

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

Modernizing data ecosystem in Africa
to support regional integration

DAY TWO | 25-October 2022



Mr. Oumar Ka, Chair UN-GGIM: Africa

EIGHTH MEETING OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION MANAGEMENT FOR AFRICA (UNGGIM: AFRICA) KICKS OFF

Strong partnerships needed between the geospatial and statistical community

HIGHLIGHTS

Eighth meeting of the Regional Committee of the (UNGGIM: Africa) kicks off

African Centre for Statistics

At StatCom Africa, Experts call for data collection coordination and communication to achieve high-qualityPage 04

Spot interviews ...Page 05

About the Statistical Commission for Africa ...Page 05

Day 2 in PICTURES ...Page 07

The Eighth meeting of the Regional Committee of the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa (UNGGIM: Africa) kicked off with a workshop on *Integration of Geospatial and Statistical Information* to discuss issues related to integrating statistical and geospatial information in Africa.

The workshop was attended by officials from national geospatial authorities and national statistical offices in Africa and experts from private sector, academia and research institutions, as well as international organizations and United Nations.

From the outset, the experts in attendance noted that the integration of geospatial information and statistics has been the missing link in the development of the information chain. Efforts to ensure this integration are however being undertaken by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) through a working group on geography and statistics under the aegis of the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa.

Statistical-geospatial infrastructure

Participants recognized that a robust statistical-geospatial infrastructure helps to promote
continued on page. 2

AFRICAN CENTRE FOR STATISTICS



Mr. Oliver Chinganya, Director of the African Centre for Statistics

African Centre for Statistics, re-established in 2006, is the regional coordinator of statistics in Africa to enable the African Statistical System to produce high-quality statistics, data and geospatial information to inform sound and evidence-based decision-making in support of sustainable development regional and national initiatives. The African Centre for Statistics is headed by a Director. ACS is responsible for improving the production, dissemination and use of quality data and comparable data and statistics in Africa to support evidence-based policymaking, planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 The Africa We want.

The strategic focus of the statistics sub-programme is to support statistical capacity development for strengthening the capacity of Member States in Africa to build robust and sustainable statistical systems that are versatile

continued on page. 2

Eighth meeting of the Regional Committee of the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa (UNGGIM: Africa) kicks off, continued from pg. 1



data sharing and improve quality and timeliness of national information to help facilitate evidence-based decision making in support of sustainable development. The workshop noted that African countries need to build, develop, and strengthen their geospatial information infrastructures in support of censuses and statistical activities. Furthermore, adopting a geographic-based approach with full integration of statistical and geospatial information offers a possible opportunity for countries to proceed with modernization of their national statistical systems and official statistics. Equally, National Mapping Agencies are modernized as well as the authoritative data being produced.

Establishment of an Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information

Recognizing the critical need to incorporate the geographic dimension into statistics, the Statistical Commission and the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management established the Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information in 2013. The Expert Group was tasked with developing and advancing the implementation of the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework. This critical need was also recognized in 2017, when the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data established objective 3.4: "Integrate geospatial data into

statistical production programmes at all levels", with the following key action: "Promote the integration of modern geospatial information management systems into mainstream statistical production programmes by highlighting synergies between the two systems". Similarly, under the leadership of ECA, the Regional Committee of Experts of the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management, established a working group dedicated to the integration of geospatial and statistical information.

Building on these developments, the UNGGIM workshop discussed various updates, including a progress report on the integration of geography and statistics in Africa as well as on geocoding of census data in Africa. The workshop also discussed the implementation, guidance and recommended actions aimed at establishing and developing integrated geospatial information management.

Additionally, participants examined the implementation of the Global Statistical and Geospatial Framework for the Integration of Statistical (GSGF) in Africa. They were also introduced to the Geocoding Population and Housing Census Data in Africa.

Workshop participants agreed that better integration will need strong partnerships between the geospatial and statistical community. ECA, national mapping agencies and national statistical offices were called on to work closely together to create and implement frameworks such as the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF) and to facilitate linkages between geographies and statistical data. They were further urged to update and validate their national second administrative level boundary (SALB) datasets. Such a comprehensive digital database on administrative boundaries can be used to disaggregate data by geography and to link other thematic information of statistics, demography, development, health, environment, social and economic development and therefore, and enable comparability with other relevant SDGs indicators at national level.

