

Eighth Session of Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa VIII)

Modernizing data ecosystem in Africa
to support regional integration

DAY ONE | 24-October 2022



Mr. Demeke Mekonnen, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister Of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

AFRICA MUST INVEST IN SOLID STATISTICAL SYSTEMS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

HIGHLIGHTS

Opening speech by Mr. Demeke Mekonnen, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister Of Foreign Affairs of the FDRE

Oliver Chinganya, ECA Director African Centre for Statistics Offers Three Reasons why we should care about Data and Statistics

The future of Africa's Official Statistics:

A Roadmap for the Transformation and Modernization of official statistics in Africa ...Page 03

Increasing the availability and accessibility of data on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) ...Page 03

Infographics...Page 04

Day 1 in PICTURES ...Page 05

Ethiopia's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Demeke Mekonnen, has called on the community of African statisticians and data experts to come up with a road map for the reform and modernization of the continent's official statistical systems to provide reliable information for informed decision making.

Addressing the joint opening session of back-to-back meetings taking place this week in Addis Ababa as part of the eighth Statistical Commission for Africa (STATCOM), Mr Mekonnen stressed the need for "comprehensive tools that can enable governments to create and execute the policies required to achieve the digital goals needed for regional integration as efficiently as possible. Organized under the theme: "Modernizing data ecosystem in Africa to support regional integration", the Eighth Statistical Commission for Africa seeks to strengthen the inter-related natural linkages between data, statistics and civil registration.

"It is unfortunate that Africa continues to have the highest proportion of unregistered births and deaths in the world, said the Deputy Prime Minister, noting that in the COVID-19 Pandemic period, only a handful of countries were capable of producing sufficient quality mortality and cause of death statistics to guide public health decision-

continued on page. 2

MESSAGE FROM THE ECA



Mr. Oliver Chinganya, Officer-in-Charge of the Economic Commission for Africa and Director of the African Centre for Statistics

For the first time, the Economic Commission for Africa is organizing three related conferences in tandem from 22 to 28 October 2022 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic. The eighth StatCom-Africa holding under the theme "Modernizing Data Ecosystems in Africa to support Regional Integration" has gathered heads of African National Statistics Offices and representatives of Regional Economic Communities, Regional Statistical Training Centres, Pan-African institutions, and various partners working in statistical development.

Specifically, the eighth StatCom-Africa provides a unique opportunity for African Statistical Systems to take stock of ongoing global and regional developments with a view to mainstreaming and creating ownership of new or updated methodologies to enhance Member States' statistical capacities and to move ahead with the kind of modernization that can build agile and resilient statistical system. It will particularly engage participants on methodologies that support the available data on key regional initiatives, such as regional and sub-regional integration, African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), Agenda

continued on page. 2

Africa must invest in solid statistical systems for sustainable development, continued from pg. 1

*Hon. Dr. Chris Baryomunsi,
Minister for ICT & National Guidance, Uganda, keynote speaker*

making and planning. “This situation, which has endured for a very long time, must change, and this event should define the steps Africa must take to stop the tragedy of invisibility,” he added.

Through its Statistics Service, Ethiopia has made significant progress in electronic collection and transfer of data using PDAs, CAPIs and tablets for surveys, censuses and transmission of data, greatly reducing costs and human resource demands, said the Deputy Prime Minister. Furthermore, the country’s Consumer Price Index (CPI) is now being released between the first and fifth days of the month – marking a significant improvement in timeliness. More work is underway to collect new data for monitoring national plans and SDGs, including agriculture, migration, urban agriculture pilots, livestock, production and postharvest loss.

Touching on some key aspects of this week’s theme, Mr. Oliver Chinganya, Director of the ECA’s African Centre for Statistics bemoaned the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on civil registration and vital statistics systems, particularly in Africa, leading to the absence of vital data. “Data and statistics have never been more significant than they are now – they are needed to influence policies and measure progress to attain the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development as well as the African Union Agenda 2063,” Mr. Chinganya said.

He stressed the importance of modernizing Africa’s data for facilitating regional integration and for “enhancing the accuracy

and efficiency of decision-making in support of a stronger regional integration in the continent, arguing that barriers to economic progress can only be overcome through a reliable data ecosystem.

