

The 57th Session of the International Statistical Institute Concludes in Durban to Resounding Acclaim

Addis Ababa, 26 August 2009 (ECA) - The 57th Session of the International Statistical Institute (ISI) 2009 concluded in Durban South Africa on the 22nd August to widespread acclaim from the statistical fraternity. The session lasted from 16th August and was held in sub-Saharan Africa for the first time in the institutes 124 year history.

Addressing the Institute, the President of the Republic of South Africa, H.E. Jacob Zuma, said he was delighted to see that one-quarter of the 2500 delegates from 135 countries at the meeting were Africans. "The discussions around the African development agenda will provide new directions in statistical capacity building and development in Africa", he said.

Mr Zuma said it was clear that multilateral financial institutions currently have a limited capacity to respond to world economic crises. He urged statisticians to contribute to the search for durable solutions that will benefit all nations.

The African Statistical Coordination Committee (ASCC), comprising the African Development Bank (AfDB), the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), the African Union Commission (AUC), and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) worked hard to make ISI 2009 truly an African event.

Several African organisations, scholars and statisticians were able to participate and present research papers. The discussions largely dealt with the challenges of statistical development in Africa.

ASCC is also working to ensure a lasting legacy not only to South Africa as the host country but also to the entire African continent. A major part of this strategy is the *Isibalo* "Statistical Capacity Building Programme."

The programme is designed to facilitate the participation of Africa's statistical community in debates over key issues on measurement, monitoring and evaluation; encourage the improvement of statistical methodologies and foster innovations. It includes issues such as: Statistical research and capacity development; training and support for young statisticians; mathematics, statistics and the girl-child; the statistical education programme; and African women in statistics.

Isibalo also aims at developing cadres of statisticians and demographers in Africa; developing statistics education in Africa; and promoting statistical data utilization in Africa for evidence-based policy-making while creating a platform for sharing best practices.

It is therefore vital that African countries continue cultivating a culture of evidence based policy making and fostering partnerships for improved availability and use of statistics. Future challenges to include developing strategic leadership and management of statistical Offices in African countries and increasing advocacy for sustainable funding from governments.

The 57th Session of the ISI in figures

The 57th Session of the ISI was attended by more than 3000 delegates including more than 2500 elected members. There were more than 1600 papers presented on more than 300 themes, forcing organisers to hold 60 different sessions on average a day.

Issued by the ECA Information and Communication Service
P.O. Box 3001
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia

Tel: 251 11 5445098
Fax: +251 11 5510365
E-mail: ecainfo@uneca.org
Web: www.uneca.org

Related Articles

Expert Group Meeting on the Compendium of Intra-African and Related Foreign Trade Statistics (10/3/2011)

South Africa to host the International Statistics Institute 2009(8/6/2009)

International Experts Meet on Improving Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems in Africa(7/1/2009)

Toward an African plan for the development of statistics (12/19/2008)

The Statistical Commission for Africa to take charge of statistics development in Africa. (1/24/2008)

Janneh among first recipients of the African Statistics Award (1/21/2008)

First Session of the Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa) held at ECA calls for a new focus on statistics as part of the enabling environment for development(1/21/2008)