

# ECA hailed for commitment to improving statistics on the continent

Gaborone, Botswana, 19 February 2014 (ECA) - The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) was repeatedly hailed for its commitment and contribution to improving statistical institutions and systems on the continent.

During a seminar 'Facts and Fiction of Africa's Statistics Narrative' on the second day of the 5-day 9th African Symposium on Statistical Development (ASSD) in Botswana, ECA took centre stage as different discussants made reference to its commitment to statistics through consistent initiatives including the establishment of the African Centre for Statistics (ACS).

The current ECA restructuring and focus on data, statistics and country profiles is not particularly new for ECA. Since its establishment in 1958, statistics has been part of the commission's main agenda. The establishment of the ACS aims to elevate the ECA as the first call for member States seeking original data to inform policy decisions.

Over the years, ECA has worked and supported member States to establish efficient statistical infrastructure for the collection, processing, analysis, dissemination and archiving capabilities. The African Statistical Year book, the African socio-economic Indicators and compendium of intra-African and related foreign trade statistics are some of the outputs and programs produced by the Centre.

Meanwhile, ECA affirmed its commitment and priority to improving the statistical regime in Africa. In his opening statement ACS Chief, Data Technology Section, Chukwudozie Ezigbalike said a lot has been achieved since the last ASSD "We have moved from the drawing board to action on the ground" he said.

Ezigbalike reported successes across the continent following a resolution by the Conference of Ministers responsible for Civil Registration for each country to conduct a comprehensive assessment with time bonds and action plans for improving Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) "We are glad to report that more than 20 countries have either conducted an assessment and have either developed the plan or have at least initiated the process" he said.

During discussions in a break-away session, Albina Chuwa, Director General for the National Bureau of Statistics in Tanzania urged ECA to ensure that CRVS remained on the top agenda of African Heads of State.

The Conference of Ministers was sanctioned by African Heads of State to develop a continental framework to strengthen and advance statistical institutions.

The five-day high level symposium organised by ECA, Africa Development Bank, the African Union and hosted by the Government of Botswana has brought together about 450 delegates and is represented by 54 African countries.

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