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**The Nature and Magnitude of UNFPA's Assistance to  
Statistical Development in Sub-Sahara Africa**

By

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## **I. Introduction**

Statistical development in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) can be traced back to colonial era. However, significant development was realised only during the post-colonial period mainly due to support given by multilateral and bilateral agencies. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is among the multilateral agencies that have supported data collection and analysis programmes/project since 1971, when the African Census programme (ACP) was launched. Since then, the Fund has continued its support to data production and use in formulation, planning and implementation of population programmes. In response to evidence based decision-making process, data needs by national governments and donors have increased. Furthermore, the new developmental frameworks, including the MDGs and PRSPs, require recent and reliable data to measure achievements of targets.

This paper reviews UNFPA's contributions to statistical development in Sub-Saharan Africa in the last three decades. In section 3, contributions of UNFPA to statistical development are discussed. Most of the achievements could not be possible without adequate coordination and collaborative efforts of other development partners. Thus, Section 4 highlights the role of UNFPA in coordinating the international agencies in statistical development. Factors that have contributed to increased data needs are discussed in Section 5. It is recognised that with the increased demand for data, there is need to adopt new strategies in order to address them and this is provided in section six.

## **II. UNFPA Contributions to Statistical Development in 1970s and 1980s**

The statistical units established during the colonial period mostly provided the economic data (finance, trade, consumer price index, household budgets, agriculture, etc.) for use by the Ministries of finance and in some cases, Ministries of Planning. These units however, remained unstructured, poorly equipped and poorly staffed (UNECA, 1993). Thus, after attaining independence, the newly installed Governments encountered situations of limited data for use in formulation and implementation of socio-economic programmes. It was therefore felt necessary to strengthen the statistical units, and the international community was approached for assistance.

UNFPA was among the multilateral agencies that positively responded by supporting a number of regional population related statistical development programmes/projects, including the African Census Programme; The World Fertility Survey (WFS); Regional Advisory services for demographic statistics (RASDS); the Demographic and Health surveys; Contraceptive Prevalence Surveys (CPS), the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP) and the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA).

The African Census Programme has been seen as “the engine of growth for the Statistical systems in Sub-Saharan Africa”. The ACP programme was initiated by UNFPA in response to requests from African governments for financial and technical assistance to provide population data. The programme contributed to: increased capacities at the statistical offices; increased demographic data and operations; stimulated the development of vital registration systems; and, made available experienced technicians to plan and conduct censuses and surveys (UNFPA, 1991).

Table 1 gives levels (%) of support provided by the international agencies to various statistical activities for the period 1983 – 1989.

**Table 1: Main areas of statistical assistance to sub-Saharan Africa in (1983 – 1989)**

Area of assistance	Percentage	Area of assistance	Percentage
Population census	48.0	Sampling and surveys	6.5
2 Other economic statistics	15.5	National accounts, finance and price	6.1
3 Multi-sector statistics	11.1	Data processing	3.8
4 Demographic and social statistics	8.5	Census cartography	0.5
9 External trade, transport and energy statistics	-		

Source: A strategy for the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for statistical development in 1990s. UNCEA, 1992

It is noted that UNFPA support to population census, demographic statistics and cartography accounted for 57% of the total expenditure during the period. Also, in 1990, support to statistical technical cooperation projects, which included training institutions, amounted to about US\$ 150 millions, out of which UNFPA provided 75% (UNECA,

In addition, UNFPA supported several training institutions including Regional Institute of Population Studies (RIPS) in Legon, Ghana and the Institut de Formation et Recherche Démographiques (IFORD), in Yaounde, Cameroon, in which several demographers and statisticians were trained. Furthermore, scholarships were given to a number of students who wanted to pursue higher degrees. .

### **III. UNFPA’s Contributions to Statistical Development**

Given its comparative advantage in data production, UNFPA is playing a key role in advancing the implementation of the ICPD agenda within the context of poverty eradication as well support for measurement of progress in the new development frameworks. Assistance provided by the UNFPA, in SSA, includes providing direct financial support for censuses and large-scale surveys, technical support, training of staff, and development of databases. These are discussed below.