Mr. Chinganya challenged African countries to “participate in creative and innovative methods to solve some of the major obstacles facing National Statistics Offices such as limited funding, insufficient personnel, inadequate Information Technology infrastructure, and inadequate legislative framework.”

On the integration of geography and statistics under the auspices of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa, he called for a change in “the way we generate and package data and statistics to guarantee that the narrative of Africa’s progress is properly captured,” and pledged ECA’s commitment to providing technical assistance to member countries to restructure and modernize their statistics systems.

In a keynote address at the Eighth Session of the Statistical Commission for Africa, Chris Baryomunsi, Uganda Minister for ICT and National Guidance stressed “the need to develop agile statistical systems that are resilient to crises such as COVID - which heavily impacted statistical production and National

“ *It has been declared a ‘scandal of immense proportion’ that at the turn of the third millennium, few countries in Africa have complete civil registration systems. This scandal has had serious implications for vital statistics, human and constitutional rights, policy and national development,” Mr. Baryomunsi - KEYNOTE ADDRESS* **”**

Statistical Systems.”

He emphasized the need to improve administrative data and civil registration systems which together account for up to 70% of the data required to monitor national development processes.

“It has been declared a ‘scandal of immense proportion’ that at the turn of the third millennium, few countries in Africa have complete civil registration systems. This scandal has had serious implications for vital statistics, human and constitutional rights, policy and national development,” said Mr. Baryomunsi.

Message from the ECA, continued from pg. 1

2063 “The Africa We want”, and Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development Goals.

We also have the eighth Session of the Regional United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa (UNGGIM) under the theme: “Strategic Pathway for modernizing geospatial information in Africa and Linking Geographies to Statistics”. Lastly, a meeting of CRVS experts will also take place on the theme: “A Decade into APAI-CRVS: Reflecting on progress and accelerating efforts towards 2030 through transformed systems”.

All countries are invited to leverage the benefits of having the three main conferences, which will be focusing on critical areas aimed at propelling Africa towards attaining its development Agenda 2063. It is also an excellent opportunity for African member states to make integrating geospatial data with statistics, both from traditional and new approaches, a reality for the betterment of the African people.

It is, therefore, my hope that participation in these events will

stimulate reflection and inward examination resulting in a renewed zeal to accelerate efforts towards more progress in the three critical areas of focus.

Oliver Chinganya, ECA Director African Centre for Statistics Offers**Three Reasons why we should care about Data and Statistics**

1. *Data and statistics are the lifeblood of development planning. Reliable statistics and analysis boost effective implementation of development programmes to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).*
2. *Accurate, high quality, timely, disaggregated and accessible data enhances development planning by providing useful and understandable information critical in knowing the development metrics of a country.*
3. *Many countries in Africa are challenged by inadequate data and insufficient statistical analysis owing to lack of capacity and poor investment. This needs to change so as to make data driven policy decisions that support social and economic development.*

THE FUTURE OF AFRICA'S OFFICIAL STATISTICS:

A Roadmap for the Transformation and Modernization of official statistics in Africa

The Roadmap for the Transformation and Modernization of official statistics in Africa provides a refreshed and consolidated view of how the African Statistical System needs to adapt to the modern era. It takes outlinesthe drivers, challenges, and opportunities facing official statistics across Africa and sets out relevant principles and priorities to guide national, regional, and sub-regional planning and the design of National Strategies for the Development of Statistics. It also provides guidance on creating and sustaining virtuous cycles for official statistics and ensuring digital technology is used in appropriate ways, tailored to the needs of each country.

The Roadmap was prepared by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in consultation with the African Group for Transformation and Modernisation and a wide range of National Statistical Offices, sub-regional and regional bodies, and development partners.

It encourages the African Statistical System to prioritise planning and action on the foundational enablers of transformation and modernisation which are: Statistical Leadership and Advocacy; Balanced Autonomy; establishing effective National Statistical Systems, and strategic approaches to sustaining Financial Resources for official statistics.

Other key enablers outlined in the Roadmap include the use of Strategic Tools for planning and decision-making;

the development of Organisational Capital suitable for modern data ecosystems in each country context; well-targeted nationally tailored plans for Digitalisation; and improved methods and efficiency in Learning and Capacity Development.

