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Ninth Meeting of the Coordinating Committee on
African Statistical Development (CASD)

24 - 25 June 1999
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

REPORT

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I. Opening and duration of the meeting

1. The Coordinating Committee on African Statistical Development (CASD) held its Ninth meeting at the United Nations Conference Centre in Addis Ababa from 24 to 25 June 1999.

2. The meeting was opened by Ms. Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane, Chief Development Information Services Division (DISD), Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

II. Observance of one minute silence.

3. The meeting observed a one-minute silence in memory of Mr. George Kibirige, Director, ISAE, Makerere University, Uganda and Mr. Nguessan-Bi Kouassi, Directeur, Institut national de la statistique, Côte d'Ivoire.

III. Attendance

4. The meeting was attended by members representing ECA member States: 4; Members representing regional statistical training centres participating in the Regional Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA): 1; Members representing African and non-African, Bilateral and Multilateral Agencies and Donors: 6; and observers: 3. A list of participants is given in Annex VI to the present report.

IV. Documentation

5. The documents before the Committee at its Ninth meeting are listed in an Annex V to the present report.

V. Account of proceedings

A. Election of Chairperson (agenda item 2)

6. Mr. Charles Leyeka Lufumpa, the representative for ADB, was elected Chairperson of the meeting.

B. Agenda and organization of work (agenda item 3)

7. The meeting considered the provisional agenda contained in document ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/1 and the agenda for workshops/presentations contained in document ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/1/Add.1. The meeting adopted the agenda. The adopted agenda is in Annex II to the present report.

8. The meeting also adopted the provisional timetable for the meeting contained in document ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/inf.2. The final timetable is in Annex IV to the present report.

C. Report to the CASD by the Secretariat (agenda item 4)

9. The Committee considered this agenda item and had before it the following documents:

- (a) Report to the CASD by the Secretariat (ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/2);
- (b) Coordinating Committee on African Statistical Development: Terms of reference (ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/2/Add.1);
- (c) Coordinating Committee on African Statistical Development: Terms of reference of task forces (ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/2/Add.2);
- (d) Report on ECA Statistical activities from April 1996 to May 1999 (ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/2/Add.3);
- (e) ECA Development Information Services Division Programme of work for the biennium 2000 to 2001 (ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/2/Add.4);
- (f) Results of the survey on the production of the Minimum National Social Data Set (MNSDS) indicators (ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/2/Add.5);

Action taken by the Committee

10. The Committee:

- (a) took note of the appreciation by the East African Co-operation (EAC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for their election to the Committee membership;
- (b) commended the Secretariat for the good quality of the report, which focussed on the main issues for the Committee's deliberations;
- (c) requested copies of the project document on "Strengthening Capacity for Statistical Services in Africa" to be made available to members for their comments/observations, particularly in view of the fact that some members had not received the documents at their offices;
- (d) emphasized the importance of the Minimum Regional Statistical Programme as an instrument for better coordination of statistical activities. However what constituted a minimum was not known, therefore it was necessary to examine the major differences in the approaches to a number of initiatives and to take into account the results of the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action;
- (e) took note of the description of the Minimum common statistical programme developed by AFRISTAT (PROSMIC) which covers five main sectors – statistical coordination, national accounts, short-term indicators, data dissemination and social statistics (education and health), and the desire by some National Statistical Services (NSS), to include agriculture and poverty monitoring statistics in the programme.
- (f) welcomed the development by the Secretariat of the Manual on improving the quality of African statistics" and requested its wider dissemination to National Statistical Offices to be used, among others, for reference purposes;