#### **(a) Support to production and use of population data**

UNFPA support for population censuses and large-scale surveys (demographic, fertility, health, etc.) is undertaken within country programme assistance frameworks. For example, support for the 2000 round of census is undertaken through Population and Development Strategies (PDS) sub-programme, within the overall country programme. The assistance has included: technical support, training of staff, direct funding for census/survey activities including local technical staff, supplies, workshops, printing of census instruments, purchase of census equipment (computers, office stationery, cartographic equipment, vehicles, etc. The support has ensured that all countries conduct censuses as required under the decennial census programme, see table 1 in annex.

Examples of specific support to countries:

- UNFPA supported Countries in the Southern Africa Development Cooperation (SADC) in setting up the “SADC Census Project for the 2000 round”, which greatly enhanced capacities in the sub-region to collectively undertake the population and housing censuses. Specific training/workshop programme were conducted including: censuse management, Census Questionnaire Design, Census Mapping and Cartography, Sample Survey Design and Census Data processing (2001, Guest Charumbira)
- UNFPA provided a third of total financial requirements as well as technical support for the 2003 census of Gambia. Funds were spent in training, purchase of office equipment, cartographic equipment, and publicity/advocacy, vehicles, logistics and computer equipment.
- The last census in Senegal was conducted in 1993 and UNFPA provided 15% of the total financial requirements, as well as technical support through the CST in Dakar.
- The last Population and Housing Census in Mozambique was conducted in 1997 and UNFPA provided 40% of the total financial requirements for the exercise. Other donors included UNDP, European Union, World Bank, Netherlands, Denmark, USA, Norway and Italy. The activities supported by UNFPA included: census cartography, administrative support, data processing equipment, training, purchase of vehicles and operations, technical, conduct of the PES, report writing and development of databases.
- The UNFPA played a key role in the conduct of 2002 census and the PES survey of Benin and provided a direct financial support of about 25%, including technical support. It is also noted that UNFPA played a key role in mobilization of resources, resulting in substantial support from World Bank, UNICEF, Switzerland and National private Sectors.

Although levels of funding from UNFPA has reduced in recent years, the Fund still maintains the policy of assisting countries in population and population related data production and use. Decisions on the level of funding are based on three criteria: (i) Countries that have never conducted a census before, qualify for full funding; (ii) Countries that have undergone civil wars or natural calamities, qualify for higher funding subject to the availability of funds; and (iii) Countries that have undertaken a census before, qualify for selective assistance, usually technical support.

In addition to its core-funding, UNFPA plays a key role in mobilizing resources from multi-bi and bilateral funding. UNFPA.

The information collected from censuses and the demographic surveys remain the two most important sources of population data, especially at the sub-national level. For a number of countries, there exist current and sufficient demographic and socio-economic data for use.

#### **(b) Technical support to countries**

UNFPA provides technical support to countries using three approaches; Technical Support Programme (TAP), through Country Support Team (CST), recruitment of in-country Chief Technical Advisers (CTA) and short-term consultants.

The Country Support Team, a component of the TAP system provides, assistance at critical stages of population data production and use. There are nine CSTs globally; three of them are in Africa, based in Addis Ababa, Dakar and Harare. The CSTs work closely with national counterparts in providing: technical backstopping at critical stage of a large scale data collection and analysis, organizing workshops, preparing guidelines and training manuals, imparting skills through on-the-job-training and conducting formal training programmes.

Statistical technical skills at CST include: surveys/census design and planning; cartographic mapping; census organization; data processing (all stages); survey design; data analysis; and, dissemination of results

(1) Technical Backstopping to countries

In 2003, UNFPA/CST Addis Ababa provided support to countries in SSA in various areas. The Team undertook several missions, related to statistical development to Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Eritrea, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Liberia, Rwanda, Burundi, and Eritrea. Many missions included on-the-job training activities and formal training programmes. Other activities completed include preparations of: "Publicity and Advocacy Operational Manual for Population and Housing Censuses in Africa" (CSTAA, 2002); the Monitoring and Evaluation Training Manual (CSTAA, 2002); and preparations of the manual on "Improving Data Quality in the 2000 Round of Population and Housing Censuses".