African Centre for Statistics, continued from pg. 1

and resilient to respond to increasing demands for data and statistics for the implementation, monitoring, decision making and reporting on Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063.

The strategic objectives of the ACS are:

- 1. Capacity development:** Enhance the capacities of Member States to respond to demands for fit-for-purpose data.
- 2. Governance and policy:** Promote statistical governance mechanisms and raise awareness on the role and importance of statistics for development, including ensuring effective coordination of information infrastructures and development of data policies in Africa.
- 3. Data Services:** Provide authoritative development information on Africa and support data production for ECA research and policy analysis work.
- 4. Modernization of Statistical value chain:** Conduct and promote research on methods, concepts,

definitions and classifications with relevant information infrastructures to optimize statistical and spatial data collection, processing, analysis and dissemination through innovative technologies.

5. Outreach and Partnership: Build partnerships, nurture technical assistance and advisory services, collaboration, and network with national, regional and international entities.

It is divided into four main sections: Economic, Infrastructure and Agriculture Statistics; Demographic and Social Statistics; Statistical Development, Data Innovation and Outreach; and Geospatial Information Management Systems.

Economic, Infrastructure and Agricultural Statistics

The section is engaged mainly in promoting the production of harmonized and quality economic and agricultural statistics in African countries by applying international statistical standards providing advisory services and technical assistance to Member States in the collection, compilation analysis, and dissemination of economic statistics; and conducting

African Centre for Statistics, continued from pg. 1

methodological research to improve the production and use of economic and agricultural Statistics including infrastructure. The section currently has three main work streams.

Demographic and Social Statistics

The section advocates for and build capacities of the statistical systems of Member States in the production and use of demographic and social statistics, particularly in Conducting population and housing censuses, improving civil registration and vital statistics systems, migration statistics, gender statistics, education, health, urban and human rights statistics, etc.

Statistical Development, Data Innovation & Outreach

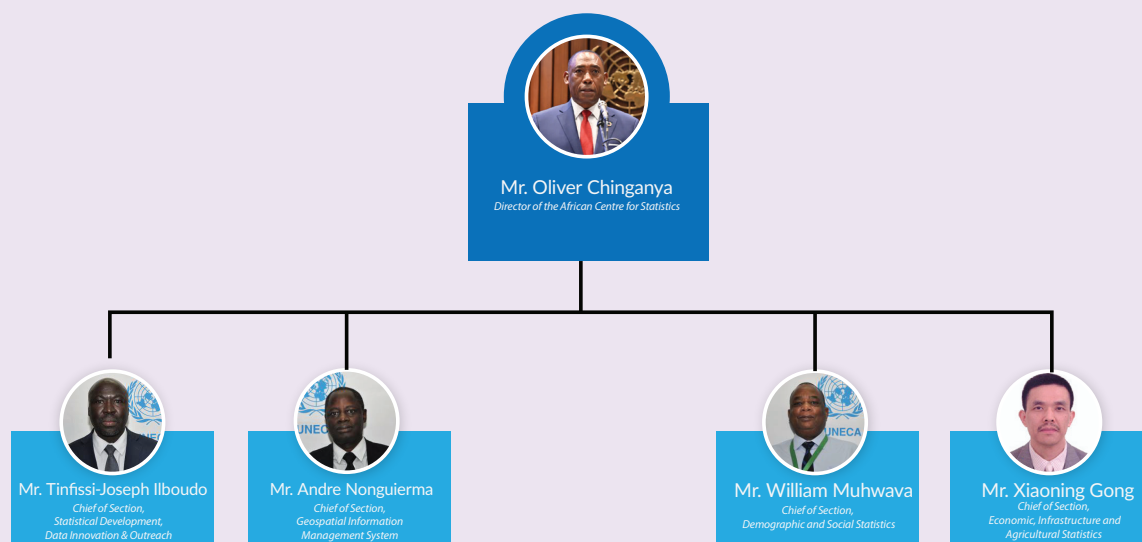
The function of the section includes standardization of statistical concepts, definitions, methods, classifications and database management, as well as coordinating regional

statistical programmes and activities entrusted to the Centre by the Committee on Statistics of Directors General of Statistics and the African Statistical Coordinating Committee (ASCC). In addition, it acts as the interlocutor. It strengthens statistical coordination between the global statistical system and the African Statistical System, as well as promoting and coordinating the African inputs to United Nations Statistical Commission. Other functional areas are: Supporting member States to use Big Data and other data sources; and applications of data science for official statistics.

