



## Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
8 January 2021

Original: English

**Economic Commission for Africa**  
**Statistical Commission for Africa**  
Seventh meeting

Addis Ababa (online), 13–15 October 2020

### **Summary of the proceedings and outcomes of the seventh meeting of the Statistical Commission for Africa**

#### **I. Introduction**

1. The seventh meeting of the Statistical Commission for Africa was held from 13 to 15 October 2020 under the theme “Developing regional solutions to enhance the resilience of African national statistical systems to meet the need for data during the Decade of Action in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic” to review current trends and devise innovative statistical solutions to strengthen national statistical systems in Africa in the context of the pandemic.

#### **II. Attendance**

##### **Member States**

2. The seventh meeting was attended by delegates from the following member States: Algeria; Angola; Benin; Botswana; Burkina Faso; Burundi; Cabo Verde; Cameroon; Chad; Democratic Republic of the Congo; Djibouti; Egypt; Equatorial Guinea; Eswatini; Ethiopia; Gambia; Ghana; Lesotho; Liberia; Madagascar; Malawi; Mali; Mauritania; Mauritius; Morocco; Namibia; Niger; Nigeria; Rwanda; Sao Tome and Principe; Senegal; Seychelles; Sierra Leone; South Africa; United Republic of Tanzania; Tunisia; and Zambia.

##### **Observers**

3. The meeting was attended by observers from the following non-African States and international, regional, subregional and national organizations and institutions:

(a) Non-African States: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, France, Norway;

(b) International, regional and subregional organizations and institutions: African Development Bank (AfDB); African Union Commission (AUC); Southern African Development Community; Intergovernmental Authority on Development; Economic Community of West African States;



Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa; Economic and Statistical Observatory for Sub-Saharan Africa; Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development; Partnership in Statistics for Development in the Twenty-first Century (PARIS21), European Union; and Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries;

(c) Training institutions: Eastern Africa Statistical Training Centre; University of Ibadan; University of Ghana Regional Institute for Population Studies; Oklahoma State University; *Ecole Nationale de Statistique et d'Economie Appliquée* (National School of Statistics and Applied Economics), Côte d'Ivoire; *Ecole Nationale de la Statistique et de l'Analyse Economique* (National School of Statistics and Economic Analysis), Senegal; and African Institute for Economic Development and Planning;

(d) Agencies of the United Nations system: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics; United Nations Statistics Division; United Nations Population Fund; United Nations Development Programme; World Health Organization (WHO); United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); International Organization for Migration; United Nations country teams; and International Labour Organization;

(e) Others: international statistics consultants and other prominent persons.

### **III. Election of the Bureau and adoption of the agenda**

4. Participants approved the retention of the outgoing Bureau for the following two years (2020 to 2022). The membership of the Bureau comprised:

Chair: United Republic of Tanzania

First Vice Chair: Kenya

Second Vice Chair: Tunisia

First Rapporteur: Zambia

Second Rapporteur: Senegal

5. The following agenda was adopted by the delegates:

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Statutory issues.
3. Statistical activities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic: the experiences of member States.
4. Strategies to strengthen the data ecosystem in the context of United Nations reforms: African perspectives.
5. Initiatives on emerging issues.
6. Statistical capacity-building programmes of ECA partners.
7. Consideration of recommendations and conclusions.
8. Closing of the meeting.

## IV. Account of proceedings

### Opening of the meeting [agenda item 1]

6. The meeting was officially opened by the President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Sahle-Work Zewde. Underscoring the relevance and timeliness of the theme of the meeting, Ms. Zewde took stock of the adverse effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and stressed the urgency of transforming statistical production systems in African countries to generate the data needed in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union.

7. Welcoming remarks were then given by the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Vera Songwe, who said that, although the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic was undermining development efforts, it was also giving impetus to the development and use of innovative technologies in a wide range of fields. Ms. Songwe acknowledged that it was challenging to measure phenomena in a timely manner, in particular in periods of crisis, such as during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

8. The Director of the United Nations Statistics Division, Stefan Schweinfest, said that the COVID-19 crisis continued to impede statistical activities around the globe but should be viewed as an opportunity to modernize statistical systems, including through the development and use of new data sources, and to launch global statistical initiatives, including big data platforms.

