Economic Commission for Africa
Statistical Commission for Africa
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Item 2 of the provisional agenda*
Organizational matters

Follow-up report on the main conclusions and recommendations of the Statistical Commission for Africa at its eighth session

I. Introduction

1.   The purpose of the present document is to report on the status and progress made on the main conclusions and recommendations that emerged from the reports presented at the eighth session of the Statistical Commission for Africa by the groups working on various aspects of statistical development. In the report on the session (E/ECA/STATCOM/8/2022/13), the programmatic issues faced, including those relating to the statistics programme of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and other statutory issues, are acknowledged and the availability of reliable and accurate geographical information is recognized as one of the most important factors enabling national economies to grow, since it allows more informed decisions to be made relating to social and economic development, including through improvements achieved in the mapping of relevant social and economic indicators.

2.   The theme of the eighth session, "Modernizing the data ecosystem in Africa to support regional integration", was timely, as technological developments are revolutionizing the field of statistics in the public and private sectors.

II. Statistics programme of the Economic Commission for Africa and statutory issues

A. Programme of work on data and statistics for the period 2023–2024

3.   Members of ECA achieved different levels of progress in response to the appeal for them to allocate domestic resources to implementing a road map to transform and modernize their national statistical systems. The pace and size of their domestic resource commitments were influenced by such factors as competing national priorities, fiscal constraints and the lingering effects of multiple crises, including the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Some members of ECA, including Chad, have made progress by increasing

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* E/ECA/STATCOM/9/2024/1/Rev.1.

their domestic financing for data and statistics. Senegal has made progress by establishing a statistics fund to accelerate statistical development.

4.   South-South cooperation has allowed countries to share their experiences of using technology to conduct censuses. During the 2020 round of African censuses, Senegal shared its knowledge with the Gambia on how to use the tools for tablets developed and promoted by ECA for collecting data and tracking coverage and completion rates for critical variables. Experts from Malawi on geographic information systems assisted Sierra Leone by sharing the knowledge and experiences they had acquired and the lessons they had learned during their census mapping exercise.

B.   Statistical capacity development in Africa

5.   Although the Statistical Commission for Africa, at its eighth session, approved the creation of the Takwimu Young African Statisticians Programme, with ECA acting as the secretariat of the Programme through the African Centre for Statistics, and although the Statistical Commission also approved the 2022–2025 strategy of the Programme (see E/ECA/COE/41/12), countries have made little progress in institutionalizing the Programme or ensuring that its objectives are fulfilled. Nevertheless, the national statistical offices of Burundi and Liberia have initiated work to establish associations for young statisticians.

6.   Development partners continued to support statistical systems in Africa in many different ways to ensure their transformation and modernization in response to the growing needs of users of the systems. The Office for National Statistics of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland continued to support the statistical leadership training programme, in order to equip senior and middle managers at national statistical offices in Africa with the skills they needed to lead their organizations. The training programme was designed to enhance their skills by equipping them to deal effectively with the range of challenges that their organizations face. Statistical professionals in Botswana, Cameroon, Madagascar, Nigeria and Zimbabwe attended in-person sessions in their respective countries, while staff from Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Mali, Namibia, Tunisia and Zimbabwe took the facilitator-guided e-learning version of the course.

7.   Partners, including the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century, supported data innovation as part of efforts to transform and modernize statistical systems in Africa. A framework for participatory data ecosystems was developed to support the institutionalization of citizen-generated data in official statistics, following a successful roll-out in Kenya. The Partnership also provided bilateral support to a number of countries, helping Burkina Faso to develop policies and policy implementation assessments and recommendations for improvements in the National Institute for Statistics and Demographics and the agricultural statistics directorate; helping Burundi to develop a new organization chart, establish the size of the workforce and write new job descriptions for the national statistical office and the agricultural statistics unit; and helping Mali to develop a training needs assessment and training plan for its national statistical office and for the statistics, monitoring and evaluation office of its Ministry of Agriculture.