Geospatial Information Management System

The function of this section is to support the work of ACS and ECA. Its function is to advance holistic policies and strategies to foster the use of geospatial products and resources to support emerging global challenges and various socio-economic sectors in Africa.

AFRICAN CENTRE FOR STATISTICS



INFORMATION SHEET STATISTICAL

The Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in 1990s urged governments to support the African Statistical Association. While the Plan did not address National Statistical Associations, there is a need to establish and/or ensure that these associations are functional and effective. The Roadmap for Transformation and Modernisation of Official Statistics Africa recognises that such Associations can play a key role in supporting the development of National Statistical Systems.

1. Roles of Statistical Associations

These include:

- promoting statistical literacy across society
- promoting public awareness of good statistical practice and promoting such practice
- development and monitoring of professional educational programs
- updating of skills, professional qualifications, examinations and accreditation
- promoting and disseminating research and best practices in statistical sciences
- promoting interaction between academic/official statisticians

2. Benefits of belonging to a Statistical Association

There are a number of benefits in belonging to a professional association. These include:

- Networking
- Knowledge sharing
- Employment opportunities
- Having a platform for career growth.

3. Current efforts to establish/strengthen National Statistical Association

The ISI is stocktaking to establish existence and effectiveness of National Statistical Associations in Africa. Questionnaires for this purpose were sent to all African countries and we appeal to NSOs to ensure that these questionnaires are filled and returned to the sender. Results from this exercise will be used to promote establishment/strengthening of National Statistical Associations and the African Statistical Association. Let us brainstorm on the way forward on this important issue.

For more information, contact Lamine Diop of the ISI Capacity Building Committee: Idiopsen@yahoo.fr

AT STATCOM AFRICA, EXPERTS CALL FOR DATA COLLECTION COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION TO ACHIEVE HIGH-QUALITY DATA SUPPLY

Macroeconomic data experts have stressed the need for concerted data coordination and the need to have data collected by statisticians, in order to ensure countries are generating and disseminating high quality data to achieve structural transformation. This was the conclusion of a side event outlining the urgent needs faced by countries to ensure high-quality data supply.

Hosted by the ECA's Macroeconomics and Governance Division (MGD), the event was held on the margins of the Eighth Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa-VIII) that takes place from 24-26 October on the broader topic of "Modernizing data ecosystem in Africa to support regional integration. The side-event's focus was underpinned by the growing and urgent need for timely accurate, complete, reliable and relevant data and statistics to inform policy, which remains a significant challenge across Africa.

Lack of Data Makes Support to Member States Difficult

Presenting the challenges and consequences related to the lack of data, Ms Atkeyelsh Persson, Economic Affairs Officer at the Macroeconomics and Governance Division (MGD) stressed the need for high-quality data to achieve structural transformation and inclusive growth. This, she noted, is a key focus of MGD, which aims to serve member states through strengthened and effective development planning, macroeconomic policy analysis, and enhanced public sector financial management and economic governance.

She noted that the Division faces challenges in the area of data quality, which implies availability, timeliness, completeness, consistency, and accuracy. These challenges hinder its support to member states, such as in the area of macroeconomic modelling, development planning and reporting, and measuring illicit financial flows (IFF). For instance, incomplete and inconsistent data results in biased estimation in macroeconomic modelling. "Our aim, stressed Ms Persson, "is to continue to strive for data quality and support countries in order to resolve these challenges."



ECA Staff, Atkeyelsh Persson and Joseph Attah-Mensah lead discussions on coordination and data collection challenges

Poor Data Quality Can Lead to Disastrous Consequences

Jairo Arrow, Official Statistics Expert, former Deputy Director-General of Statistics in South Africa and Vice President of International Association of Survey Statisticians spoke about modernising data ecosystems and quality statistics. He drew from his rich experience in and compared the production of statistics to building a house, in which sampling frames correspond to foundations, surveys and censuses to pillars, national accounts to roof, and policy outcomes to flagpoles for assessment of poverty and inequality, economic growth, unemployment.

"Regular maintenance and constant consultation with users on data adequacies and gaps is required," he stressed. He noted that poor quality statistics could lead to disastrous consequences.

Methodologies and Modernizing Data Collection

Member states shared experiences and lessons learnt, with Rwanda informing the meeting on the country's advancements in computerization for data collection and big data techniques.