In some cases, UNFPA provides funding for hiring long-term consultants to work in specific programmes or projects. In 1999, for example, UNFPA hired a long-term consultant to assist in Demographic and health survey in Liberia. Also, in the 2001, UNFPA wholly funded an international consultant to assist in mortality and contraceptive Prevalence survey in Benin.

UNFPA has provisions for hiring short-term consultants to provide technical assistance in specific areas. For example, in 2003, UNFPA funded short-term consultancies in census cartography for Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Uganda and Tanzania. Recently (2004), two consultants were hired to assist in census analysis in Benin.

(2) Training and statistical capacity development

Many statisticians and demographers working at national statistical offices in SSA have been trained at training UNFPA sponsored institutions in demography or statistics. These include the Regional Institute of population studies, Legon, Ghana; the Institut de Formation et de Recherche Démographiques (IFORD), Yaounde, Cameroon, and the Programme on Population, Human Resources and Development, at the institute of Development and Economic Planning (PHRDA/IDEP) in Senegal; Others include: Demographic Training and Research centre, University of Addis Ababa, global training programme, Department of Statistics University of Botswana, the Institut sous-régional de statistique et d'économie appliquée (ISSEA), Yaounde, Cameroon, and the Reproductive Health Training Programme (RTPs) in Mauritius and Tunisia.

In 2003, CSTAA supported formal technical training programmes for National Statistical Offices in SSA. These include:

- Skills of 23 high-level national experts from ten Anglophone SSA countries working primarily with census or statistical organizations were enhanced in census advocacy and publicity.
- Skills of 35 national experts from 13 African countries were enhanced on the use of socio-demographic data in support of local-level governance, empowerment and poverty reduction.

As a matter of procedure, CSTs undertake continuous on-the-job-training for technical staff at National Statistical Offices in the sub-region. Furthermore, UNFPA provides support for specialized training. For example; one staff member from Tanzania Census office attended CSPro training in US Bureau of census, in 2002; and, two staff members of Central Bureau of statistics, Kenya, underwent three months course in sampling at the US Bureau of Census, in 2000.

### *(3) Establishment of databases*

UNFPA supports development of databases at country level to enable easy access and retrieval of population-related data. These include programme level database for monitoring and evaluation of programmes and the multi-sectoral database.

UNFPA provided support to national statistical offices in the development of programme-monitoring databases. Specifically, in 2003, CSTAA UNFPA assisted in preparations of training manuals and tools for use in collecting data; and development of comprehensive monitoring framework.

Support was also provided for development of Multi-sectoral databases, which contains data from several sources including censuses, surveys, administrative records and development programmes. The multi-Sectoral statistical systems already established have the objective of harmonizing, integrating, linking and generating data/information on a timely basis for effective decision-making and research. Countries that have already established multi-sectoral databases include Kenya and Nigeria. Others that have embarked on the exercise include Rwanda, Burundi, Benin, Madagascar, Gabon and Chad.

The Integrated Multi-information System (IMIS) in Kenya has information from the 1999 and 1989 census, developed such that it can accommodate data from other sources. It is, for example planned to accommodate data from DHS, welfare monitoring surveys multi indicators surveys, hospital insurance, vehicle registration, etc (Munene F, 2002). The statistical information collected from the Kenya IMIS are being used for poverty mapping.

### **(c) Support to programmes and policy advice**

Data collection and analysis can be an expensive undertaking and there is need therefore for detailed technical planning and clear identification of sources of funds. It is observed that UNFPA regularly intervenes at policy level to ensure that country programmes include aspects of data collection and analysis. The importance of population data for formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluating programmes are clearly stated in UNFPA national population policy documents. The UNFPA programming processes at country level addresses two thematic areas, namely: Reproductive health and Population and development strategies, the later mainly focuses on policy and population data concerns.