- (g) noted the attendance by the Secretariat at various international meetings and requested summaries of the conclusions and recommendation of the meetings to be disseminated to African countries through appropriate mechanisms;
- (h) took note of the efforts being made in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region to define a subregional statistical programme through the identification of priority needs which will include the 1993 System of National Accounts, informal sector and implementation of the 2000 round of population and housing censuses;
- (i) taking note of the results of the survey on the MNSD indicators, wondered whether an assessment of the capacity of the countries to generate the indicators was included in the survey and requested the Secretariat to make a parallel check on which countries had compiled and published the indicators;
- (j) noted also the indicator for monitoring DAC goals;
- (k) further noting the efforts of ECOSOC to harmonize different indicator initiatives and to strengthen national capacities;
- (l) re-emphasised the need for coordination with the objective of minimizing the burden on member States in responding to questionnaires originating from various institutions. The Committee noted the experience of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the provision of incentives in this regard;
- (m) noted and commended the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) for the support provided in the organizations and funding of workshops for developing countries;
- (n) urged ECA to consider participation in the work of the city groups by including these meetings in the workprogramme;
- (o) endorsed for publication the two documents: "CASD terms of reference (revision 4) (ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/2/Add.1)" and "Terms of reference of CASD task forces (ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/2/Add.2)".

D. Reports from Coordinators on actions/activities of their task forces

Connectivity for statistics (agenda item 5 (a))

11. The Committee considered this agenda item and had before it the following documents:

- (a) Report on task force 1: Connectivity for statistics (ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/3)
- (b) A framework for building connectivity for statistical institutions in African countries (ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/3/Add.1)

Action taken by the Committee

12. The Committee:

- (a) noted the delay in the implementation of some activities planned in the first two phases and recommended that they be carried out during the third and last phases;
- (b) strongly recommended that this phase should concentrate on the development of the CASD Web site with a feasibility study on the type and number of potential users of the Web site in order to prepare an appropriate content;
- (c) noted the action underway to re-organize the Web pages and the offer by the World Bank in establishing links with the sites of other partners;
- (d) noted with satisfaction the offer made by the International Programs Center, US Bureau of Census to host, temporarily, a mirror site on one of its servers for national statistical services facing difficulties to access the Internet.

Monitoring the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action (agenda item 5(b))

13. The Committee considered this agenda item and had before it the following documents:

- (a) Report of task force 2: Monitoring the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action (ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/4);
- (b) Compendium of statistical activities in African countries (ECA/DISD/CASD.8/98/4);
- (c) Report on the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action at regional, sub-regional and national levels (ECA/DISD/CASD.8/98/4/R).

Action taken by the Committee

14. The Committee:

- (a) commended the Secretariat for the informative and detailed survey reports, which were prepared as final outputs of the task forces;
- (b) noted that the Compendium provided the list and structure of statistical activities in African countries in 1997 while the Report on the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action gave an indication of the level of implementation by African countries in 1997;
- (c) requested a careful check of the completeness of the information conveyed in the reports before printing the survey reports for a wider dissemination;
- (d) urged the Secretariat to reduce non-response to questionnaires for surveys of this nature by collaborating more closely with subregional economic groupings for assistance;
- (e) recommended that the findings and recommendations on the reports should be formulated as a memorandum and presented to the ECA Conference of Ministers by Heads of National

Statistical Offices. In that way, the results of this significant piece of work would be used for policy making by African governments;

- (f) requested further clarification on the number and scope of the statistical activities reported in the Compendium. Such an exercise would entail interaction with the individual countries and could be undertaken by those agencies/individuals interested in conducting a study of that particular country;
- (g) recommended that a new Strategy should be prepared to take into account new challenges such as the changing state of the national statistical services, new approaches to compilation of data, application of new technology, making statistics more consumer related, etc. This Strategy should also address aspects of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action which were not fully implemented, i.e. funding for statistical activities; long-term statistical development plans; existence of national statistical councils; statistical user/producer committees; and statistical producer/producer committees; research, methods and standards; legislation for statistical services; priority by African government on statistical activities; and staff development programmes;
- (h) recognized the concerns on the sustainability of foreign donor support projects which were affected by, among other factors, lack of ownerships and inadequate planning in some instances. Considered having the relevance of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action beyond 1999 and hence the future of the CASD and:
 - (i) decided to discuss the subject on the relevance of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action and the future of CASD under a new agenda item during the current meeting;
 - (ii) reaffirmed that the Addis Ababa Plan of Action was still relevant beyond the year 1999;
 - (iii) recommended that an evaluation on the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action and the activities of the CASD would provide answers to questions on continued relevance and impact of the implementation;
 - (iv) urged that the evaluation should be undertaken within the next twelve months to enable input into a new Strategy to be prepared to guide statistical development for the year 2000 and beyond.
- (i) endorsed the recommendations made in the two reports and requested a review of the modalities for implementing them;
- (j) encouraged the move to semi and full autonomy by national statistical offices in African countries, however cautioned that full autonomy would be unattainable particularly in view of the fact that statistics was a public good.