C.   Regional report on Sustainable Development Goal indicators

8.   Members of ECA supported the overall system of statistics in Africa by strengthening coordination of the continent's national statistical systems and ensured that policymaking in Africa was more evidence-based and supported by the collection, processing, analysis and release of reliable, timely, available, high-quality   and   disaggregated   data   on   the   indicators

(see E/ECA/STATCOM/8/2022/7), as evidenced by improvements made to the availability of data on the Sustainable Development Goals in the Global Sustainable Development Goals Indicators Database, with a number of countries providing data for more indicators in 2024 than they did in 2022. As of March 2024, African official data in relation to at least one data point were available for between 129 and 206 of the Goal indicators, depending on the country, while they were available for at least two data points in respect of between 110 and 175 indicators. For Egypt, Ghana, South Africa, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, at least two data points were available for nearly three quarters of the indicators; for Eritrea, Libya and South Sudan, by contrast, adequate data were available for less than half of the indicators.[1]

9.   The countries that presented their voluntary national reviews and voluntary local reviews at the twelfth meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development had largely applied a whole-of-society approach in pursuit of the Goals, ensuring the participation and engagement of all stakeholders, including line ministries and departments, civil society organizations and city-level stakeholders, in recognition of the interlinkages among the Goals during the preparations for the reviews. Chad, the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Guinea, Kenya, Libya, Mauritania, Mauritius, Namibia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe presented their voluntary national reviews in 2024.

D.   2020 round of African censuses

10.   ECA, the United Nations Population Fund, the Office for National Statistics of the United Kingdom and the Census Bureau of the United States of America compiled a digital census handbook in which they drew on the experiences and lessons learned from the countries that participated in the 2020 round of African censuses. This collective knowledge base of African countries will be used as a resource during the 2030 round. Experts from members of ECA validated the handbook in September 2024, and the resulting draft document will be presented to the Statistical Commission for Africa for adoption at its ninth session.

11.   ECA continued to provide support and technical assistance for digital censuses by supplying Burundi, the Gambia, Ghana and Sierra Leone, among other countries, with tablets for data collection and a census tracking dashboard.

12.   For the coordination of technical assistance to countries, ECA worked with the Office for National Statistics of the United Kingdom and the United Nations Population Fund to form a census technical committee responsible for providing coordinated responses to country requests for support on censuses. Its members have a wide range of expertise with census processes. The committee also coordinates the activities of partners that support censuses in African countries and ensures that the scant resources available are used effectively and efficiently.

E.   Civil registration and vital statistics and the United Nations Legal Identity Agenda

13.   ECA, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund, Vital Strategies and the World Health Organization, supported Burundi, Eswatini, Somalia and South Sudan in building holistic, resilient and agile civil registration and vital statistics systems.

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[1] United Nations, SDG Indicators Database. Available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/database (accessed on 31 March 2024).

14.   In partnership with Statistics Denmark, ECA engaged with Statistics South Africa to build a population register for South Africa in the form of an integrated database incorporating data from various relevant ministries, including the Department of Home Affairs, the National Department of Basic Education and the National Department of Health. Population registers are still at the conceptualization stage in South Africa and have not yet been piloted.

15.   Almost all countries in Africa have begun to modernize their respective civil registration and vital statistics systems. Some countries are at a more advanced stage than others, having modernized the entire process – from notification to certification – and having transferred information to servers or to the cloud for archiving. ECA has already assisted the national statistical offices of Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria and Uganda in developing their vital statistics reports and will scale up its assistance to include other countries. The Office for National Statistics of the United Kingdom collaborated with ECA in developing a pipeline, in the R software environment, for the production of country vital statistics reports.