To ensure proper planning and implementation on policies and programmes, UNFPA has, in the past, supported Governments in establishing Population Planning Units (PPUs) within Ministries of planning. These units became centres of coordinating population activities among ministries and among the international community. Some of these units were later upgraded to population Secretariats and population Commissions. Examples include the Population Secretariats, Uganda, The National Population Council for Population, Kenya, and the National Population Office (ONAPO), Rwanda.

### **(d) General contributions to statistical development**

The support of UNFPA and other international agencies for statistical development has contributed to enhancement of data production and use in SSA. Most countries have functional statistical bureaus/units, which effectively respond to national data requirements. In most countries, there is ready availability of data including: population statistics, economic statistics, demographic statistics, social, trade, transport, energy, and national accounts statistics. In addition to availability of data, national institutions, operations and related systems have all been enhanced. A summary of specific contributions to statistical development:

- The projects/programmes encouraged structural changes in national statistical offices. The establishment of, for example, autonomous statistical bureau in a number of countries has ensured the achievements of self-sufficiency in statistics systems. Countries that have succeeded in this aspect include, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Nigeria, Cameroon and Ghana. The World Bank has played a leading role in this aspect but has worked collaboratively with UNFPA, USAID, UNDP and UNICEF.
- Through the multi-pronged support of the international community, countries in SSSA, have undertaken censuses or large-scale demographic surveys. Thus, there is the necessary basic population data for formulation and implementation of socio-economic programmes. Contributions from UNFPA to censuses range from support for the entire exercise, especially for countries conducting the censuses for the first time, to highly technical elements of census capacity building (UNFPA, 2003).
- Besides country specific scholarships, UNFPA has supported several training programmes, including the Global Training Programme, designed for professionals in the population field and which exposes them to integrating population factors in development planning process.

The programme has succeeded partly due to full participation of host governments and host institutions. Currently, for example, the Government and University of Botswana hosts the programme. Other training programmes that have benefited for UNFPA support include: RIPS, IFORD, etc.

- The development for guidelines and manuals has ensured availability of reference materials at country level. For example, working in collaboration with UNFPA, the United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD) has produced including the Principles and Recommendations for population and housing censuses.

There are a number of constraints/problems that may have contributed to lower levels of achievements of development in statistical offices:

- Due to extreme poverty in many countries, government priorities have concentrated on socio-economic development. Unfortunately, statistical development has not been seen as directly contributing to socio-economic development and thus have received less funding. For a number of countries, a greater proportion of statistical development came from external sources.
- In spite of the massive training programmes implemented in the past, there are still shortages of experienced and trained staff in statistical offices. The problem of staff retention has arisen due to poor salaries, compared to private sectors, as well as poor managements.

#### **IV. UNFPA's Role in Co-ordinating Multi-lateral and Bilateral Agencies in Statistical Development**

UNFPA has played a major role in coordinating or collaborating with multilateral and bilateral agencies in planning and implementing programmes related to production and use population data. These include: Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), World Bank (WB), Statistical Office of European Communities (EUROSTATS), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Canadian Fund for International Development (CIDA) and Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and, development Fund for International al development (DFID).

The National level data collection and analysis exercises in which there was high levels of coordination and collaboration include the population and housing censuses, WFS, DHS, Labour forces surveys, Multiple indicators surveys (MICS), Living Standards Measurement Surveys (LSMIS); and, the Welfare Indicators Questionnaire (CWIQ).

As mentioned earlier, WFS, was mainly sponsored by UNFPA, USAID and ODA while main implementers included the International Statistical Institute (ISI) and the International Union of Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP). Both UNFPA and USAID provided financial and technical support for the Demographic and health surveys (DHS). For example, UNFPA and USAID provided financial and technical support to the recently completed DHS in Kenya. In most countries Labour force questions are included in census questionnaire and for that matter, ILO and

UNFPA have worked closely. The World Bank has played a major role in both the LSMIS and the CWIQ, and in all cases, there has been close collaboration with other development partners including UNFPA. With regard to Multi Indicator Surveys (MICS), UNICEF has played a major role, and has worked closely with other partners. It is also noted that sponsors for the NHSCP were UNFPA, UNDP, World Bank and UNICEF and the economic commission for Africa. Table 2 gives multilateral and bilateral agencies involved in censuses and large-scale surveys in SSA.

