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Addis Ababa, 14 October 2015 (ECA) – “Ours is to have the citizen to supply structured data in the course of her normal economic activity,” said Mr. Dozie Ezigbalike, the Chief of Data Technology at ECA’s African Centre for Statistics during the opening of the Mobile data Conference in Addis Ababa.

“One of the problems of collecting data is the low technology base and reliance on paper based methods,” said Mr Ezigbalike explaining the reasons ECA started a project on data collection through mobile devices.

Through ECA ‘s project on data collection using mobile devices, the intent is to go beyond building capacity of national statistics institutes but to include the citizen as well. ECA intends to strengthen the capacity of African countries to use mobile technologies to collect data for effective policy and decision-making.

Statistical compilation in the continent is improving with each year. ECA, African Union Commission and African Development Bank have been supporting statistical capacity in Africa. /international Financial and development partners have also invested heavily in statistical capacity in Africa.

However, ECA has brought some new perspectives to data collection: the concept of the citizen as a data collector. “Since we do not have enough statisticians to do all the work that society expects them to do, why not empower the citizen to provide the data directly to the statistical system,” elaborated Mr. Ezigbalike.

The main areas of progress in data collection are civil registration and vital statistics, censuses, comparative economics and development of strategy for the harmonization of Statistics in Africa. The demand for good statistics remains high prompting organizations like the ECA to encourage member states to further explore data collection methods that employ mobile devices.

Conference participants are expected to share ideas on data gathering ; as well as brainstorm on building relationships with citizens and develop practical idea on data gathering.

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