9. The Statistician-General at the National Bureau of Statistics, United Republic of Tanzania and Chair of the Statistical Commission for Africa, Albina Chuwa, then addressed participants. Ms. Chuwa appealed to all African governments to conduct the 2020 round of population and housing censuses and collect civil registration records and vital statistics. She also appealed to statisticians to foster a data revolution across the continent by leveraging innovative data sources and making more effective use of big data.

### Statutory issues [agenda item 2]

#### Documents:

E/ECA/STATCOM/7/5; E/ECA/STATCOM/7/6; E/ECA/STATCOM/7/7;  
E/ECA/STATCOM/7/8; E/ECA/STATCOM/7/9; E/ECA/STATCOM/7/10;  
E/ECA/STATCOM/7/11.

10. Representatives of ECA introduced eight statutory reports (summarized in paragraphs 11–18 below) highlighting the work accomplished and proposing points for discussion and action. The Statistical Commission for Africa was invited to consider the guidance and recommendations provided in each report.

#### *Report on statistical capacity development in Africa*

11. The report contained a review of statistical development initiatives during the period 2019–2020.. In the light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on national statistical systems, the transformation and modernization of official statistics in Africa had become an urgent challenge.

#### *Report on progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa*

12. The report contained a review of key challenges, initiatives, opportunities, lessons learned and best practices in tracking progress towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa.

***Report on the 2020 round of population and housing censuses in Africa***

13. Meeting participants were briefed on the 2020 round in Africa, which was part of the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme.

***Report on the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems***

14. The report contained a review of the progress made in the implementation of the Africa Programme in the period from October 2018 to October 2020, in the light of the commitments made by African ministers responsible for civil registration.

***Progress report on implementation of the African programme on gender statistics***

15. The report contained a summary of activities undertaken by the member institutions of the African Group on Gender Statistics in accordance with the plan of action of the Group for the period 2018–2020, including the development of a minimum set of gender indicators for Africa.

***Progress report on the implementation of the 2008 System of National Accounts in Africa***

16. The report contained a review of progress made in the implementation of the 2008 System of National Accounts in Africa. Capacity-building activities had been undertaken or were in the planning stages in several areas (i.e., facilitating implementation of the System of Environmental Economic Accounts, strengthening African countries' ability to calculate and rebase consumer price indices and trade in value added, and facilitating countries' participation in the International Comparison Programme).

***United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management: Report on regional activities in Africa***

17. The report covered the activities of the Regional Committee for Africa of the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management since the sixth meeting of the Statistical Commission for Africa.

***Global Statistical Geospatial Framework: Standard guiding principles for the integration of statistical and geospatial information in Africa***

18. The report covered the work that ECA was undertaking to strengthen the capacities of African countries to develop geospatial information resources and services, and set out policy guidelines for the development of national statistical-geospatial frameworks.

***Discussion and recommendations***

19. The Statistical Commission for Africa provided further guidance on civil registration and vital statistics and on population and housing censuses. Participants discussed ways to mobilize the necessary political will for action and develop and strengthen partnerships to support African countries in those areas. The Commission underscored the need to establish a lobbying group to galvanize political will on civil registration, vital statistics and population and housing census issues.

20. The Statistical Commission for Africa endorsed all eight statutory reports and the related recommendations.

**Statistical activities in context of the COVID-19 pandemic:  
the experiences of member States [agenda item 3]**

21. Five presentations were made to the Statistical Commission for Africa (summarized in paragraphs 22–26 below).

***Health statistics (World Health Organization)***

22. A representative of WHO delivered a presentation on health data-related challenges in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and called upon African countries and development partner to build strong monitoring and health information systems to ensure the continued ability to provide critical health services.

***Population and housing census programme (Ghana)***

23. The representative of Ghana delivered a presentation on statistical activities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the adoption of a business continuity plan by the Ghanaian authorities to carry out census-related activities.

***Ongoing household surveys (Zambia)***

24. The representative of Zambia highlighted the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic had had a significant negative impact on the generation of statistics in Zambia, obliging the Zambia Statistics Agency to revise its statistics production calendar and to postpone the 2020 census to 2021.