F.   Gender statistics

16.   In 2023, ECA and some of its partners, including the African Development Bank, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century, the Southern African Development Community, the African Union Commission and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, organized the Africa Gender Statistics Forum 2023 to take stock of the progress made in the use of gender statistics for the implementation of development frameworks at the global, regional and national levels and to disseminate the latest methodological developments and best practices in the production, communication and use of gender statistics. The declaration adopted at the Forum included, among other undertakings, commitments to enhance the collection, analysis and dissemination of comprehensive and disaggregated data; to develop comprehensive gender statistics systems and administrative data sources, such as civil registration and vital statistics systems; and to strengthen national coordination mechanisms, with a view to institutionalizing efforts to improve the collection, analysis and dissemination of high-quality gender statistics.[2]

17.   The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, ECA and the Economic Commission for Europe jointly implemented a project on data and statistics for more gender-responsive trade policies in Africa, the Caucasus and Central Asia. In Africa, the project was carried out in Cameroon, Kenya, Senegal and Zimbabwe. Through the project, the three entities aimed to assess data availability, develop new indicators and provide insights for gender-responsive trade policies using the conceptual framework and guidelines for measurement of gender-in-trade statistics developed by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. A major challenge identified was that the data available on informal cross-border trade in the pilot countries were not comprehensive (see UNCTAD/STAT/2023/2).

18.   The Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century launched in-depth country studies on gender data use in policymaking in Kenya and Rwanda, and continued to engage with partner countries (including new partners) to mainstream gender in statistical planning, with support from Global Affairs Canada, UN-Women and other partners. In 2023, it engaged with the Gambia, Madagascar, the Niger, Senegal and Somalia, among other countries,

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[2] African Development Bank, ECA, UN-Women and Office of the High Commissioner for Planning of the Government of Morocco, "Accelerating progress towards Africa's Agenda 2063 and the SDGs using gender statistics: Africa Gender Statistics Forum, 7–11 November 2023" (Addis Ababa, ECA, 2023).

and it will continue to do so in 2024. In addition to country-level engagements and technical assistance, the Partnership continues to engage with regional commissions and partners to encourage the introduction of gender mainstreaming into its regular training on national strategies for the development of statistics. Such engagements within Africa in 2023 included a special session during the regional workshop on gender statistics co-organized by the Partnership alongside ECA, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and the African Development Bank. The gender guidelines for national strategies for the development of statistics were also presented at the workshop on national strategies for the development of statistics, jointly organized by the Partnership alongside the African Union Institute for Statistics and ECA. Held in Cairo in May 2023, the workshop was attended by the focal points for Africa of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa and the focal points of African national strategies for the development of statistics.

G. Implementation of the 2008 System of National Accounts (and related statistics)

19.   The African Development Bank provided timely financial and technical assistance to support the rebasing of gross domestic product in Botswana, Burkina Faso, the Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Eswatini, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritania, the Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda and Zambia. This enabled some countries that had only taken initial steps by 2022 to begin their full adoption of the 2008 System of National Accounts, while other countries that collected data and produced preliminary estimates in 2022 completed their adoption and published revised gross domestic product figures.

20.   The African Union Commission and the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat jointly organized a series of webinars and workshops to advocate the updating of the System of National Accounts in 2022 and 2023 and to discuss related technical issues. To increase support for capacity-building on the system of economic and environmental accounting, ECA collaborated with the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific and encouraged its members to enrol on the Institute's self-paced e-learning introductory course to the central framework of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting. Additional training on energy and emission accounts for measuring climate-related issues is planned.

H. Integration of geospatial and statistical information

21.   ECA led the development of computational functionalities for interactive geoportals using data from the census in Burundi. The geoportals were tested, fine-tuned and implemented to disseminate the census cartography data in the country. Burundi received further support in developing and updating its operational guidelines for geocoding, creating a field guide for interactive, web-based geographic information system applications and building the national census spatial databases by integrating geometric data from the census cartography phase into the geospatial analytical phase.

22.   ECA developed a financial appropriation framework for funding geospatial information activities in Africa. The report will be published following completion of the review that is under way.

