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Yaounde, 28 July 2015 (ECA) – The UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is actively disseminating the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics across five more African countries. In a strategic move, the Commission is currently running a training workshop in Yaounde, Cameroon, with the objective of availing statisticians with the practical skills and tools necessary for conducting surveys in agriculture, in order to help leaders formulate well-informed agricultural policies.

Participants at the workshop are senior civil servants drawn from national statistics offices and ministries in charge of agriculture of Cameroon, Madagascar, the Central African Republic, Chad and Comoros. Their task is to study **the use of master samples** for agricultural censuses and surveys. This system of data collection promoted by the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics was adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission in February 2010. Via this method, a part of the population, households, individuals and agricultural holdings can be used and reused for several surveys.

ECA experts say, when employed in the agricultural sector, this sampling method helps to reduce the cost of studies. The technique also provides for an integrated approach, by which completely different studies can use the same sample. This renders cross-survey analyses very convenient.

The on-going workshop also provides participants with the opportunity to share experiences in the gathering of agricultural data across different countries, to bring each of them up to speed with current techniques in conducting survey and censuses as well as in data processing. The ultimate aim is for an improved capacity of African national agricultural systems to produce quality statistics.

The workshop is the result of a joint effort by ECA, the capacity building component of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics, the African Group on Statistical Training and Human Resources (AGROST), as well as Cameroon's National Institute of Statistics and its Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

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