***Data collection for the consumer price index (South Africa)***

25. The representative of South Africa emphasized that the COVID-19 pandemic had made it more difficult to conduct activities related to collecting data for the calculation of the national consumer price index. The authorities had adapted by collecting online price data on a weekly basis, among other steps.

***Civil registration and vital statistics (Namibia)***

26. The representative of Namibia gave a presentation on the country's web-based national population registration system, including its legal framework, main stakeholders and users, and the ways in which Namibia was using the system during the COVID-19 pandemic.

***Discussion and recommendations***

27. The Statistical Commission took note of the experiences shared by members States and partners and urged partners and governments to build strong monitoring systems and health information systems at the national and local levels.

**Strategies to strengthen the data ecosystem in the context of United Nations reforms: African perspectives [agenda item 4]**

28. Three presentations were made to the Statistical Commission for Africa (summarized in paragraphs 29–32 below).

***Statistical coordination among United Nations agencies (United Nations Population Fund)***

29. A representative of the United Nations Population Fund gave a presentation on statistical coordination among United Nations agencies, focusing, in particular, on the opportunities and issues-based coalitions that had been established to coordinate the activities of ECA and other UN entities in Africa and prevent the duplication of efforts.

***Private-sector experience with big data (Hisham Arafat, EMEA Consulting Services)***

30. Hisham Arafat, Digital Transformation Lead Consultant at EMEA Consulting Services, gave a presentation outlining the experience of a private-sector enterprise dealing with big data in Africa.

***United Nations global platform and regional hub on big data for official statistics (United Nations Statistics Division)***

31. A presentation was given by the United Nations Statistics Division on the activities of the Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics, which had been established in 2014 by the Statistical Commission of the Economic and Social Council to provide a strategic vision for, and coordinate, a global programme on big data, promote the practical use of big data, promote big data capacity-building, and build public trust in the use of big data for official statistics. The presenter invited national statistical offices in Africa to make proposals on how the Regional Hub for Big Data in Africa could be made as dynamic as possible so that all African countries could benefit substantially from big data initiatives.

32. Following that presentation, the Director General of the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, Yusuf Murangwa called for robust partnerships to be established with the United Nations global platform and the regional hub in order to strengthen national capacities, enhance the accessibility of data and promote the use of innovative technological tools.

***Discussion and recommendations***

33. Participants noted that several African countries were already making use of big data in the generation of official statistics. Efforts should be made to strengthen collaboration between the African Union and AfDB with a view to promoting the use of big data in Africa. Efforts should also be made to strengthen coordination among donors at the national level.

34. The Statistical Commission for Africa encouraged closer collaboration with national statistical systems, as that would facilitate the transfer and use of data and technology in support of development programmes in Africa, and requested ECA to draw up a roster of experts to assist member States in the use of big data.

**Initiatives on emerging issues [agenda item 5]**

35. Four presentations were made to the Statistical Commission for Africa (summarized in paragraphs 36–39 below).

***Open data***

36. The representative of Tunisia gave a presentation on open data and suggested that an African working group be established to develop a road map that could help member States to develop legal frameworks and procedural manuals that reflected international standards on open data. A data portal should also be established to facilitate access by relevant stakeholders to statistical databases compiled by member States.

***Data science***

37. The Office for National Statistics of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda gave a joint presentation on data science that focused, in particular, on statistical tools, methods and practices that could improve decision-making.

***Urban data***

38. Through the African Programme on Urbanization Data and Statistics, ECA continued to provide technical assistance to member States to strengthen their urban data and statistics initiatives and help them conduct voluntary national and local reviews of progress achieved in connection with the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. Implementation of the programme was guided by a working group composed of 12 member States and other regional and international partners. ECA had formulated a harmonized regional framework

to promote implementation by African States of the New Urban Agenda, adopted in 2016 at the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development.

***Response to the COVID-19 pandemic***

39. Through its COVID-19 Crisis Response Facility, AfDB was providing support to African countries to help them deal with the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic. African countries were using the financial resources made available through the facility to carry out public health interventions, strengthen their social protection mechanisms and support their economies.