Census coordination has successfully been achieved through the regular meeting of the Interagency Censuses Coordinating Committee (ICCC), which brings together six partners, including; UNFPA, World Bank, US Bureau of census, USAID, CIDA (Canada), United Nations Statistics Division. Table 2 shows that, in most countries, more than one donor sponsored the census programme.

**Table 2: Multilateral and Bilateral Agencies providing assistance to the 2000 round of census and large scale surveys**

Country	Census Year	Local sources	Agencies/countries participating
Benin	2002	Government	UNFPA, World bank, UNICEF, Switzerland,
Cameroon	2003	Government	UNFPA, World Bank, PTTE*
Cape Verde	June 2003	Government	UNFPA, French Cooperation, European Union, UNICEF Portugal CESD**
CAR	December 2003	Government	UNFPA, Japan, European Union, UNICEF
Comoros	September 2003	Government	UNFPA, WHO, UNDP, European Union, UNICEF
Cote D'Ivoire	November 1998	Government	UNFPA, World bank, France
Gambia	April 2003	Government	UNFPA, World bank
Ghana	March 2002	Government	UNFPA, DFID, USAID, JICA, China
Kenya	August 1999	Government	UNFPA, DFID, USAID, UNDP
Mali	April 1998	Government	UNFPA, UNICEF, European Union, World Bank, Canada
Mozambique	August 1997	Government	UNFPA, Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, European Union, USA and Norway
Namibia	September 2001	Government	IDA, UNFPA, Spain, Britain and France
Niger	June 2001	Government	UNFPA, World Bank, European Union, UNDP, UNICEF
Rwanda	August 2002	Government	UNFPA, European Union, DFID
South Africa	October 2001	Government	UNFPA, SIDA, USAID
Tanzania	August 2002	Government	UNFPA, DFID, SIDA, Japan, UNDP, USAID
Uganda	September 2002	Government	UNFPA, DFID, NORAD, Japan, European Union
Zambia	October 2000	Government	UNFPA, DFID, CIDA, Japan, Netherlands, UNHCR, Finland Germany

\*\* CESD = Center European la ststistique et Development

\* PPTTE= Pays Pauvre Tres Endettes

## **V. Factors Contributing to Increased Data Requirements**

In spite of the commendable improvements in statistical developmental in SSA countries, quantities and quality of population data remains inadequate due mainly to increased demand for data. A number of factors have contributed to the increased demand for statistical information including the need to: disaggregate data at national and sub-national levels; ensure effective implementation and monitoring of the ICPD PoA and other developmental programmes; measure the achievement of results as required in the UNFPA's New Strategic Direction; provide data for indicator measurement for the new development frameworks, namely, the MDGS, NEPAD, PRSPS and CCA. Some of these are discussed below

### **(a) ICPD Programme of Action**

At the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), it was agreed that, “national governments, donors and communities should strengthen national information systems to produce reliable statistics on a broad range of population, environment and development indicators” (1994, ICPD-PoA). Given its comparative advantage in data production and use, UNFPA was given a lead role in guiding countries achieve the objective. The 1999 United Nations Special Session of the General Assembly on the five-year review of the ICPD, donors were further called upon to strengthen the capacity of developing countries to undertake censuses and large-scale surveys at regular intervals (UNFPA, 2003). It is to be noted that SSA countries continuously seek UNFPA's guidance in this matter, more especially in the production and use population statistics. It is the policy of UNFPA to continue its' role as lead agency for the implementation of the ICPD PoA, including the support for production of timely and reliable data for monitoring progress.

### **(b) The National Governments and new data requirements**

In the recent past, national Governments have become more aware of the importance of reliable data for planning and decision-making. The importance becomes more urgent in the face of decentralization policies that require reliable data at sub-national level. It is interesting to note that some countries have translated this into increased budgets for statistical activities, as well as increased request for assistance from the international community.

### **(c) Emerging issues**

Measuring indicators in the new development frameworks require up-to-date data. Some of the frameworks as, for example, the MDGs has 48 indicators and therefore the need to consult many sources, including population and housing census, demographic surveys, administrative statistics, etc.

