



**Economic Commission
for Africa**



**Advisory Board on
Statistics in Africa**

***Annual Meeting
10-11 May 2004
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia***

**ECA Executive Secretary's
Welcoming Address**

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ADVISORY BOARD
ON STATISTICS IN AFRICA (ABSA)
(Addis Ababa, 10-11 May 2004)

DRAFT OPENING STATEMENT

By

MR. K. Y. AMOAKO, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Distinguished Members of the Advisory Board on Statistics in Africa,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to the Headquarters of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and to this first annual meeting of the Advisory Board on Statistics in Africa (ABSA).

As you are aware, at the inaugural session of ABSA held during the third meeting of the Committee on Development Information (CODI) in May 2003, there was a consensus among participants that the statistics function needs to be significantly strengthened in ECA to enable the Commission to adequately respond to the expectations of member States in the various areas of statistical development. It should be recalled that, while reiterating its commitment to fulfilling these expectations, the ECA Secretariat had indicated that the Commission would prepare a comprehensive strategic framework aimed at supporting and accelerating statistical development in the region. It was agreed that such a framework be presented for discussion and endorsement, to the first annual meeting of the Advisory Board.

The document entitled “Statistical Development in Africa: A strategic framework” is before you. As requested by the Board, the document aims to engage all stakeholders in a statistical development process that would ensure that African countries are equipped with statistical systems capable

of supporting their economic, political and social development efforts in a sustainable manner. This document attempts to embrace all on-going initiatives and relevant frameworks at the sub-regional, regional and international levels. It also aims to cover the entire African Statistical System, including the National Statistical Systems, which are made up of producers of statistics with the National Statistical Office as the coordinating body, line ministries and public agencies, data users and suppliers and, training institutions

Distinguished Members of the Board
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I want to re-emphasize that ECA is mandated by its member States to promote the development of statistics in support of economic, social and environmental development of the African region through capacity building activities, statistical policy development, harmonization and coordination. The aim is to enhance national statistical capacities, which, in turn, would result in improvement of the coverage, timeliness and quality of primary data at the country level. It would also result in greater responsiveness of the data generation processes to emerging user needs. Success in this effort would enable ECA to develop a regional information system that could provide a prime source of statistical information that is directly accessible to potential users within the Commission, member states and partners.

The second core document before you---“Statistics at ECA: A Framework for Action” highlights the ECA niche in the overall strategic framework for statistical development in Africa

An important element of the proposed Framework for Action is a road map for a new partnership and collaboration between ECA and several international, regional, sub-regional, bilateral and multilateral cooperation organizations. They include: the United Nations Statistics Division, Statistical Commission and Committee for Coordination of Statistical Activities; the main sister statistical organizations of the UN System, particularly FAO Statistics Division and UNFPA Country Support Teams; African Development Bank; the World Bank; IMF; PARIS21 Consortium; AFRISTAT; ECOWAS; COMESA; SADC; EUROSTAT; INSEE; CESD; InWent-Munich Centre; US Bureau of the Census; DFID; etc..

Distinguished members of the ABSA, you are invited to examine the two documents—on the Strategic Framework, and the proposed Framework for Action

Distinguished members of the Board,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Following your meeting will be the first meeting of The Forum on African Statistical Development (FASDEV), which is scheduled to take place May 11-12. That meeting will provide a unique opportunity for a thorough review of the issues pertaining to this new partnership.

So as to initiate without delay, the implementation of the Framework for Action, an ECA Inter-divisional Task Team has also come up with a revised statistics work programme for the Biennium 2004-2005. This document is also before you for consideration. I suggest that you carefully review it, bearing in mind that the other priority activities identified in the Framework will be gradually incorporated in the subsequent statistics biennial work programmes of the Commission.

In reviewing the above documents, it is highly desirable that the Board bear in mind the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics (MAPS)—a culmination of intensive discussions of the Roundtable on “Managing for Development Results”, which is a partnership of multilateral development banks, including the African Development Bank, and the OECD/DAC. The Marrakech Action Plan builds on existing initiatives and country experiences to identify six broad sets of actions aimed at improving statistics at both national and international levels. The recommended sets of actions include:

- Mainstreaming strategic planning of statistical systems and helping all low-income countries prepare national statistical development strategies by 2006;
- Strengthening preparations for the 2010 Census;
- Increasing financial support for statistical capacity building;
- Setting up an international household survey network;
- Undertaking urgent improvements needed for MDG monitoring for 2005; and,
- Increasing accountability of the international statistical system.

Finally, in view of their importance in the socio-economic development process of African countries, I have asked the Development Information Services Division, through its ICT Team, to make a presentation on the requirements of information society statistics and indicators. The proposed approach to producing such statistics will take into account the conclusions and recommendations of the Coordinating Meeting on Information Society statistics, which was held recently in New York at the occasion of the thirty-fifth session of the UN Statistical Commission.

You are requested to critically review this approach and advise on the modalities for forging strong partnerships in this area, with emphasis on capacity building.

At this stage, I want to reiterate, once again, the commitment of ECA to African statistical development and its willingness to take appropriate steps for resource mobilization in support of this new direction.

Thank you.