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**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ADDIS ABABA PLAN OF ACTION
FOR STATISTICAL DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA
IN THE 1990S: PROGRESS REPORT**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The twenty-seventh session of the Economic Commission for Africa/Eighteen meeting of the Conference of Ministers responsible for economic planning and development, held in April 1992, adopted the Strategy for the Implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s and requested the Executive Secretary to report every two years on the progress made in the implementation of the Plan of Action.

The Strategy provides a comprehensive framework for the current efforts to rehabilitate, revitalize and develop African statistics and to build up statistical capacities in the region. As noted in the introduction to the Strategy, the Addis Ababa Plan of Action is based on three cardinal principles, i.e., the central role of an improved statistical system in economic and social development; the key role of ECA in development and promotion of statistics in Africa, without prejudice to the important role of other agencies and donors; and the need for coordinating the support provided by international agencies and donors.

Significant groundwork has been achieved towards the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action. In particular, guidelines for needs assessment and strategy development and for monitoring statistical development have been prepared for use by member States. Also, the observance of African Statistics Day, on 18 November, is now included in the list of events to be celebrated each year in most countries of the region. Furthermore, a Coordinating Committee on African Statistical Development (CASD) and four sub-committees have been established to assist in the coordination of statistical development activities in the region. At the global level, the United Nations Statistical Commission and the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities emphasized the special role in the African region of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s.

The ECA Conference of Ministers is invited to pay particular attention to the following issues:

- (a) The need to reiterate the appeal to member States to take necessary action to set up as soon as possible needs assessment and strategy development teams to identify needs and priorities of national statistical systems;
- (b) The need to enhance ECA's role in formulation/execution/implementation and technical support of UNDP-funded country programmes and projects in statistics through the use of TSS1 and TSS2 (technical support services) modalities;
- (c) The need for ECA to coordinate more effectively its programme of technical cooperation in statistics with that of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA);
- (d) The need for ECA to formalize arrangements for coordination of technical cooperation in statistics with other multilateral (i.e., World Bank, UNICEF, ILO) and bilateral agencies.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The twenty-seventh session of the Economic Commission for Africa/eighteenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers responsible for economic planning and development, held in April 1992, adopted the Strategy for the Implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s and requested the Executive Secretary to report every two years on the progress made in the implementation of the Plan of Action {see resolution 734 (XXVII) in annex}.
2. The Strategy provides a comprehensive framework for the current efforts to rehabilitate, revitalize and develop African statistics and to build up statistical capacities in the region. As noted in the introduction to the Strategy, the Addis Ababa Plan of Action is based on three cardinal principles, i.e., the central role of an improved statistical system in economic and social development; the key role of ECA in the development and promotion of statistics in Africa, without prejudice to the important role of other agencies and donors; and the need for coordinating the support provided by international agencies and donors.
3. The Strategy document describes some of the main steps that should be taken to ensure that the Plan is implemented at the national, regional and global levels.
4. A brief account of the activities carried out so far at the different levels is given in the subsequent paragraphs. In drawing the conclusions, some recommendations will also be made to accelerate the implementation of the Plan.

II. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION

A. At national level

5. The resolution referred to above urges member States, as a first step towards the implementation of the Plan of Action, to conduct an assessment of their respective statistical needs and priorities which should be the basis for putting in place appropriate organizational structures for the national statistical systems, preparing statistical development plans covering five to ten years and developing biennial or annual work programmes and budgets.
6. In this connection, the Executive Secretary has transmitted the final version of the Strategy document, as endorsed by the eighteenth meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers, to all governments of ECA member States, with a covering letter highlighting the main actions expected to be carried out by each country in order to ensure sustainable development of statistics in the African region.
7. Guidelines for needs assessment and strategy development (NASD) have also been prepared and despatched to all member States, with a recommendation that countries should adapt them to suit their particular conditions, priority needs and the state of statistical development, taking also into account relevant action being or already undertaken.
8. Although a number of African countries are in the process of launching NASD exercises, only Kenya and Nigeria have actually undertaken such an assessment so far.
9. The Kenyan experience may give other countries some ideas about the organization of such exercises. The exercise was undertaken by a task force of eminent Kenyans from both the public and private sectors of the economy, under the chairmanship of a recently retired and a prominent ex-Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance. The task force prioritized the needs for statistics and the role of the Central Bureau of Statistics in

coordinating and managing the national statistical system and collecting appropriate data. It recommended appropriate legal authority required by the Central Bureau of Statistics to undertake its tasks and the institutional arrangements and appropriate structure as well as the resources needed.