Strengthening of the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA) centres (agenda item 5 (c))

15. The Committee considered this agenda item and had before it the following document:

- (a) Report on Statistical Training in Africa: The Statistical Training Programme for Africa, its evaluation and the future (ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/5/Add.1).

Action taken by the Committee

16. The Committee:

- (a) commended the Secretariat for a detailed and comprehensive report;
- (b) noted the evolution of the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA), the problems that the STPA centres faced, such as physical space, inadequate facilities and lack of fellowships for students as well as the assessment of the several evaluations that have been made in the report;
- (c) noted the several evaluations of the centres which had been implemented by various donors and the assessment of those evaluations;
- (d) noted also the serious impact of structural adjustment programmes on statistical training in Africa, in particular that resources dwindled against increasing numbers of students wishing to gain admission to the centres;
- (e) recognized the positive role that STPA centres had played and continued to play in training of statisticians at professional and middle levels;
- (f) appreciated the great gains that the Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics at Makerere, in Uganda had made through creative use of research and networking with similar institutions in and outside Africa;
- (g) welcomed the European Union's financial support for statistical training, to countries of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the proposed expansion to countries of Eastern Africa;
- (h) thanked also other bilateral and multilateral donors for the support they provided to statistical training in Africa;
- (i) reaffirmed the regional coordinating role of CASD and the ECA;
- (j) decided to endorse the recommendations contained at paragraphs 242 to 244 of the report on Statistical Training in Africa: The Future of the Statistical Training Programme for Africa

Databases and databanks (agenda item 5(d))

17. The Committee considered this agenda item and had before it the following document:

Report on task force 4: Databases and databanks (ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/6).

18. The Committee:

- (a) took note of the fact that the programme on bringing the live database to Africa was aimed, initially, at providing national statistical services with a CD-ROM version of data available to the World Bank and ultimately, at providing them with an LDB model to be used as a tool for developing, maintaining and disseminating their own data;
- (b) requested clarification on the technological environment and the protocols for the installation of live databases as well as household survey databases;
- (c) took note of the ongoing work to translate the current version which operates on an MS-SQL server to an Oracle environment and to develop a second generation of LDBs compatible with a larger number of informatic platforms than the current version;
- (d) welcomed the importance attached by subregional institutions like ECOWAS to World Bank databases and databanks;
- (e) noted with satisfaction that access to LDBs is open to all requesting countries which will also be provided one week's training in statistical analysis and benefit from the flexibility of the proposed database structure which they can adapt to their national needs;
- (f) also took note of the difficulty of transmitting World Bank household survey files to ECA headquarters and the need for renegotiating the protocols with countries concerned since they are the sole owners of the information on those files;
- (g) decided to give further thought to this matter and to come up with recommendations regarding the confidentiality of primary data and the conditions under which they can be disseminated; and
- (h) noted that co-operation of the World Bank with ECA and ADB will continue and African Statistical Training Centres in installing database and databank products and supporting structures;
- (i) noted further the request of the OAU and ISAE for installation of the Live DataBase (LDB) for research and training.

Gender in the national accounts (agenda item 5 (e))

19. The Committee considered this agenda item and had before it the following document:

Report on task force 5: Gender in the national accounts (ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/7)

Action taken by the Committee

20. The Committee:

- (a) welcomed the actions taken towards implementing the task force on gender in the national accounts;
- (b) noted the additional information regarding, the recruitment and terms of reference for the interns and the actions towards identification of a consultant;
- (c) urged the task force leader to reinforce communications with associate members of the task force and to circulate all technical materials to task force members.

E. Relevance of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action and the future of the CASD (new agenda item)

21. The Committee considered this new agenda item following its decision under agenda item 5(b). There was no further documentation.