***Discussion and recommendations***

40. The Statistical Commission for Africa recommended that an African community of practice for data science should be established, that stakeholders should advocate the development of data science capacity in national statistical offices, and that efforts should be made to share lessons learned between the United Nations global platform being developed by the Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics and regional hubs. Member States needed to improve the rural and urban disaggregation of the indicators pertaining to the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 through national statistical development systems. ECA was requested to continue providing technical assistance to member States to strengthen their urban data and statistics, guided by the core working group of the African Programme on Urbanization Data and Statistics.

41. The Statistical Commission for Africa called upon national statistical offices to support the proposed United Nations strategy for statistics and, in particular, opportunity and issue-based coalition 1, on strengthened integrated data and statistical systems for sustainable development.

**Statistical capacity-building programmes of ECA partners**  
[agenda item 6]

42. Seven presentations were made or submitted to the Statistical Commission for Africa (summarized in paragraphs 43–49 below).

***African Union Commission***

43. The representative of the African Union Commission (AUC) reported that statistical activities were carried by AUC in a range of areas, including capacity development and technical assistance, which also supported efforts to implement the Pan-African Statistics Programme and uphold the African Charter on Statistics.

***African Development Bank***

44. The representative of the African Development Bank reported that some \$14 million had been earmarked to support the Bank's statistical capacity-building programme in 2021 and underscored that it would be crucial to involve national stakeholders in the development and roll out of capacity-building programme activities at the country level.

***United Nations Statistics Division***

45. The Statistics Division carried out its capacity-building activities in coordination with a wide range of partners and had developed a handbook on the management of statistics systems in collaboration with member States. Activities included, among others, the support for the 2020 round of population and housing censuses and the United Nations Legal Identity Agenda framework.

***Partnership in Statistics for Development in the Twenty-First Century***

46. The Partnership in Statistics for Development in the Twenty-first Century (PARIS21) had continued to provide support to national statistical organizations to help them to formulate national strategies for the development of statistics. Among other initiatives, it had launched in 2019 the 2020 Trust Initiative with the aim of supporting the design and funding of pilot activities in countries to enhance trust in official statistics.

***Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data***

47. Since its establishment in 2015, the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data had created incentives to fund the generation and sharing of data on development, facilitated knowledge-sharing, and fostered collaboration among partners to spur critical change.

***Economic Commission for Africa***

48. A representative of ECA gave a presentation on the cost-effectiveness and coordination of statistical partnerships and highlighted how streamlining and harmonizing overlapping partnerships could improve the generation of statistics in Africa. As had been made clear by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the digitization of national statistical systems could also increase resilience and reduce costs in the area of statistical development.

***Sierra Leone***

49. The representative of Sierra Leone reported on the country's efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The President of Sierra Leone, Julius Bio, had established a national COVID-19 emergency response centre, a ministerial committee to provide guidance on policy issues in relation to COVID-19, and a scientific and technical advisory committee on emergencies, whose membership included the Statistician General.

***Discussion and recommendations***

50. Meeting participants called for the formulation of guidelines to help national statistical offices forge strong partnerships in support of statistical development and to more effectively coordinate the activities undertaken within the context of those partnerships. To that end, African national statistical offices should endeavor to emulate the successful practices adopted by certain countries. The effective coordination of initiatives undertaken with a range of partners would require strong political will and the identification of statistical champions that could take the lead in coordinating those initiatives.

**Consideration of recommendations and conclusions [agenda item 7]**

51. A set of draft conclusions and recommendations were presented by a representative of ECA and adopted by the Statistical Commission for Africa following a number of amendments (see the summaries thereof in paragraphs 52–68 below). The full text of the conclusions and recommendations is set out in the annex to the report on the seventh meeting of the Commission (E/ECA/STATCOM/7/13).

***Statistical capacity development in Africa***

52. The Commission:

(a) approved the creation of an African group on transformation and modernization of official statistics, composed of ten Directors General of national statistical offices, and requested ECA to undertake its operationalization;

(b) called upon member States to use statistical development indicators on an annual basis to measure their statistical development progress;



(c) called upon pan-African organizations and partners to work in close collaboration and foster synergies to support African countries in mitigating the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic;

(d) called upon countries to strengthen integration between geospatial information systems and other statistical systems; and

(e) called upon member States to implement the statistical leadership programme within their national statistical systems, and development partners to support the initiatives of countries in the area of leadership training.