23.   Under a project with funding from Eurostat, ECA developed a policy background paper on a strategic pathway towards the modernization of geospatial information processes in Africa. A survey is being prepared to supplement the figures in the document and will be carried out in African

countries. In addition, desktop research was carried out to increase understanding of the subject within ECA.

III. Modernizing the data ecosystem in Africa

24. The United Nations Children's Fund mainstreamed children's rights in statistical planning. ECA developed an integrated strategic tool towards the transformation and modernization of official statistics in Africa, which has a section dedicated to implementing the road map for the transformation and modernization of official statistics in Africa, 2023–2030. The Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies of France and the Economic and Statistical Observatory for Sub-Saharan Africa (AFRISTAT) provided support to some French-speaking States members of AFRISTAT. ECA helped Cameroon to revise the turnover index and increase the frequency of its production by facilitating the change from using quarterly economic survey data to monthly administrative data, with financial support under a Eurostat grant for the monitoring of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

25. In March 2023, ECA organized a side event on the margins of the fifty-fourth session of the Statistical Commission at which participants discussed the transformation and modernization of statistics in Africa and major initiatives related to statistics. At the fifty-fourth session itself, the Statistical Commission noted that it supported the road map for the transformation and modernization of official statistics in Africa, 2023–2030, as an important way forward; encouraged partners to support the implementation of the road map and to align their programme support with the priorities identified in the document; and encouraged Member States from other regions to adapt and use the road map to help to modernize and transform their national statistical systems and bring them in line with national development plans (see E/2023/24-E/CN.3/2023/37).

26. The Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century, the African Union Institute for Statistics and ECA organized a workshop in Cairo on the design of national strategies for the development of statistics. The workshop strengthened the capacity of participants to support, through their national statistical system, the development agendas of their country through the implementation of well-designed, sector-inclusive and user-responsive national strategies. The workshop increased the awareness of participants of the importance of national strategies in transforming and modernizing national statistical systems to make them more responsive to national, subnational, sectoral, regional and global development agendas.

27. The Partnership supported statistical laws and governance in Benin and Lesotho, designed to ensure that statistics are independent and authoritative in the two countries and to foster trust among citizens. In Benin, the focus of the support was on reviewing and developing the implementing regulations of the new Statistics Act. In Lesotho, it supported the review of the statistical law and associated regulatory frameworks, including by advocating the modernization of laws to improve statistical systems by leveraging regional expertise and international guidelines.[3]

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[3] Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century, "Stronger national statistical systems through partnerships: Paris21 progress report 2023" (Boulogne-Billancourt, France, 2024).

IV. Reports on preliminary events

A. Forum on African Statistical Development

28.   African countries have participated in the work of the Statistical Commission through various working groups on specific issues, including the Sustainable Development Goals, to better align global statistical priorities and methodological developments with regional and national priorities in Africa. United Nations country teams engaged with the national statistical offices of some ECA members, within the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, with a view to achieving the greatest possible cooperation on raising the profile of statistical requirements and on the efficient allocation of funding to avoid duplication. Uganda, for example, signed an agreement that provides a framework for cooperation with United Nations entities, coordinated by the Resident Coordinator Office in the country, on matters pertaining to data and statistics.

B. Data science and the United Nations Regional Hub for Big Data and Big Science in Africa

29.   The United Nations Regional Hub for Big Data and Big Science in Africa, in collaboration with the Bank of Italy and Statistics Poland, actively supported the statistical offices of Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal and Tunisia through an initiative to strengthen their capacity to use big data and data science by employing web scraping to record prices for the consumer price index. The four weeks of online training covered ethics, methodology, coding and the building of a web scraper. Participants also attended one week of training at the training centre of the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda in March 2023. Participants developed their coding and web scraping skills, learned about the methodological challenges and ethical considerations of web scraping and identified other areas in which national statistical offices could use web scraping, such as tourism and job vacancies. Representatives of Ghana and Nigeria shared their outcomes and lessons learned during a webinar on web scraping for consumer price indices, which was hosted by the Regional Hub.