In addition, the importance of sound methodologies was stressed during the discussion as is the need to improve the national statistics ecosystem and create favourable conditions for improving methodologies in local contexts. Furthermore, participants reiterated the need to value the role of statisticians and census-takers and stressed the importance of coordination and communication as the foundation for availing high-quality data.

For his part, Joseph Atta-Mensah, Principal Economic Affairs Officer of the Macroeconomics and Governance Division, stressed the need for quality data as a means for controlling the narrative on sustainable development. "Proper legislation and enforcement are also needed in ensuring high quality data supply," he said and also stressed the importance of political will and leadership for the use of data in policy and decision-making.



SPOT INTERVIEWS

Interaction and collaboration vital for strengthening Africa statistics and civil registration systems

Holding the Eighth Statistical Commission for Africa back-to-back with The Ninth Forum on Africa Statistical Development (FASDev) and the Experts Group Meeting of the 6th Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration and the UNGGIM has never been done before. Organized under the theme: “Modernizing data ecosystem in Africa to support regional integration”, the Eighth Statistical Commission for Africa taking place in Ethiopia from 24–26 October, seeks to strengthen the inter-related natural linkages between data, statistics and civil registration.

Victoria Anib Majur,
Under-Secretary, Ministry of
Health, South Sudan

“CRVS is very important and vital statistics are important and in today's presentation we saw the status of CRVS in African countries,” said Ms. Victoria Anib Majur, Undersecretary, Ministry of Health, South Sudan, noting that South Sudan was still lagging behind in having a robust civil registration system.

“The biggest achievement of the session is the interaction and coming together of different countries and learning from the experience of other countries. We benefited from other countries who have done very well in the region such as Namibia,” said Ms. Majur, who was confident that replicating the best practices from Namibia would improve CRVS in other African countries.

“My comments and suggestions for the future plans are for the ministerial meeting to happen concurrently with the experts meeting because of the continuity of the process. We were expecting the ministers to attend this meeting, but it's only the experts who attended the meeting and now the ministers will have the meeting in January 2023,” Ms. Majur added.



Mr. Mohamed Massaquoi,
Director General for the National
Civil Registration Authority of
Sierra Leone

Concurring that the experience of Namibia was an inspiration for other countries, Mr. Mohamed Massaquoi, Director General for the National Civil Registration Authority of Sierra Leone, felt that Namibia has demonstrated political will in having the government and national leadership involved in the CRVS.

“We can learn from these countries that have political commitment and see how we can advocate and build on their experience so that we can generate the same kind of political will to fund CVRS,” said Mr. Massaquoi, adding that participating at COM6 enabled a reflection on gains the continent has made in civil registration, vital statistics and identity management.

“I think as a continent we are in the right direction in a way that we have taken leadership in our affairs as well as determining how we move our continent forward in accounting for our people and other residents in a reliable manner and in a way that we will have data on our people which is useful for our development planning and other purposes,” he said.



Mr. Chea Sanford Wesseh, Assis-
tant Minister for Vital Statistics at the
Ministry of Health

Mr. Chea Sanford Wesseh, Assistant Minister for Vital Statistics at the Ministry of Health, Liberia, finds the meetings was inspiring because of the opportunity for experts to learn from each other's experience in CRVS.

“I have come to learn from others who are far ahead of us and also to be able to adopt some strategies and measures that will improve the system and also to meet with other countries to build that connection and community of practice so that you can learn lessons from them,” said Mr. Wesseh.



Tulimeke Munyika, Director of
National Population Register, Identifi-
cation and Production, Namibia

For Tulimeke Munyika, Director of National Population Register, Identification and Production Namibia, the meeting was enlightening and was a platform for Africans to learn from one another.

“For me the takeaway is if we are going to talk about a comprehensive civil registration system then we also have to bring marriages and death registration along. We can ensure legal identity for all if we make sure nobody is left behind,” Ms. Munyika said.



Celina Molato, Director-General of
the Lesotho Bureau of Statistics

The Eighth Statistical Commission for Africa meeting was an opportunity to take stock of the state of the African statistical system, looking at challenges and successes in rolling out national statistical systems, according to Celina Molato, Director General of the Lesotho Bureau of Statistics.

