistical legislations;
- (h) urged the donor agencies to continue to participate in CASD which has still an important role to play in African statistical development and to support the participation of African countries to the meetings of the CASD;
- (i) emphasized the relevance of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action in the year 2000 and beyond and that any new plan to guide statistical development should take into account emerging issues, challenges and problems affecting the functioning of the national statistical service, establishment of autonomy or semi-autonomy in the organization of the national statistical services, etc.
- (j) called upon ECA to address requirements such as the legal framework which would assist in the achievement of the Plan's objectives;
- (k) recommended that themes for the celebration of African statistics Day be chosen from areas which had not been achieved in the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action to enable sensitization of the African governments and users of information and called upon the secretariat to communicate themes in good time to enable adequate preparation for the celebration of the Day;
- (b) Progress report on the Coordinating Committee on African Statistical Development and report of the 9th CASD meeting

Actions taken by the Sub-committee

9. The Sub-committee:

- (a) Took note of: (i) the changing structure and membership of CASD during the period 1992-1999; (ii) the activities and achievements of the committee; and (iii) the summary of conclusions and recommendations of the ninth meetings of CASD, which took place in Addis Ababa from 24-25 June 1999;
- (b) Welcomed the role played by donors in the work of the Committee both in the provision of technical support and funding the participation of CASD members at its annual meetings and:
 - (i) observed the lack of commitment on the part of African Directors of Statistics in their participation at annual meetings of CASD and at the CODI Sub-committee on statistics;
 - (ii) requested the secretariat to examine how attendance at the CODI Sub-committee on Statistics could be improved by examining, the model of the UN Statistical Commission where membership was limited to 24, with the UN paying the travel of those members;
 - (iii) endorsed the evaluation of the CASD as a component of the evaluation on the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action.
 - (iv) decided to recommend the continuation of the work of CASD through the proposed statistics working group of CODI.

Implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts (1993 SNA) in Africa (Agenda item 7.3)

10. The Sub-committee considered this agenda item and had before it the following documents:

- (a) Implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts
 - Progress report on the implementation of the 1993 System of national Accounts in Africa (E/ECA/DISD/CODI.1/17)
 - AFRISTAT Program in National Accounts (E/ECA/DISD/CODI.1/44)
- (b) Report on a survey on the use of micro-computers and specialized software for compiling national accounts in Africa (E/ECA/DISD/CODI.1/18)

(a) Implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts

Actions taken by the Sub-committee

11. The Sub-committee:

- (a) took note of the unsatisfactory progress in the implementation of the 1993 SNA in Africa;
- (b) further took note of the AFRISTAT programme in National Accounts;
- (c) Considered that National Accounts are an essential tool for policy formulation, planning, monitoring and evaluation of economic performance at the national level, as well as for the promotion of regional and sub-regional integration and:

- (i) urged African Governments to give the implementation of the 1993 SNA the required attention on a sustainable basis, by taking the appropriate steps in this context and ensuring that these tie in with pertinent medium and long-term strategies;
 - (ii) further urged ECA to continue providing technical assistance to the countries of the region in the preparation of project documents as well in national accounts compilation, within the framework of the 1993 SNA;
 - (iii) requested ECA to draw the attention of the Conference of Ministers to the importance of implementing the 1993 SNA;
 - (iv) requested bilateral and multilateral cooperation agencies to launch a five-year multifaceted and coordinated regional assistance programme for the implementation of the 1993 SNA, with emphasis on the compilation of institutional sector accounts.
 - (v) encouraged (AFRISTAT) to continue providing technical assistance to its member States in national accounts compilation within the framework of the 1993 SNA as well as on improving basic economic statistics.
- (b) Report of a survey on the use of microcomputers and specialized software for compiling national accounts in Africa

Actions taken by the Sub-committee

- (a) recalled the recommendations of the Conference of African Planners, Statisticians, Population and Information Specialists regarding statistical development in Africa and the need for producing timely and accurate national accounts;
- (b) took note of the role of microcomputers in National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and the diversity of the statistical packages available for compiling national accounts in Africa;
- (c) recommended the adoption of compatible standards and the intensification of the computerization of national accounts and other statistical activities.