30.   The Regional Hub ran a series of webinars between July and September 2023, including one on automated occupation classification coding, geared towards national statistical offices and young statisticians in Africa. The goal of the webinar was to share the outcomes of the work undertaken by the Data Science Campus of the Office for National Statistics of the United Kingdom in partnership with the Namibia Statistics Agency to automatically classify occupation codes and support the quality assurance work carried out by the Agency on data gathered during the census in Namibia.

31.   The Regional Hub hosted the African official satellite location of the 2023 United Nations Datathon at the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda. Four African teams took part, three of which were sponsored by ECA, with the team from Ghana being sponsored by the country's statistical office. Participants from Cameroon, the Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Namibia, Netherlands (Kingdom of the) and the United Republic of Tanzania participated in the event, fostering collaboration and innovation in the field of data science.

32.   A webinar on the use cases of mobile phone data for official statistics was held in November 2023 to highlight the potential of mobile phone data to fill data gaps worldwide and to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The webinar showcased the work of the task team on mobile phone data that was put in place by the Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics. The task team included speakers

from the Committee of Experts, the International Telecommunication Union, a data analytics company based in Estonia, the University of Tokyo, the statistical office of Indonesia, the mobile operator data analytics foundation Flowminder, and the Roads and Transport Authority of Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

33.   In December 2023, the Regional Hub, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Global Hub in China, held an international webinar on Earth observations for agricultural statistics. The presentations covered several aspects related to Earth observations, namely: big data and statistics; data cubes and time series analysis for enhanced classification performance; the use of data cubes to monitor agricultural frontiers in Mexico; and the use of data for the integrated monitoring of agricultural resources and of the adverse effects of disasters. There was also a live demonstration of the use of the Earth Observation Data for Official Agricultural Statistics (EOSTAT) tool developed by FAO to map crops in Senegal. The audience comprised young statisticians from Africa, directors general and other representatives of national statistical offices in Africa, StatsTalk-Africa viewers, data scientists and other members of the statistical community.

C.   Administrative data initiatives and resources for Africa

34.   UN-Women and ECA provided training in Ethiopia, Kenya and Mozambique on improving data quality using the toolkit for quality assessment of administrative data for official statistics developed by UN-Women and the Statistics Division. The Division also organized a global initiative on administrative data for disaggregated Sustainable Development Goal indicators in Namibia and the United Republic of Tanzania. With funding from Eurostat, ECA produced a comprehensive report on the use of administrative data for official statistics in Africa and a strategy for improving the integration of such data sources into processes for producing official statistics, in order to help States to modernize their administrative data systems, with a view to increasing the use of such data for statistical purposes.

35.   In 2023, the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century, the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies of France, ECA and AFRISTAT continued their joint project to strengthen peer learning at the national statistical offices of French-speaking countries in Africa to support constructive exchanges of experiences among national statistical offices and experts regarding the common issues they faced. A webinar on the benefits of and challenges associated with using social media to disseminate statistics and improve statistical literacy allowed national statistical offices and other experts to share their experiences and the methodological issues they faced when producing, communicating and using data and statistics. The offices shared their experiences of using social media to publish official statistics, disseminate and facilitate access to statistical products, support statistical literacy and strengthen dialogue with data users. The offices also discussed the profiles required and types of training needed for social media to be used effectively and efficiently. The needs of national statistical offices in this area were identified so that partnerships could be built to provide effective support. Partner agencies, in collaboration with national bodies in the countries in question, made it possible to learn from their experiences by presenting use cases that illustrated their work.

D. Computer-assisted personal and telephone interviews to collect data for consumer price indices

36.   In line with the digitalization efforts stipulated in the road map for the transformation and modernization of official statistics, ECA supported Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Comoros, Eritrea, Ghana, Mauritius, Lesotho, Nigeria, Seychelles, South Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania, by providing them with online training and testing their computer-assisted personal and telephone interview methods to help them to modernize their data production processes and develop resilience and responsiveness to crises. Pilot data-collection activities were successfully carried out in Lesotho, Mauritius, Nigeria and the United Republic of Tanzania.

