
Experts to address Statistical Challenges on Monitoring Development Indicators beyond 2015

Addis Ababa, 15 April 2013 (ECA) — At the March 2013 Conference of African ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development that was held in Abidjan, African Ministers requested the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank and the African Union Commission to set up a Working Group that would come up with indicators aimed at following up on progress made in reaching the post 2015 development agenda in line with the Africa Common Position.

In this regard, the three institutions are jointly organizing a meeting, themed: Statistical Challenges of Monitoring Development beyond 2015 in Pretoria, South Africa on 2-3 May 2013. The objective of the meeting is to provide an opportunity to officials from the national statistical systems and other statistical organizations in the region to learn about the on-going policy work on the post-2015 development agenda at international and regional levels; initiate development of indicators and prepare a clear roadmap for meeting the statistical challenges through a balanced understanding of the likely data demand beyond 2015.

Regardless of the nature of post-2015 development framework that is finally adopted, the issues and challenges of monitoring progress against regional and national goals and targets through robustly measurable indicators still need to be seriously addressed. Further, while the policy work is in progress, it is hoped that the statistical community in Africa can start engaging in discussions on development of indicators; setting of goals and targets; as well as measurement issues for monitoring purposes. The discussion should also include the various statistical challenges currently being faced by the countries with regard to obtaining regular data for monitoring of development indicators, including those in the MDGs. Clearly, statisticians should prepare themselves to meet greater data demands in future.

Background:

In Africa, the three regional institutions namely, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), African Union Commission (AUC) and African Development Bank (AFDB) in consultation with member states and other stakeholders are developing an African position with regard to the development framework that Africa would like to see for itself beyond 2015.

The outcome of Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the post 2015 development agenda now occupy centre-stage in development discourse. The UN System Task Team (UNTT) on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, in its first report, recommended that while setting collective goals and targets, a one-size-fits-all approach should be avoided and instead these should be tailored to regional, national and sub-national conditions and priorities, while respecting international standards, and “should be tracked with data disaggregated by sex, age and geography (including rural-urban location).” The report highlights the need to monitor both the degree to which development progress is inclusive and sustainable, and the extent to which the needs of the most deprived and vulnerable groups are being addressed. It also emphasizes that the indicators and data should facilitate better assessment of policy effectiveness and contribute to strengthening accountability.

In the outcome document of the Rio+20 Conference, The Future We Want, the Heads of States and Government and high-level representatives recognized “the importance and utility of a set of sustainable development goals ... [that] ... should be coherent with and integrated into the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015, thus contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and serving as a driver for the implementation and mainstreaming of sustainable development in the United Nations system as a whole.” The Conference recognized that there is a need for global, integrated and scientifically based information on sustainable development.

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