Status report on integrated household survey programmes in Africa since the 1980s (Agenda item 7.4)

12. The Sub-Committee considered this agenda item and had before it the following document:

Status report on integrated household survey programmes in Africa since the 1980s (E/ECA/DISD/CODI.1/19)

Actions taken by the Sub-committee

13. The Sub-committee:

- (a) noted that the strategy for strengthening integrated household survey programmes in African countries should take into account the need:
 - (i) to focus on a core programme of surveys as identified by the countries in the context of their respective national needs and priorities for household survey data;
 - (ii) to consider the scope of core programmes essentially in context of household income and expenditure, labour force, agriculture production and inter-census demographic surveys;

- (iii) for core programmes to be conceived modestly such that the core programmes can be implemented through national resources;
 - (iv) to review some of the established and accepted conventions on scope and content of the core programmes and the role of population based master samples, the deployment of permanent survey teams of enumerators of data, etc.
- (b) expressed awareness that the concept of integration in a system of household survey programmes was not yet well understood by many countries;
- (c) recognized the need for technical assistance to further country level capabilities especially in data processing and dissemination, particularly by enhancing the analytical capability of the CSOs; and, the need to promote south-south cooperation and technical assistance among African countries and to review institutional arrangements for the provision of such assistance;
- (d) recommended the convening of an intergovernmental working group of experts that would address the issues affecting the successful implementation of integrated household surveys and establish a strategy for revitalising and strengthening integrated household survey programmes in African countries.

Institutional capacity building (Agenda item 7.5)

14. The Sub-committee considered this agenda item and had before it the following document:

Report on statistical training in Africa: The Statistical Training programme for Africa, its evaluation and the future (E/ECA/DISD/CODI.1/20)

Actions taken by the sub-committee

15. The Sub-committee:
- (a) considered the status of statistical training in Africa;
 - (b) took note of the important role played by the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA) Centres;
 - (c) welcomed the recent establishment of the Joint ADB/IMF/ World Bank training institute in Abidjan as a useful addition to the capacity to train statisticians in Africa;
 - (d) expressed its awareness that universities in Africa and abroad were contributing to the supply of statisticians;
 - (e) recognized the increasing need for statisticians at all levels, both for the public and private sectors and the problems faced by the training centres;
 - (f) endorsed the recommendations for strengthening statistical training contained at paragraphs 242 to 244 of the Report on Statistical Training in Africa: The Statistical Training Programme for Africa, its evaluation and the future.

Review of the terms of reference of CODI (Agenda item 7.6)

16. The Sub-committee considered this agenda item and had before it the following document:

Review of the Terms of Reference of the committee on Development Information (CODI) (E/ECA/DISD/CODI.1/24)

Actions taken by the Sub-committee

17. The Sub-committee:
- (a) reviewed the proposed terms of reference which provide further elaboration and details to better focus the work of CODI;
 - (b) suggested that the paragraph 3 be amended to read:
“States, not members of the Commission, inter-governmental organizations, academic institutions and research centers, agencies of the UN, non-governmental organizations and users shall be invited to the meetings of CODI and its sub-committees”.
 - (c) suggested that paragraph 18 be deleted;
 - (d) recommended the terms of reference of CODI proposed in the document E/ECA/DISD/CODI.1/24 for approval as amended.

ECA statistical activities and Programmes of Work (Agenda 7.7(a))

18. The Sub-committee considered this agenda item and had before it the following documents:
- (a) Report on ECA statistical activities for the period April 1996 to May 1999 (E/ECA/DISD/CODI.1/21)
 - (b) Summary of the recommendations of ECA workshops (E/ECA/DISD/CODI.1/22)
 - (c) Programme of work in the area of statistics for the biennium 2000-2001 (E/ECA/DISD/CODI.1/28)

- (a) Report on ECA statistical activities for the period April 1996 to May 1999

Actions taken by the sub-committee

19. The Sub-committee:
- (a) took note of the reports on ECA statistical activities.
 - (b) Summary of the recommendations of ECA workshops.
20. The Sub-committee:
- (a) considered the recommendations of the eight workshops organized by ECA during the period April 1996 to May 1999;
 - (b) expressed its doubt on the implementation of the integrated economic and environmental accounting in the near future;
 - (c) welcomed the information on the ongoing work undertaken by the Inter-agency task force on finance statistics chaired by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) concerning the external debt management leading to the publication of a “Guide for users and producers of external debt statistics” as well as work on the manual on Government Finance Statistics consistent with the 1993 System of National Accounts (1993 SNA);

- (d) endorsed the recommendations of the eight workshops on National accounts statistics, Services in the informal sector, Environment statistics, indicators and accounting and Improving the quality of African statistics contained in the document E/ECA/DISD/CODI.1/22.

