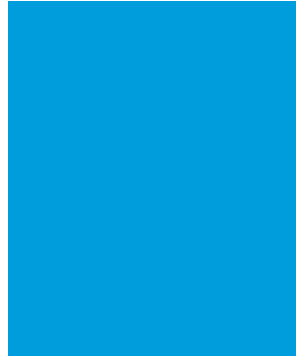


Political and Historical Background



Africa's Development Initiatives

1. At the end of the 1990s, the African heads of state and government took very important steps in calling for the establishment of an African Union, “with a view, *inter alia*, to accelerating the process of integration in the continent to enable it to play its rightful role in the global economy while addressing multifaceted social, economic and political problems compounded as they are by certain negative aspects of globalization.” They also launched the process

and the achievement of outputs, outcomes and impact. It includes sectoral development plans, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and other national development plans; NEPAD; and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The results agenda is data intensive and predicated on the notion that there is both the capacity to demand and effectively use statistics

Century [PARIS21], and the World Bank) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), held in Tunis in January and February 2005. They resolved that a new framework for statistical development in Africa should be put in place by developing a Reference Regional Strategic Framework (RRSF), in line with the Marrakech Action Plan on Statistics (MAPS), under UNECA coordination.

11. The MAPS, a plan for improving statistics in developing countries, came out of the 2004 Marrakech Roundtable meeting for improving statistics when the Meeting identified better statistics as a priority of the results agenda. The MAPS contains six action areas: Mainstream strategic planning of statistical systems; Prepare for the 2010 Census Round; Increase financing for statistical capacity building; Set up an International Household Survey Network; Undertake urgent improvements needed for MDG monitoring by 2005; and Increase accountability for the international statistical system. The RRSF contains components relevant to each of the eight results

Demand for statistics

19. There is international consensus that statistics are a necessary part of the enabling environment for improving decision-making and development outcomes at all levels, supporting business and personal decisions, and facilitating research. For this reason, while recognizing the importance of demands from

22. African countries can be divided into four groups.⁴ The first group includes “vicious circle countries”; in these countries, statistics are of poor quality, and both the supply of and demand for statistics are low. The second group includes “data supply–constrained countries”; although statistics are weak in these countries, they are increasingly being used by policy-makers. The third group includes “data demand–constrained countries”; in these countries, the quantity and quality of statistics are improving, but they are not used for decision-making because decision-makers lack the incentives or the capacity to use them. In all three types there is to increase the demand statistics their quality, to improve linkages between available data national policy needs by enhancing dialogue between data users and producers. Countries should strategically move toward a fourth group, the “virtuous circle countries”, where statistics are improving and increasingly being used for decision-making. These two processes - the improvement of statistics and the use of statistics

inputs, outputs, impacts and outcomes. These strategies and frameworks are generally agreed on by all key stakeholders at different levels. They will have been designed in a participatory and inclusive manner, taking into account country

by international rather than national demand, which created some distortion of data production away from national priorities. To address this problem, priority should be given to meeting national demand for statistics.

25. The core set of outputs by national statistical systems should correspond to the highest priorities. These include data that are required for managing the economy and stimulating social development, such as data on GDP, prices, inflation, foreign trade, employment, and household income.

education, industry and agriculture; public sector institutions, such as the central bank; private sector institutions, such as chambers of commerce and industry; research and training institutions, including universities; and NGOs (see figure 2.1). In many countries, line ministries not only produce statistics by aggregating basic information collected by the local structures under their jurisdiction such as schools or health centers but often they conduct comprehensive data collection exercises. For instance, depending on country organization, the ministries of agriculture may have substantial delegated authority and technical capacity to conduct the general census of agriculture. While this works well in some countries, there is need for more clarity and coherence in the organizational set-up.

31.

41. Data are usually available in printed form and also increasingly in electronic form (diskettes, CDs, the Internet), but the quality and the quantity of the data are often inadequate. In many countries, gaps exist in critical indicators (including gender, poverty, environment, employment, wages and hours of work, energy, industr

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of statistical data. Therefore, they also have an important stake in Africa's national statistical systems.

Figure 2.2. External Stakeholders in Africa's National Statistical Systems

50. The AfDB has developed a formal strategic plan for improving statistical activities in the region which includes: coordinating ICP-Africa, which is active in 51 of the 53 African countries, funding about 80 percent of its activities and providing technical assistance; assisting member countries in developing their national strategies for the development of statistics; supporting countries

Problems, Constraints and Challenges

70. The assessment of external stakeholders identified the following problems, constraints and challenges:

- Some sub-regional organizations have inadequate staffing for their statistical activities.
- National data collected by sub-regional organizations are not always available or comparable. Communication between countries and some sub-regional organizations is inadequate.
- A decline in resources assigned to statistics and the organizational structure for statistics in UNECA has limited its capacity to promote statistical development in Africa.
- Statistical capacity building is not among the main sectors that bilateral donors support, and it is not identified as a cross-cutting theme of any importance.
- UN specialized agencies that are interested in doing statistical capacity