Action taken by the Committee:

22. The Committee:

- (a) recognized that even though the Addis Ababa Plan of Action was still relevant, its term would end in six months time. Further, the situation regarding statistical development had changed over the decade;
- (b) recommended that a formal evaluation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action should be undertaken and should include a review of the CASD. The evaluation should be undertaken by an independent evaluator following the terms of reference to be prepared by the Committee. The need to undertake this during a reasonable time frame i.e. next twelve months was emphasized. The results of the evaluation would be used in the preparation of the new strategy;
- (c) recognized that unlike a decade ago, there was now enough material to enable a new strategy to be prepared. These materials included the current Plan of Action and the Strategy for its implementation, the document on the STPA which was presented to the present meeting, reports of the two surveys conducted by the Secretariat between 1997 and 1998 under task force 2 and the Workshop on improving the quality of African statistics;
- (d) proposed the creation of a Working Group of CODI which could deal with such issues as task forces previously coordinated by CASD. Such a Working Group would meet more frequently than the CODI which now meets every two years. Such a Working Group could be composed of Directors of African Statistical Offices. Problems of participation of the members at meetings of the Working Group were to be considered during the preparation of the new strategy;
- (e) recommended that in preparing a new strategy, there was need to take into account the operational aspects of the national statistical offices, particularly that they work closely with partners in the implementation of their activities. There was also need to integrate the

coordination/collaboration with users of statistical products, in the preparation of such a strategy;

- (f) recognized that the preparation of a new strategy offered a window of opportunity particularly now that capacity building was being emphasized by donors;
- (g) accepted the challenge of moving forward towards the conduct of the evaluation and demonstrated its commitment by forming a task force composed of members of CASD present at the meeting. The objective of the task force was to draft terms of reference for the evaluation, prepare a draft timetable for it and propose possible sources of finance;
- (h) welcomed the following volunteers to the task force membership: Nigeria, DFID, World Bank, US Bureau of the Census, UNFPA, South Africa, AFRISTAT and ECOWAS. Nigeria was nominated coordinator of the task force. The task force agreed to start its work immediately and to complete it before the end of the CODI meeting.

F. Selected issues on statistical development in Africa

Improving the quality of African statistics (agenda item 6(a))

23. The Committee considered this agenda item and had before it the following document:

Selected issues on statistical development in Africa: Improving the quality of African statistics (ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/8).

Action taken by the Committee

24. The Committee:
- (a) commended the secretariat for a very rich document which provided information on the conceptual framework for improving the quality of statistics in Africa;
 - (b) urged that the recommendation of the Workshop on improving the quality of statistics in Africa be used as one of the materials for the formulation of the new strategy to guide statistical development in Africa in the period 2000 and beyond;
 - (c) expressed concern on the fact that the workshop on improving the quality of African statistics was organized for the English-speaking African countries only and noted plans to organize another workshop for French-speaking African countries;
 - (d) requested the Secretariat to disseminate the Manual on Improving the Quality of African Statistics and the report of the workshop which was held in Addis Ababa, 14-18 December 1998.

Partnership for statistical development (agenda item 6(b))

25. The Committee considered this agenda item and had before it the following document:

Selected issues on statistical development in Africa: Partnership for statistical development
(ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/9)

Action taken by the Committee

26. The Committee:

The Committee:

- (a) welcomed the report on partnership for statistical development in Africa;
- (b) noted the assessment of the status of technical cooperation between the Economic Commission for Africa and its partners in the area of statistics over the past three decades, and the orientations of the Commission's intervention in this domain;
- (c) noted also that the Commission was planning to convene in the near future, a meeting of bilateral and multilateral donor agencies to review several project proposals prepared by the Commission in various area, including statistical development;
- (d) recommended that ECA should monitor closely the statistical activities that are carried out by other regional and sub-regional organizations, in order to set up appropriate mechanisms for sharing and exchange of information;
- (e) urged ECA to liaise with the other regional Commission in order to review and draw lessons from their experiences in the promotion of statistical development;
- (f) requested ECA to conduct a survey of technical cooperation activities between other regional and sub-regional organizations and their partners and prepare, on the basis of the materials a comprehensive report on partnership for statistical development in the region;
- (g) requested ECA to undertake an assessment of the demand for regional advisors; this assessment should include the number of advisors, their sectoral distribution and their profiles.

