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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**  
Third Meeting of Committee  
on Development Information (CODI)

Addis Ababa,  
10-16 May 2003

**Follow-up of the second meeting  
of the Sub-committee on Statistics of the  
Committee on Development Information  
(CODI)**



## **I. Introduction**

1. The second meeting of the Sub-committee on Statistics of the Committee on Development Information (CODI) was held at the Headquarters of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Addis Ababa, from 4 to 7 September 2001. The Sub-committee elected the following bureau: Chairperson: Mauritius; Vice-Chairperson: Benin; and, Reporter: Morocco. The meeting reviewed the following items and took action for follow-up:

- i. Data mining and knowledge discovery in corporate setting;
- ii. Meta-analysis for appropriate aggregation;
- iii. Organization, dissemination and use of statistical and geographic information systems, for poverty mapping and the reinforcement of survey capabilities;
- iv. Presentation of national statistical systems in Country reports (for noting and panel discussion);
- v. Evaluation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action (AAPA) for statistical development in Africa in the 1990s:
  - a. Results of the evaluation of the AAPA
  - b. The way forward
- vi. Assessment of the implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts (SNA93) in Africa;
- vii. Use of statistical databases and information systems for data dissemination and decision making;
- viii. International cooperation and inter-agency co-ordination and liaison in the area of statistics;
- ix. Conclusions and recommendations of the working group on strengthening statistical capacity for poverty monitoring;
- x. Follow-up of the recommendations of the first meeting of the Sub-committee on Statistics;
- xi. ECA statistical activities during the period September 2001 – April 2003.

2. The Sub-committee called upon the secretariat to undertake a number of activities. This document reports on the implementation of some activities that were addressed to the

secretariat for implementation, the constraints experienced as well as some corrective measures for a better and effective achievement of the objectives of the Sub-committee.

## II. Follow-up Activities

### (a) Evaluation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action (AAPA) for statistical development in Africa in the 1990s: the way forward

3. Following the presentation on the evaluation of AAPA, the main focus of the Sub-committee's discussions was on "The Way forward". Participants emphasized the need for new frameworks, machineries and systems to replace the AAPA, which, despite its low level of implementation, remains relevant in many respects. This should take into account recent regional and sub-regional initiatives aimed at promoting statistical development in Africa. The Sub-committee recommended:

- i. The formulation of a strategic framework for African Statistical Development over the next decade;
- ii. The inclusion of an African chapter in the PARIS21 consortium; and,
- iii. The establishment of an Advisory Board on Statistics in Africa (ABSA), ECA being the secretariat.

4. A significant work has already been done at the secretariat level on the strategic framework. During the period under review, the cooperation between PARIS21 and ECA has been very active. This dynamic partnership will continue and is expected to enable the inclusion of an African chapter in the consortium in the near future.

5. Draft terms of reference of ABSA and a proposal concerning its membership have been made available to the Sub-committee by the secretariat. During the present session of CODI, members will be hired and a bureau will be elected. The programme of work of the Board will be discussed during the launching session following CODI-3.

### (b) The implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts (SNA93) in Africa

6. Following the adoption of the 1993 System of National Accounts (SNA93) by the Statistical Commission (SC) of the United Nations, the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA) was established to coordinate issues related to its implementation at the national level. The SC gave the lead role to regional commissions for monitoring the implementation of the new SNA in their respective regions.

7. As you are aware, about two and half years ago, the secretariat had conducted a regional survey on the conceptual compliance and the scope of compilation of the 1993 SNA accounts and tables using the two questionnaires developed by ISWGNA for this purpose. During the period under review, it has not been able to carryout a similar survey due to resource constraints. It should be noted, however, that the secretariat has been provided recently with copies of the survey returns forwarded to UNSD by Chad, Mauritius and Swaziland. Unfortunately, the corresponding response rate to the ISWGNA questionnaires by African countries was too low to enable a meaningful assessment of the SNA implementation at the regional level.

(c) **The use of statistical databases and information systems for data dissemination and decision-making**

8. Under this agenda item, the Sub-committee recommended that appropriate steps be taken to launch an initiative called "Statistics as a support for decision-making". This initiative should be linked with similar initiatives at the national and sub regional levels, especially with sub regional institutions like ADB, ECOWAS, UMA, CEMAC and SADC and also with major partners like the World Bank and its second generation of Live Database (2g-LDB).

9. As mentioned earlier, it was further recommended that the Statistical Capacity Building Trust Fund managed by the World Bank on behalf of the donors should make available adequate resources for the building and/or improvement of the computing environment of the National Statistical Offices, in terms of information and communication technologies.

10. So far, the LDB has been disseminated to sub regional institutions mainly and it is advisable to have the secretariat reinstated in its initial role discussed with the Bank. It is also advisable to have the African Regional LDB hosted by ECA, which should be the key and premier repository of statistical information in Africa.

(d) **Conclusions and recommendations of the working group on strengthening statistical capacity for poverty monitoring**

11. Among other recommendations, the working group emphasized the need to:

- Alleviate the major constraints which hampered the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for the Statistical development in Africa, i.e. lack of advocacy and ownership by member States, inadequacy of financial resources allocated to statistics, lack or inadequacy of institutional and human statistical capacity;
- Speed-up the implementation of the SNA93 in Africa by building and/or developing technical capacity in the area of national accounts;

- Strengthen statistical capacity to meet the requirements of new initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP), etc.

12. In this context, the following actions were recommended:

- National Statistical offices should submit reports to ECA on the implementation of their work programme for the previous year by the end of June of each year;
- Member States should formulate statistical development strategic plans;
- A new framework for African statistical development should be developed; and,
- An Advisory Board on Statistics in Africa (ABSA) should be established.

13. Unfortunately, the Board could not be launched before the present session of CODI, which is expected to finalize its terms of reference and membership. This has delayed, to a large extent, the establishment of the new framework for African statistical development. As for the country reports, since the last session of CODI only three countries complied with the request.

(e) ECA statistical activities during the period September 2001 - April 2003

14. During the period under review, some statistical programme elements have been relocated in ECA Sub regional Offices (SROs). Significant progress has been made in the process of establishing ABSA. The official launching of the Board is scheduled to take place after the present session of CODI. Moreover, the secretariat has convened in collaboration with the UNCTAD two workshops on International Trade on Merchandise Statistics and one on Energy Statistics. A number of recurrent and non-recurrent publications have also been released by the secretariat. Finally, advisory services on the organization and management of national statistical systems were provided to selected members of the Commission by the secretariat.

### III. Conclusion

15. The implementation rate of the major recommendations made by the Sub-committee at its second session is rather low. The reasons are the lack of resources (both financial and human), which had an adverse impact on the ability of the secretariat to fully play its role, inadequate coordination of statistical programmes at the regional level; and, the delay in the establishment of ABSA. The major achievements were recorded in the preparation and release of recurrent and non-recurrent publications and the maintenance of ECA's statistical database different modules.