***Sustainable Development Goal indicators***

53. The Commission:

(a) called upon African countries to continue aligning their national development plans and budgeting processes with the 2030 Agenda, other international frameworks, and regional frameworks such as Agenda 2063;

(b) called upon African countries to establish or enhance a whole-of-society approach in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure the participation and engagement of all stakeholders, in particular line ministries and departments; and

(c) called upon the regional economic communities and the United Nations subregions to synergize their collaboration and accelerate efforts towards fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda.

***2020 round of population and housing censuses***

54. The Commission:

(a) called upon member States to renew their commitment to the conduct of population and housing censuses during the 2020 round, in particular for technical assistance and advisory services for countries in conflict, post-conflict countries and countries affected by the COVID-19 pandemic;

(b) invited the Bureau to conduct an assessment of census undertaking, in collaboration with ECA, to identify factors contributing to the failure by countries to conduct a census during the 2020 round;

(c) requested the Bureau to develop a plan for monitoring the implementation of the Commission's decisions, with the support of ECA;

(d) reiterated its call to partners to stimulate national funding of population and housing censuses;

(e) recommended that a census be conducted during the period 2015–2024; and

(f) recommended a transition from manual to digital systems and the use of improved methods and new technologies to increase the reliability and accessibility of statistics in a timely manner.

***Civil registration, vital statistics and the United Nations Legal Identity Agenda***

55. The Commission:

(a) called for the establishment of a small committee composed of Registrars General and Directors General of national statistical offices to explore ways to revamp the continental commitment to the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics;

(b) recommended that civil registration systems be strengthened as core components of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and that they harness the potential of technologies, in particular mobile phones;

(c) recommended that Member States establish or revamp national population registers with civil registration systems at their foundation; and

(d) recommended that member States establish automated civil registration, vital statistics and identity management systems that are based on the United Nations Legal Identity Agenda framework.

***Implementation of the African programme on gender statistics 2017–2021***

56. The Commission:

(a) endorsed a minimum set of gender indicators for Africa;

(b) approved the revision of the second phase of the African programme on gender statistics, in order to align it with COVID-19-related methodological and data requirements; and

(c) called upon member States to support the development of gender-related administrative data.

***2008 System of National Accounts***

57. The Commission:

(a) called for the continuation of programmes designed to support participation in the implementation of the 2008 System of National Accounts, the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting and related economic statistics;

(b) requested that specific initiatives be undertaken to support member States that are lagging behind in the implementation of the 2008 System of National Accounts; and

(c) recommended the regional and international coordination of the support provided to countries and the adaptation of development strategies and cooperation to the new pandemic-induced situation.

***United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management: report on regional activities in Africa***

58. The Commission:

(a) urged that steps be taken to ensure the incorporation of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework into national development plans and that it be fully contextualized at the regional level; and

(b) requested ECA, with assistance from the secretariat of the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management, to develop a comprehensive programme for modernizing geospatial activities in Africa.

***Standard guiding principles of the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework for the integration of statistical and geospatial information in Africa***

59. The Commission:

(a) requested ECA, with assistance from the Regional Committee for Africa of the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management, to provide policy-level support for the African statistical geospatial framework, and to further prioritize and propose guidelines to advance the implementation of national and regional action plans to integrate statistical and geospatial information in Africa;

(b) recommended that ECA continue to support African countries in building and developing their statistical-geospatial information infrastructure;

(c) recommended that census data dissemination be diversified by using web-based mapping, cloud applications and services, and mobile technology, so as to reach a wider audience;

(d) called for the development of a common regional framework of standards and tools, taking into account their national specific conditions, while aligning the framework with existing internationally agreed standards; and

(e) encouraged countries to develop their respective national statistical-geospatial frameworks in accordance with internationally agreed guidelines and principles.

***Statistical activities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic: the experiences of member States***

60. The Commission urged partners and governments to build strong monitoring systems and health information systems at the national and local levels.