The Roadmap places emphasis on the development of agile and resilient National Statistical Systems, outward-looking mindsets, meeting user needs and national development priorities, expansive and new types of institutional and partnership arrangements, stronger non-technical as well as traditional skills, and leadership across societies on statistical and data issues.

With the Roadmap in place, the African Statistical System needs to develop a well-coordinated action plan to support the implementation of the Roadmap's principles and priorities. Technical support and learning will continue to be important on international harmonisation of certain statistics and the transformation of approaches to use administrative data, digital data, and survey methodology. However, a new emphasis is required on strategic actions that optimise the long-term cross-cutting efficiency and performance. A key strategic action to support this should be the development of a Maturity Assessment Model and related decision-making toolkits based on the Roadmap. This should allow for better targeted assessments of national capacity and better planning for capacity development around the technical and strategic objectives for transformation and modernisation.

INCREASING THE AVAILABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF DATA ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

During the side event on increasing the availability and accessibility of SDG data, officials from the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) highlighted the importance of data availability and accessibility, indicating that without the availability of data, assessment and monitoring of SDGs is impossible.

The main objective of this side event was to reflect on the UNSD-FCDO project on SDG monitoring, five years since the project's inception in 2017. The project was established in response to the need to ensure the availability of data in a timely manner to enable beneficiary countries make informed decisions on SDGs. The main goals of the UNSD-FCDO project are to improve the capacity of project countries to monitor SDG progress; increase the availability of SDG indicators at international and national levels; and to improve coordination of National Statistical Systems around the SDG indicators. Almost all project countries have launched national SDG data platforms that have not only improved accessibility of data to users at international and national

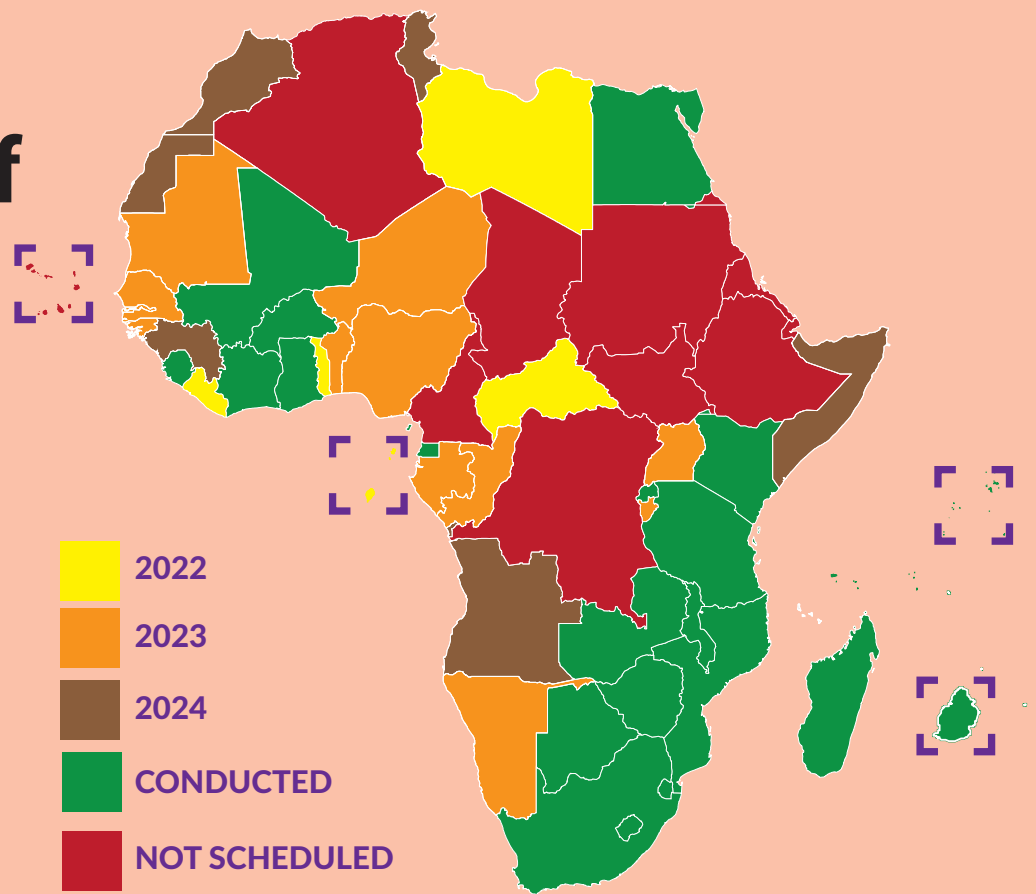
levels, but also been integral to project country's Voluntary National Reviews and other national SDG reporting.