(c) Programme of work in the area of statistics for the biennium 2000-2001

21. The Sub-committee considered this agenda item and had before it the following document:

The General Data Dissemination System (GDDS) (E/ECA/DISD/CODI.1/28)

Actions taken by the Sub-committee

22. The Sub-committee

- (a) examined the programme of work and priorities of ECA in the area of Statistics for the biennium 2000-2001;
- (b) considered that this programme of work is not only appropriate, but also germane to the concerns and requirements of ECA member States;
- (c) noted that the budgetary provisions of the United Nations may not be sufficient to carry out this programme of work fully;
- (d) urged bilateral and multilateral partners to support the programme with appropriate financial resources to help make it a success, and to help with ECA's activities in the area of statistical development.

General Data Dissemination System(Agenda item 7.8)

22. The Sub-committee considered this agenda item and had before it the following document:

- (a) Measurement, collection and compilation of HIV/AIDS statistics (E/ECA/DISD/CODI.1/29)
- (b) Poverty statistics in Africa (E/ECA/DISD/CODI.1/45)
- (c) Africa: Demographic, environmental and agricultural indicators (E/ECA/DISD/CODI.1/26)
- (d) Some guiding principles for good practices in technical cooperation for statistics (E/ECA/DISD/CODI.1/27)

Actions taken by the Sub-committee

23. The Sub-committee,

- (a) considered the critical situation of data quality and timeliness in Africa;
- (b) took into account the need of having tools, which can improve data quality and rationalize and prioritize statistical activities;
- (c) took into account also the need to provide to decision makers, development partners, other users and donors with accurate, coherent and timely data;

- (d) noted the report of the IMF on the General Data Dissemination System (GDDS) as well as the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS);
- (e) noted with appreciation the four dimensions of the GDDS, namely quality, access, integrity and data, and the impact they will have in promoting statistical development;
- (f) noted also that the financial and technical assistance from the IMF, the World Bank, and other donors would be helpful to reinforce statistical capacities in carrying out the different tasks required by the GDDS and the SDDS;
- (g) encouraged the member States to subscribe to the System;
- (h) urged the IMF to take into account the different situations in the subscribing countries in their fixing advance release calendars;
- (i) urged also the IMF to include National Statistical Offices in its contacts with the national authorities on statistical matters;
- (j) urged further that the IMF, in its contacts with the highest policy makers in member countries, to emphasize the importance of statistics with a view to generating domestic support and resources for national statistical offices.

Other selected issues (Agenda item 7.9)

(a) Measurement, collection and compilation of HIV/AIDS statistics

24. The Sub-committee:

- (a) recalled the resolution adopted by the ECA Conference of Ministers at its meeting in May 1999 which called upon the Executive Secretary of ECA to work closely with UNAIDS and any other institutions to gather, analyse, and disseminate data on the economic impact of HIV/AIDS to facilitate policy development and programme planning;
- (b) noted the need for monitoring the incidence of HIV/AIDS, estimation of adult mortality and increasing demand of data on the social and economic impact of HIV/AIDS and the demand for high quality data in this field.
- (c) noted also the efforts of the UN Statistics Division and the US Bureau of the Census in monitoring the incidence and prevalence of HIV/AIDS and development methodologies;
- (d) took note of the data being reported widely on the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, the sources of data and projection models being used by organizations;
- (e) expressed concern with the need to ensure that the data is reported widely on the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, the sources of data and projection models being used by organizations;
- (f) recognized the major effects of HIV/AIDS on the population dynamics of the countries including population decreases, reduction in the rate of population growth, reduction in the life expectancy at birth, and increase in infant and child mortality;
- (g) recognized further the erosion of the development gains of the past decades of many African countries which had resulted from HIV/AIDS pandemic;
- (h) appreciated the efforts made by UNICEF in convening a meeting of Directors of Statistics in Sub-Saharan Africa on Multiple Indicator Cluster Modules-Aids and the inclusion, for the

first time, of data collection activities on HIV/AIDS in household surveys in African countries;

- (i) requested the secretariat to implement the resolution which was adopted by the ECA Conference of Ministers and ensure an appropriate role of national statistical services in the field of HIV/AIDS.
- (j) requested also the agencies to involve more African countries in the workshops on HIV/AIDS statistics which they conducted, to enable a better understanding of the methodology for collection and analysis of the data;
- (k) emphasized the need for coordination among agencies and countries in the measurement, collection and compilation of HIV/AIDS statistics and the role of national statistical offices in this regard.