Ms. Molato felt the meeting was well organized and enlightening but there were challenges with time to discuss most of the important aspects of statistics such as the national accounts and economic studies which were important beyond the COVID pandemic. However, she said the meeting showed some good progress made in terms of GIS and civil registration.

“Let us plan well for the coming SATCOM because we did not do well for other topics of statistics. As Lesotho we are planning to now work on our GIS to see how modernizing GIS can help us undertake the census and in undertaking the agricultural statistics and even to see how coordination can be improved across all the relevant stakeholders,” said Ms. Molato adding that another issue of importance was partnerships between NSOs.

“When we work together, we are able to share the minimum resources and are able to talk with one voice and then we would avoid duplication,” she said.

SPOT INTERVIEWS

Are African countries on course to achieve SDG 16.9?

Africa has made significant progress. The rate has increased to 55 percent and there are about 20 countries that are on track to achieve the global goal of SDG 16.9. Countries are actually simplifying the process and they are ensuring that children are registered where they are born. Countries are also encouraging mothers to bring forth their babies to be registered and fathers as well. Countries are making sure that [with] the first birth certificate, the registration is free. So birth registration is the start of the life cycle.

What is the starting point for any individual and how does it affect one's life cycle

First, you have to be registered at birth. Additional registration follows when you get married and when you divorce. When you are adopted there is a registration and finally, if you pass away, there is a death registration.

Once registered at birth, it is important to ensure that if there is a national ID in that country, that registration can get you a national identity. This is important because a child can miss out on being a citizen of the country in which they are born and all the benefits of citizenship. This can affect enrollment in school and access to health services. When the child becomes an adult, it affects participation in elections, opening a bank account, having a driver's license and having a passport to travel. In any turn, it affects their life throughout.

What is your message for African member states

The member states of the African Union need to simply, register a child where the child is born, make sure the process is simple and accessible to the population. This registration system also needs to be financed. Countries also need to ensure that citizens understand the importance of birth registration for their lives.

It is important that African member states recognize everyone in their territory or country or state to ensure their entitlement as citizens. If Africa can achieve this target, it can show the rest of the world what it is like to be able to achieve one of the world's most important targets affecting the lives of individuals.



Cornelius Williams, Director of Child Protection at UNICEF on the importance of CRVS to the life cycle of the individual.

ABOUT THE STATISTICAL COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

When was it established? The Statistical Commission for Africa is an intergovernmental entity established in 2005 and supervised by the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. The Commission operates within the framework of the policies and procedures of the United Nations.

What does it do? The Statistical Commission for Africa is the highest decision-making body in Africa responsible for setting statistical standards, developing concepts and methods, and implementing them at the national, subregional and continental levels. The meeting provides an opportunity for participants to discuss the link between African and global statistical systems to ensure that Africa is not left behind in global statistical initiatives. Participants discuss progress and statistical development in African statistical systems. Furthermore, the meeting serves as a platform for international partners to meet representatives of member States of the Economic Commission for Africa to discuss the needs of those Member States.

Who Can Attend?: African countries are represented in the Commission by the heads of national statistical offices, heads of the statistical units of the regional economic communities; heads of statistical training centres; geoinformation system experts; information and communications technology experts; and regional and international development partners; representatives of data users of African countries;

African inter-governmental organizations; the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD); United Nations agencies; the Bretton Woods institutions; and non-governmental organizations active in statistical work are invited to the meetings of STATCOM-AFRICA.

Format: The meeting of the Statistical Commission for Africa is held in plenary sessions, with simultaneous interpretation in English and French. Representatives of the Forum on African Statistical Development, and other pre-events on various contemporary issues can report to the plenary meeting.

The Statistical Commission for Africa meeting every two years: The official country delegation to the Statistical Commission for Africa is normally led by the head of the national statistical office. Observers from intergovernmental organizations; non-governmental organizations; other national, subregional, continental and international organizations; academia; research institutions; the private sector; and related industries are also invited to attend, as are African statisticians who have played a notable role in promoting statistics in the region. Observers may attend all sessions except those designated as closed-door sessions and may participate in discussions, but they may not vote on any issues.

Structure: StatCom-Africa Bureau is led by: Chair, Vice-Chair, Second Vice-Chair, First Rapporteur and Second Rapporteur.

DAY 2 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 Nonguierma 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), Interviews by MOPIX productions, Design by Yonathan Tadesse (ACS). For queries, write to ecainfo@un.org