The UNSD-FCDO project, which ends by the end of 2022, is implemented in 20 countries, 10 in Africa and 10 in Asia. During the site event, some of the beneficiary African countries, including Mozambique, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Zambia, and Ethiopia, shared their experiences regarding the domestication of SDGs, reporting, user-engagement, and challenges, opportunities, and way forward. These countries reported to have increased awareness of the data they provide. The need to continue reporting on SDGs even after the end of the UNSD-FCDO project came out strongly.

Beneficiary countries have tremendously benefited from capacity building and the innovative tools, methods, and technologies made available through the project. More UNSDO-FCDO project activities and achievements for all project countries, plus tools and materials available to all, can be accessed at <https://unstats.un.org/capacity-development/UNSD-FCDO/>

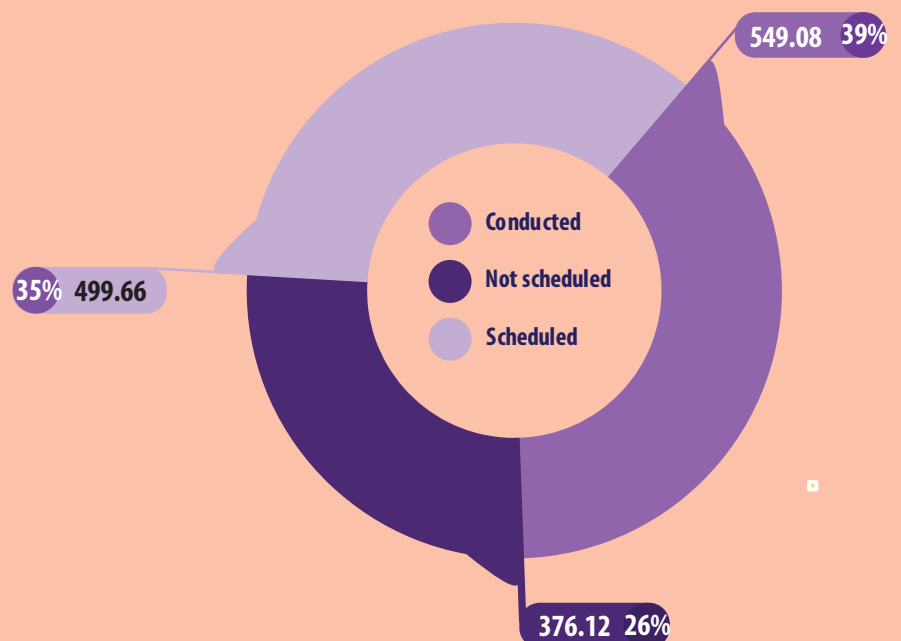
INFOGRAPHICS

Status of the 2020 round of population and housing censuses



Status of the 2020 Census Round in Africa (2022 population estimate in millions)

More than **376** million people are at risk of not being counted in the 2020 round



DAY 1 IN PICTURES





Acknowledgments

This edition of the StatCom-Africa-VIII Conference Bulletin is produced under the general direction of Oliver Chinganya, Director, ACS. Gratitude goes to Molla Hunegnaw, William Muhava, Tinfissi-Joseph Ilboudo, Andre Nonguierna and Aster Denekeew at ACS; Charlotte Arinaitwe and Mercy Wambui (SPORD); and Busani Bafana and Sophia Denekeew (Communication Section). Photo contributions by Daniel Getachew and Tewodros Aleyew (Communication Section) Design by Yonathan Tadesse Alemu (ACS).

For queries, write to ecainfo@un.org