10. It also became apparent from the NASD exercise that, in order to stay in line with the dynamically changing socio-economic situation, it was necessary to revise statistical development plans on continuous basis through regular monitoring of the prevailing circumstances.

11. The Nigerian exercise, which was started recently, will involve not only needs assessment and strategy development but will also highlight areas in which external support would be needed. Some countries, including Chad, Mali and Côte d'Ivoire are in the process or about to embark upon smaller-scale NASD exercises.

12. From the NASD exercises hitherto conducted, it is apparent that countries in the region will continue to require technical support from external sources in development of their national statistical systems and implementation of specific data collection initiatives.

13. One of the recommendations of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action is the adoption of African Statistics Day, 18 November, in order to increase public awareness for the important role which statistics play in all aspects of social and economic life. This Day was celebrated for the fourth time in 1993.

14. Many African countries have reported their activities in celebration of African Statistics Day, while information on celebration of this event was also obtained through missions of ECA staff members. This is a very encouraging indication of the initiatives being taken by the countries to sensitize their respective populations on the need for timely and accurate statistics. In this connection, it should be mentioned that the Minister responsible for Planning of Burkina Faso had written, in April 1993, to the ECA Executive Secretary to suggest that the directors of African statistical services as well as interested agencies and other partners in African statistical development meet in Ouagadougou in November 1993 to celebrate African Statistics Day. The Executive Secretary welcomed the proposal but unfortunately his efforts to secure the necessary financial support were not successful, particularly following the termination in March 1993 of the UNDP-financed Statistical Development Programme for Africa (SDPA) project, which was executed by ECA.

15. For 1994, it has been proposed to explore the possibility of merging the celebration of African Statistics Day with the biennial scientific conference of the African Statistical Association and/or the meeting of the Institute of Statisticians (IOS).

16. At the national level, it is essential that a periodic report on the implementation of the Plan of Action is prepared by the national statistical office, in cooperation with all the national institutions concerned with statistical development. For the report to be useful, it should include areas of achievement and failure as well as recommendations for improvements. It will also be necessary to assess the political and resource commitments of governments as an indication of the priority accorded to statistical development, to monitor the flow and usage of donor assistance and to assess and monitor actions taken at various levels in the areas spelt out in the Plan of Action and the Strategy for its implementation.

17. A document entitled "Framework for monitoring statistical development" has been prepared by the ECA secretariat with the assistance of a consultant and has been sent to all African countries for comments and suggestions. It is hoped to finalize this document as soon as possible for use by member States.

B. At the regional level

18. Significant progress has been achieved in the last two years towards the implementation of the Plan of Action at the regional level.

19. In this connection, a Coordinating Committee on African Statistical Development (CASD) was established in March 1992. It acts as the coordinating body for statistical development activities in the African region and assists ECA in reporting to the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers on the progress made in the implementation of the Plan of Action. The members of CASD comprise representatives of the Bureau of the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers, representatives of training centres participating in the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA), intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations (IGOs and NGOs) as well as multilateral and bilateral donors and United Nations agencies.

20. The secretariat of CASD is located in the ECA Statistics Division and is responsible for the overall monitoring of the implementation of the Plan of Action. It is the repository of all reports and reference materials relating to the activities of the Committee.

21. Four meetings of CASD have been held since March 1992. The last one took place during the eighth session of the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers in March 1994. The following agencies are among the active members of the Committee: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Statistical Division (UNSTAT), International Labour Organisation, Central Bureau of Statistics-Norway, Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques (INSEE) of France, United Kingdom Overseas Development Administration (ODA), National Institute for Statistics (INE) of Portugal, Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT), Statistics Sweden, Organization of African Unity (OAU), African Development Bank (ADB), Centre européen de formation de statisticiens économistes des pays en développement (CESD-Paris), the Munich Centre for Advance Training in Applied Statistics, International Statistical Programs Center (ISPC), US Bureau of the Census, Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics (ISAE), Makerere University and Eastern Africa Statistical Training Centre (EASTC). All the meetings of the Committee were attended by the Chairperson of the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers. Two CASD meetings which were held during the seventh and eighth sessions of the Joint Conference were attended at least by four members of the Bureau of the Conference.