***Private-sector experience with big data***

61. The Commission:

(a) encouraged close collaboration with national statistical systems in gaining access to and in the use of data and technology in support of development programmes in Africa; and

(b) called upon ECA to constitute a roster of experts to assist member States in the use of big data.

***United Nations global platform and regional hub on big data for official statistics***

62. The Commission:

(a) called for the establishment of data science departments/units within national statistical offices to develop applications for the use of big data, to integrate this data source into data plans and activities, and to establish a robust partnership among ECA, the regional hub, and the United Nations global platform; and

(b) recommended strengthened collaboration with the African Union and the African Development Bank on big data activities and initiatives in the region.

***Statistical coordination among United Nations agencies***

63. The Commission:

(a) expressed its support for coordination between ECA and all United Nations entities in Africa, in order to avoid the duplication of efforts; and

(b) requested national statistical offices, in collaboration with the United Nations country teams, to support the proposed United Nations strategy for statistics and, in particular, opportunity and issue-based coalition 1, on strengthened integrated data and statistical systems for sustainable development.

***Open data***

64. The Commission:

(a) recommended the creation of an African working group on open data, comprising representatives of national statistical offices, with support from the African Development Bank, the African Union Commission and the Economic Commission for Africa, to develop a road map to support member States in developing legal frameworks, procedural manuals, harmonized frameworks in accordance with international standards, and data portals for the purpose of providing access to their statistical databases; and

(b) requested ECA, in collaboration with the African Development Bank, and the African Union Commission, to lead the identification of African open data champions.

***Data science***

65. The Commission:

(a) recommended the establishment of an African community of practice for data science, to advocate the development of data science capacity in national statistical offices and to share lessons learned between the United Nations global platform and regional hubs; and

(b) recommended that the Office for National Statistics of the United Kingdom continue to collaborate with statistics training centres in Africa.

***Urban data***

66. The Commission:

(a) called upon member States to improve the rural and urban disaggregation of the indicators pertaining to the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 through national statistical development systems; and

(b) requested ECA to continue providing technical assistance to member States to strengthen their urban data and statistics, guided by the core working group of the African Programme on Urbanization Data and Statistics.

***Response by the African Development Bank to the COVID-19 pandemic***

67. The Commission took note of the establishment by the African Development Bank of a crisis-response facility to support African countries in dealing with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

***Partner statistical capacity-building programmes***

68. The Commission:

(a) welcomed the establishment of the African Union Institute for Statistics and statistical capacity-building programmes by ECA partners;

(b) urged the creation of the African Statistical Fund, in line with the implementation of the African Charter on Statistics;

(c) called for the establishment of a microdata database on household surveys in Africa and for the improved coordination and advocacy of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa for the period 2017–2026;

(d) welcomed the statistical capacity-building programme of the African Development Bank and called for strong advocacy for Bank country teams to complement the Bank's statistical capacity-building programme;

(e) called upon the African Development Bank to harness technology more effectively and to promote digitalization to enhance the efficiency of its work and to further the Africa Information Highway initiative;

(f) called upon the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century to enhance statistical data on development financing, and requested the Partnership to strengthen its assistance to member States in building the communications skills of statisticians within African national statistical systems;

(g) requested member States to issue or update existing statistical legal frameworks to comply with current statistical developments, with a view to building international trust;

(h) urged member States to elaborate comprehensive national statistical programmes through national strategies that are fully aligned with

national development plans, so as to ensure domestic funding of statistical activities;

(i) called upon regional and international partners to support member States in the transformation and digitalization of their statistical information systems;

(j) commended the efforts of national statistical systems in monitoring and assessing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

(k) invited regional and international partners to support member States in developing their capacities to provide timely and accurate population and infrastructure data, so as to enhance their governments' response to the COVID-19 pandemic through geospatial datasets, analyses and tools under an open, non-commercial licence.

**Date and venue of the eighth meeting of the Statistical Commission for Africa**

69. The Statistical Commission requested ECA to make the necessary arrangements for the convening of the eighth meeting of the Statistical Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa in October 2022.

**V. Closing of the meeting** [agenda item 8]

70. The meeting was closed by the Chair of the Statistical Commission for Africa.

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