G. Any other business

27. There was no other business raised by the Committee.

H. Date and venue of the next meeting

28. The Committee:

- (a) agreed that CASD, or subject to the decision of CODI, a successor group would meet within twelve months time to consider the results of the evaluation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action implementation and any other issues of relevance to its work. The actual date would be established in consultation with members;
- (b) agreed that the venue of the next meeting should be Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

I. Adoption of the conclusions and recommendations of the meeting

29. The meeting adopted its report.

J. Workshops and presentations

30. The US Bureau of the Census, International Programmes Center presented workshops on three software products:

- Next generation of IMPS (generalized packages for census and survey processing);
- Corsstab, Windows standalone version (for quick cross tabulations); and
- Webmap, Internet version of Crosstab.

K. Closure of the meeting

31. The Chief of DISD made closing remarks of appreciation for the work done by the Committee.

32. The Chairperson declared the meeting closed.

Agenda

1. Opening statement
2. Election of Chairperson
3. Adoption of the agenda and other organisational matters
4. Report to the CASD by the secretariat
5. Reports from coordinators on actions/activities of their task forces on:
 - (a) connectivity for statistics;
 - (b) monitoring the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action;
 - (c) strengthening of the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA) Centres;
 - (d) databases and databanks;
 - (e) gender in the national accounts.

(After presentation of each report, the Committee will discuss achievements, impact, and future work of the task force)

6. Selected issues on statistical development in Africa:
 - (a) improving the quality of African statistics;
 - (b) partnership for statistical development.
7. Any other business
8. Date and venue of the next meeting
9. Adoption of the conclusions and recommendations of the meeting
10. Closure of the meeting.

AGENDA FOR WORKSHOPS /PRESENTATIONS

Presentation of three software products by the International Programs Center (IPC), US Bureau of the Census

- A. Next generation of IMPS (generalized package for census & survey processing)
- B. CrossTab, Windows standalone version (for quick cross tabulations)
- C. WebMap, Internet version of CrossTab

List of documents

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|-----|--|----------------------------|
| 1. | Provisional agenda | ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/1 |
| 2. | Provisional agenda for workshops/presentations | ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/1/Add.1 |
| 3. | Annotations to the provisional agenda | ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/1/Add.2 |
| 4. | Provisional list of participants | ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/inf.1 |
| 5. | Provisional timetable | ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/inf.2 |
| 6. | Information for participants | ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/inf.3 |
| 7. | Report of the CASD by the secretariat | ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/2 |
| 8. | Coordinating Committee on African Statistical Development: Terms of reference | ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/2/Add.1 |
| 9. | Coordinating Committee on African Statistical Development: Terms of reference of task forces | ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/2/Add.2 |
| 10. | Report on ECA statistical activities from May 1996 to May 1999 | ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/2/Add.3 |
| 11. | ECA Development Information Services Division Programme of work for the biennium 2000-2001 | ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/2/Add.4 |
| 12. | Results of the survey on the production of the MNSDS indicators | ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/2/Add.5 |
| 13. | Report on task force 1: Connectivity for statistics | ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/3 |
| 14. | A framework for building connectivity for statistical institutions in African countries | ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/3/Add.1 |
| 15. | Report on task force 2: Monitoring the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action | ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/4 |
| 16. | Compendium of statistical activities in African countries | ECA/DISD/CASD.8/98/4 |
| 17. | Report on the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action at regional, subregional and national levels | ECA/DISD/CASD.8/98/4/R |
| 18. | Report on Statistical Training in Africa: The Statistical Training Programme for Africa, its evaluation and the future | ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/5/Add.1 |
| 19. | Report on task force 4: Databases and Databanks | ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/6 |
| 20. | Report on task force 5: Gender in the national accounts | ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/7 |
| 21. | Selected issues on statistical development in Africa: Improving the quality of African statistics | ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/8 |
| 22. | Selected issues on statistical development in Africa: Partnership for statistical development | ECA/DISD/CASD.9/99/9 |

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