22. The main CASD Committee has established four sub-committees in accordance with the modalities of the Strategy for the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s. These are as follows:

<u>Sub-committee</u>	<u>Convener (s)</u>
1. Training	EUROSTAT and ODA
2. Research, methods and standards	UNSTAT
3. Data processing	Statistics Sweden
4. Organization and management of national statistical systems	ECA and the World Bank

23. All the sub-committees but the Sub-committee on Research, Methods and Standards which had its first meeting in March 1994, have held two meetings so far and are very active in supporting the activities of CASD in their respective fields.
24. It should be pointed out that, for example, the guidelines on needs assessment and strategy development and the draft framework for monitoring statistical development were discussed at the meetings of CASD and its sub-committees before they were finalized.
25. The ECA secretariat is considering the possibility of mobilizing the respective sub-committees of CASD to prepare action-oriented position papers in their designated respective fields of interest for adoption by CASD.
26. As already indicated, countries of the region will continue to require external assistance in support of their efforts towards the development of their national statistical systems. UNDP and UNFPA have played a prominent role in the past in providing such support. Both agencies have now implemented new regimes of technical cooperation arrangements. It is imperative that the technical cooperation capability located in ECA is aptly deployed in the context of the TSS1 and TSS2 (technical support services) modalities of technical cooperation introduced by UNDP and in coordination with the operations of the three country support teams established by UNFPA in the region to backstop UNFPA's programmes of technical cooperation in sub-Saharan Africa. This is important to ensure coordinated application of external assistance in developing integrated statistical systems at the national level and avoid duplication of external efforts. Apart from UNDP and UNFPA, some other multilateral and bilateral agencies as well have ongoing programmes of technical cooperation in the field of statistics which should also be coordinated in the context of the stipulations of the Strategy.
27. In connection with African Statistics Day, the Committee suggested that a video film on African statistical development could be made. Excellent initiatives and materials for such a film already exist in some countries. The CASD secretariat is in the process of identifying agencies which would like to be associated with the development of such a video film.
28. In addition, the National Institute for Statistics, Portugal, is prepared to assist in reproducing the Portuguese version of publicity materials in observance of African Statistics Day for use by Portuguese-speaking African countries. Furthermore, the International Statistical Programs Center, Washington, D.C., prepared an audio tape, with the assistance of two African participants in one of their courses, that might be used to promote African Statistics Day. The script used for these tapes was forwarded, after adaptation by ECA, to all national statistical offices in the African region to assist them in preparing their messages for radio broadcast and television on the occasion of the celebration of African Statistics Day in 1993.
29. It should also be mentioned that every year ECA prepares a press release and posters in observance of African Statistics Day. However, since 1992, ECA has observed African Statistics Day and African Development Information Day simultaneously on 18 November. The press release therefore covers both days. Through his letter dated 19 October 1993, the Executive Secretary drew the attention of all member States to the importance of observing these two events which help to remind everyone of the vital role played by statistics and development information systems in all aspects of life and particularly in planning, monitoring and evaluation of national development activities. The theme of the 1993 celebrations was "Strengthening information systems for development planning and policy reforms".
30. The Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers is the main technical body responsible for providing guidance in the fields of planning, statistics, population and information science and

taking action to ensure their development in the African region. In this connection, at its seventh session in March 1992, the Joint Conference considered and approved the Strategy for the Implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s before it was adopted by the ECA Conference of Ministers the same year.

31. At its eighth session in March 1994, the Joint Conference reviewed the progress made on various aspects related to the implementation of the Plan of Action.

C. At the global level

32. In accordance with the recommendation of the Strategy for the Implementation of the Plan of Action, ECA introduced, at the twenty-sixth session of the ACC Sub-committee on Statistical Activities, held in Geneva in April 1992, an agenda item on coordination issues in strategies for statistical development in Africa. Follow-up actions by the various agencies were discussed. Subsequently, at the request of the Working Group of the United Nations Statistical Commission, ECA and the World Bank, in collaboration with UNDP, prepared a joint paper on the Strategy for the twenty-seventh session of the Statistical Commission, held in New York from 22 February to 3 March 1993. That session of the Statistical Commission emphasized the role of the regional commissions in promoting coordination of technical cooperation projects in statistics and that of national statistical offices in coordination at the country level. It also emphasized the special role in the African region of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action. The Commission was of the view that the Plan of Action provided a framework for statistical development and technical cooperation in statistics in the African region and urged that any future technical cooperation activities in the region be organized within the framework of the Plan of Action.

33. Also, the twenty-seventh session of the ACC Sub-committee on Statistical Activities, held in Geneva in September 1993, considered an ECA report entitled "Coordinating Committee on African Statistical Development (CASD) - Need for additional operational support" and expressed satisfaction for the activities that various agencies were carrying out in support of the Plan of Action.

34. In the context of the United Nations regular programme of technical cooperation, it needs to be noted that while the Strategy has stipulated a key role for ECA in development and promotion of statistics in Africa, the resources at the disposal of ECA to undertake the tasks effectively need to be supplemented. These resources are located in the recently established Multidisciplinary Regional Advisory Group (MRAG), supported also by the skills available in the ECA substantive divisions. Resources hitherto provided by UNFPA have been relocated to support UNFPA-funded programmes and those provided by UNDP under SDPA are no longer available as a result of termination of UNDP's support for the programme. Under the circumstances, therefore, there is need to review the United Nations regular programme of technical cooperation in statistics at the global level and reallocate the resources for technical cooperation in statistics as per enhanced need for technical support to countries which can be more effectively served from ECA.