## **VI. Strategies for Improving the Status of Statistics in the Region**

UNFPA policy is to continue providing assistance to statistical development in SSA. Here below, strategies that will ensure strengthened National Statistical Offices are proposed.

- Enhancing capacities of persons, systems and institutions. In that regard, the training programmes, more especially, statistical training institutes will be supported because of their vital contribution to strengthening statistical offices.
- Fostering inter-country collaboration in capacity building;
- Promoting coordination between governments and development partners in the development of statistical systems. It will therefore be important to ensure strong collaboration and coordination between the governments and donors, in the provision of technical, financial and logistics support to large scale data collection exercises;
- Promoting dialogues between producers and users of data;
- Enhancing strong commitment at all levels of Government, more especially for provision of budgets for the large scale data collection and analysis;
- Developing a well targeted census advocacy campaign for increased awareness during the data collection exercise and also for wide dissemination of information;
- Strengthening national databases to ensure simplified data retrieval and dissemination, which should include national and regional information system. It may also be necessary to develop district specific data profiles;
- The regional and sub-regional organizations should be encouraged to support data collection activities, including UNECA, Africa Union (AU), the economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS), Economic Community of Central Africa States (ECCAS), Preferential Trade Area (PTA), The Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), Africa Development Bank (ADB).
- To enhance the value of data, there is need to ensure that data collection and analysis are gender-specific, dissemination is made on timely basis and data is disaggregated into population sub-groups, especially by sex.

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**Annex 1: Countries participating in 2000 Round of Census and Population Surveys**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Census (month and year)</b>	<b>Population Surveys</b>
Angola	2004	Priority Surveys (PS)
Benin	02/02	DHS, IES, CWI
Botswana	08/01	MIC
Burkina Faso	12/96	IES, MIC, DHS, PS, CWI
Burundi	-	PS, MIC
Cameroon	12/02	PS, DHS, IES, MIC,
Cape Verde	06/00	-
Central African Rep.	06/03	IES, MIC
Chad	2003	PS, DHS, MIC
Comoros	09/02	IES, DHS
Congo	07/00	-
Cote d'Ivoire	11/98	PS, MIC, DHS, PS,
DR of Congo	2003	-
Equatorial Guinea	02/02	
Eritrea	12/03	DHS, PS
Ethiopia	05/04	PS, IES, LFS, DHS
Gabon	2003	DHS
Gambia	04/03	IES, MIC
Ghana	03/00	MIC, CWI, DHS, IES
Guinea	12/96	MIC, DHS
Guinea Bissau	-	MIC, CWI
Kenya	08/99	PS, DHS
Lesotho	04/96	IES, CWI
Liberia	10/03	-
Madagascar	09/03	MIC, LFS, DHS & PS
Malawi	09/98	DHS, IES, CWI, ED
Mali	04/98	DHS, MIC, LFS, CWI
Mauritania	11/00	IES, MIC, DHS, CWI
Mauritius	07/00	-
Mozambique	08/97	MIC, IES, DHS, CWI
Namibia	09/01	DHS
Niger	05/01	IES, MIC, DHS, CWI
Nigeria	11/02	IES, DHS, MIC, CWI
Rwanda	08/02	IES, MIC, DHS, CWI
Saint Helena	03/98	
Sao Tome and Principe	08/01	PS
Senegal	11/01	MIC, IES, DHS, PS, CWI
Seychelles	08/97	-
Sierra Leone	01/03	MIC, IES
Somalia	-	MIC
South Africa	10/96	IES, DHS, IES
Swaziland	05/97	IES
Togo	11/02	DHS
Uganda	08/02	DHS, PS, ED, IES
United Rep. of Tanzania	08/02	DHS, LFS, IES
Zambia	10/00	DHS, PS, LFS, ED, IES
Zimbabwe	08/02	IES, DHS

\* Priority Surveys (PS), Demographic and Health surveys (DHS); Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS); Labour Force Survey (LFO); ED, CWI, EdHS, IES (survey with income expenditure modules, including LSMS)