(b) Poverty statistics in Africa

25. The Sub-committee

- (a) considered the severity and the intensity of absolute poverty in Africa, which affects more than 50 per cent of the total population;
- (b) took into account the need to ensure full involvement of African countries in the definition of concepts and methodologies for poverty measurement and analysis and the impact of poverty on the ability of countries to produce accurate and timely statistics on the phenomenon essential for decision making for the welfare of affected populations;
- (c) considered the fact that household surveys are the primary sources of information for poverty measurement and analysis;
- (d) encouraged the exchange of information between member States, subregional and regional institutions, and donors countries, which have a substantial amount of data sets and databases on household surveys.

(c) Selected indicators for sustainable development

26. The Sub-committee took note of the report and selected indicators for food security and sustainable development.

(d) Some good practices for technical cooperation in statistics

27. The Sub-committee

- (a) noted the importance of the document on good practices for technical cooperation for statistics for the design and management of technical cooperation programmes and projects;
- (b) urged African countries to implement the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics;
- (c) endorsed the practices as a good framework for discussion of technical cooperation between donors and recipients.

Any other business

28. The Sub-committee considered the report of the task force established by CASD on the evaluation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action and had before it the following document:

Evaluation of the Implementation and Future of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s (E/ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/2/TF)

29. The Sub-committee:
- (a) received the first report of the task force which was established by the Committee on African Statistical Development (CASD) on the “Evaluation of the implementation and future of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for statistical development in Africa in the 1990s” which provided a description of the background, objectives, methodology, skills requirements of consultants, outputs and the timeframe of the evaluation;
 - (b) took note of the work of the task force which was continuing and that the results of the evaluation will be presented to the next meeting of CASD to be convened in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in the year 2000;
 - (c) further took note of the different organizational arrangements of national statistical offices including semi and full autonomy status of these offices and the implications with regard to budgeting and decision making;
 - (d) noted also the overlap in meetings of regional and subregional organization during the week of the first meeting of CODI;
 - (e) requested that regional and subregional organizations should liaise their calendars of meetings.

Plenary sessions panel discussions and presentations on statistical development in Africa on: (1) African statistical development: the road ahead, (2) Major challenges in the year 2000 and beyond (Agenda items 4 and 5)

30. The Sub-committee revised the presentations and discussions during the plenary sessions on
- (a) African statistical development: the road ahead and
 - (b) Major challenges in the year 2000 and beyond (E/ECA/DISD/CODI.1/45)

Actions taken by the Sub-committee

31. The Sub-committee,
- (a) noted the fundamental importance of statistics for the promotion of economic and social development and the challenges to African statistical development in the year 2000 and beyond, namely improving quality and availability of statistical data on a wide range of subjects including the Minimum National Social Data Sets,
 - (b) noted that the strategies for statistical development in Africa should include taking advantage of the new information and communication technologies, educating and influencing decision-makers, training as many statisticians as possible, urging governments to improve the working conditions for statisticians, sharing of data among African and international organizations, devoting more resources to data analysis and forging partnerships for statistical development,
 - (c) urged that efforts should be made to:

- improve quality of data by reducing the time-lag in the release of data, and drawing up and implementing a vigorous data dissemination programme;
 - promote efficiency in the administrative and financial management of national statistical services;
 - ensure that national statistical services were well equipped with appropriate computers and related software;
 - utilize new information and communication technologies as much as possible;
 - promote the use of GIS systems and infrastructure for population and housing censuses and mapping ;
 - promote synergy between statistics, geo-information and information and communication technologies;
 - obtain political commitment of African governments in terms of resources for statistical development;
 - call upon the private sector to contribute to the funding of national statistical services; and;
 - seek for greater support from donors and partners in statistical development.
- (d) urged African countries to embark upon, as quickly as possible, actions that could enable them to confront the numerous challenges facing African statistical development;
- (d) requested ECA to undertake a detailed assessment of the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s, with a view to working out a new framework for statistical development in Africa in the year 2000 and beyond as well as a strategy for its implementation at regional, subregional and national levels.

Presentation of the US Bureau of the Census software packages (Agenda item 7.10)

The Sub-committee noted the software packages presented by the US Bureau of the Census International Programmes Centre, in particular the next generation of Integrated Microcomputer Processing System (IMPS) which were presented in a special session of CODI: an Integrated Census and Survey Processing and Analysis System.

Adoption of the report of the Sub-committee (Agenda 7.11)

The Sub-committee considered and adopted its report for presentation to the Plenary Session of CODI.