III. CONCLUSION

35. It appears from the brief account which has just been given that significant groundwork has been achieved towards the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action.

36. However, as already indicated earlier, only Kenya and Nigeria have so far been engaged in fully-fledged NASD operations towards the revitalization of their statistical systems. It should be emphasized that the NASD exercises have to take into account local conditions and the status of statistical development in each country.

Therefore the plan made by a number of countries to carry out smaller scale NASD exercises is in order. ECA and the agencies participating in CASD stand ready to assist member States in these exercises as the need arises.

37. It was unfortunate that UNDP was unable to give a favourable response to the request of the ECA Conference of Ministers to provide, during its fifth Inter-Country Programming Cycle, sufficient resources to ECA for the regional operational support to implement the Plan of Action due to severe financial difficulties. ECA resources however need to be supplemented to undertake the tasks assigned to it in the implementation of the Plan of Action. Furthermore, as noted earlier, UNDP (and also UNFPA) have now instituted new regimes for technical cooperation, the main emphasis of which is on country execution.

38. In this connection, it is encouraging to note that a number of African countries were able to mobilize the necessary resources to support their participants at a workshop on the implementation of the New System of National Accounts organized by ECA in December 1993. Also, the costs of advisory missions in the field of population, undertaken by the UNFPA multidisciplinary teams in which there are 12 ECA advisers, are charged to country projects since 1 January 1993. Such a practice should also be extended to other fields.

39. There is now need for ECA's programme of technical cooperation in statistics to be synchronized with the new arrangements on technical cooperation instituted by UNDP and UNFPA and with those of other multi-lateral and bilateral agencies to achieve the overall objectives of the strategy on the development and promotion of statistics in Africa.

IV. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE

40. The Conference of Ministers is invited to make comments and suggestions on progress made so far towards the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s and to provide guidance for future actions in the light of this report, with particular reference to the following needs:

(a) To reiterate the appeal to member States to take necessary action to set up as soon as possible needs assessment and strategy development (NASD) teams to identify needs and priorities of national statistical systems;

(b) To enhance ECA's role in formulation/execution/implementation and technical support of UNDP-funded country programmes and projects in statistics through the use of TSS1 and TSS2 modalities;

(c) For ECA to coordinate more effectively its programme of technical cooperation in statistics with that of UNFPA;

(d) For ECA to formalize arrangements for coordination of technical cooperation in statistics with other multilateral (i.e., World Bank, UNICEF, ILO) and bilateral agencies.

Annex

RESOLUTION

734 (XXVII). Implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s

The Conference of Ministers,

Recalling its resolution 683 (XXV) of May 1990 on the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s,

Noting with satisfaction that an Intergovernmental Working Group met in Nairobi in July 1991 to further review and elaborate on the principles, objectives and recommendations of this Plan of Action and formulate detailed strategies for its implementation,

Taking note of the report of the seventh session of the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers, especially as regards the Strategy for the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action,

Noting further with satisfaction the establishment of the Coordinating Committee on African Statistical Development under the sponsorship of ECA and UNDP,

Concerned with the limited resources available while it is essential to have reliable and up-to-date data for designing, monitoring and evaluating short-term policy reforms and long-term planning to support the current efforts to transform and restructure African economies,

1. Adopts the Strategy for the Implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s;
2. Appeals to all parties concerned, including African Governments, international organizations, multilateral and bilateral agencies and institutions, to use the Strategy referred to above as an overall framework for development of statistics in Africa in the 1990s;
3. Urges member States to set up as soon as possible needs assessment/programme review and strategy development teams to draw lessons from past experience and to identify needs and priorities, taking into account local conditions and the state of statistical development, and to formulate draft five- to ten-year national statistical development plans;
4. Requests the United Nations Development Programme to provide during its fifth Inter-country Programming Cycle sufficient resources to ECA for the regional operational support to the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s;
5. Calls upon other agencies to provide complementary resources to ECA for the regional operations in respect of the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action;
6. Further calls upon all interested donor agencies to assist countries in establishing national Statistical Development Funds, as recommended in the Addis Ababa Plan of Action, for meeting assessed statistical needs in accordance with national plans and priorities;
7. Requests the Executive Secretary of the Commission to report to the Conference of Ministers every two years on progress made on this Plan of Action.