



Economic Commission for Africa
Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development
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Item 7 of the provisional agenda*

Plenary round-table panel on the transformation and modernization of statistical systems in order to produce high-quality data and statistics that can be used to track progress and reinforce national policies and plans to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063

Information and guidelines for the plenary round-table panel on the transformation and modernization of statistical systems in order to produce high-quality data and statistics that can be used to track progress and reinforce national policies and plans to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063

I. Date, time and venue

1. The round-table panel will be held on Wednesday, 24 April 2024, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., in the Banquet Hall of the United Nations Conference Centre.

II. Background and introduction

2. High-quality data and statistics are indispensable for designing, implementing and reporting on policies and programmes at all levels to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union. This notwithstanding, Governments and their partners continue to experience challenges in generating, managing, gaining access to and using high-quality data in a timely manner.
3. Members of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and their partners have therefore underlined the need to transform and modernize statistical systems. The ultimate goal is to generate, effectively manage and enable the use of high-quality data and statistics to respond to the urgent need for data-driven plans to rescue the Sustainable Development Goals, implement the second 10-year plan for the implementation of Agenda 2063 and deal with current and future crises.
4. In September 2023, the Secretary-General, with a view to rethinking, refocusing and recharging approaches to ensure that the world is on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, launched United Nations 2.0, which is aimed at strengthening the expertise and culture within the

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Organization with regard to data, digital, innovation, foresight and behavioural science. The vision is a powerful fusion of innovation, data, digital, foresight and behavioural science skills and culture aimed at creating more agile, diverse, responsive and impactful United Nations entities and building a United Nations system that can better support the States Members of the United Nations in the years to come.

5. With a view to supporting its members in this process, ECA has developed a road map for the transformation and modernization of official statistics in Africa for the period 2023–2030, to guide national statistical systems and their partners in sustainably and efficiently meeting the needs of statistical users and in planning for resilience, innovation and agility. In 2022, the road map was endorsed at the eighth meeting of the Statistical Commission for Africa, and, in 2023, at its fifty-fourth session, the Statistical Commission of United Nations Headquarters noted its support for the road map.

6. It is against this backdrop that this panel is planned as part of the tenth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development.

III. Objectives

7. The objectives of the round-table panel are:

(a) To highlight trends in the demand for, and in the generation, management and use of, data and statistics in existing statistical systems;

(b) To identify and highlight gaps and challenges encountered in the current statistical systems in the region, with a view to meeting the changing and growing data and statistical information needs;

(c) To identify and highlight the initiatives and investments that are needed to transform and modernize statistical systems.

IV. Guidelines

8. The following guidelines will apply to the plenary round-table panel discussion:

(a) The Chair will outline the aforementioned objectives of the discussion and introduce the moderator and panel members listed in section V. The Chair will then yield to the moderator, who will guide the discussion among the panellists and other participants;

(b) The moderator, with a view to catalysing an interactive discussion among the panellists, will invite each panellist to respond to one or more of the following questions:

(i) What are the current trends in the demand for high-quality data and statistics, what are the main areas of interest, and how are national statistical systems expected to address them?

(ii) How are national statistical offices addressing the data gaps, including the need to produce evidence-based data for decision-making purposes in a timely manner, and how are they collaborating with other stakeholders in the data system?

(iii) In the current digital era, in which good-quality and timely data are necessary, what are the targeted initiatives and investments needed to effectively transform and modernize statistical systems in order to make them agile, resilient and responsive?

- (iv) How can ECA, other United Nations entities and partners support members of ECA and regional organizations in the transformation and modernization of their statistical systems?
- (v) What should participants in the Summit of the Future highlight as priorities for Africa with regard to the transformation and modernization of statistical systems?
- (c) The moderator will invite questions and comments from the floor;
- (d) At the end of the discussion, the moderator will summarize the main policy messages, including the recommendations made, before yielding to the Chair, who will conclude the round-table panel discussion.

V. Chair, moderator and panellists

9. The Chair, moderator and panellists will be as follows:

Venue: United Nations Conference Centre, Banquet Hall

Chair: Chair of the Bureau

Moderator: Director, Public Diplomacy, Research and Policy Analysis, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Botswana, Mavis Matenge

Panellists:

- Minister of Planning and Development, Ethiopia, Fitsum Assefa
- Government Statistician, Ghana Statistical Service, Samuel Kobina Annim
- Regional Director, East and Southern Africa Regional Office, United Nations Population Fund, Lydia Zigomo
- Director, Africa Hub, Development Initiatives, Stephen Chacha
- Senior Statistician, Namibia Statistics Agency, Namibia, Fransina Amutenya
- Director, African Centre for Statistics, ECA, Oliver Chinganya