E. Increasing the availability and accessibility of data on the Sustainable Development Goals

37.   ECA, in partnership with Eurostat and in collaboration with the Statistics Division and the Office for National Statistics of the United Kingdom, facilitated capacity-development workshops and hands-on technical support for national statistical offices responsible for compiling, managing, reporting on and disseminating data on the Sustainable Development Goal indicators. Statistical office staff enhanced their skills in the use of the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange tools to manage and convert data on the Goals to facilitate the efficient uploading of data for reporting through Open SDG, a platform for publishing data and statistics related to the Goals. Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Senegal, Uganda and Zimbabwe are the pilot countries that will launch national dashboards to increase the visibility, availability and accessibility of their data on the Goals, disaggregated by various different subcategories.

38.   The African Development Bank delivered a series of training sessions on the Exchange, with a focus on sending data in the harmonized index of consumer prices. The sessions were delivered to experts from Ethiopia, the Gambia, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda. In addition, the Bank trained staff in Burkina Faso, Mali, Mozambique, the Niger, Sierra Leone, Zambia and Zimbabwe on the use of the Exchange to send data on the Goals.

F. Supply and use tables and trade in value added

39.   ECA, in collaboration with the World Trade Organization and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, developed the statistical capacities of countries in Africa to enable the integration of their data into trade in value added databases. The aim of the effort was to promote the collection and incorporation of data from additional African countries into indicators pertaining to trade in value added at the regional and global levels by: facilitating the sharing of lessons learned; building the capacity of countries to use and interpret indicators of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development on trade in value added to support policy discussions related to regional and global value chains; and introducing the ongoing ECA initiative to build an African continental input-output table. The number of members of ECA with databases on trade in value added and global value chains grew from three (Morocco, South Africa and Tunisia) in 2022 to eight (with the addition of Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Nigeria and Senegal) in 2023. ECA and partners delivered a thematic course on trade in value added statistics and global value chains at the headquarters of the World Trade Organization.

40.   ECA organized the first regional seminar on the African continental input-output table initiative and trade in value added indicators. The purpose of

the seminar was: to enhance the relationship with, and build the capacity of, States included in the initiative model to improve the quality and availability of the required inputs; to develop regional solutions to current challenges; and to set out a long-term strategy for the improvement of the model. Additional technical support was extended to Benin, Ghana and Kenya, where relevant data producers were engaged in integrating the data of their respective countries into the model.

41.   Through the available platforms, including the ECA platform StatsTalk-Africa, the national statistical offices of members of ECA have been encouraged to increase the use and reuse of data by policymakers in order to increase the visibility of their analytical tools among researchers and policy analysts.

V. Statistical leadership training to support the modernization and transformation of official statistics

42.   ECA, in partnership with the Office for National Statistics of the United Kingdom, ran a statistical leadership training programme to provide senior and middle managers of national statistical offices in African States with training on the tools they needed to become more transformative leaders as they modernized their institutions. The training programme could be completed online or in person.

43.   With a specific focus on gender, ECA held a training event in Botswana, in January 2024, for women in statistical leadership. The e-learning modules were designed to reach as many participants as possible, including young African statisticians. They were delivered in English and French to ensure better engagement. The programme was designed to enable participants to hone their skills in statistical leadership; build relationships with team members, line managers and colleagues effectively; develop leadership skills, such as communication, decision-making, change management and problem-solving; and apply the knowledge through case studies and projects. The aim was to build the skills for leading and developing better statistical systems through the transformation and modernization of national statistical offices.

44.   The Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century, the African Union Institute for Statistics, ECA and the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda jointly organized a leadership training event for the directors general of 21 national statistical offices in Africa. Members of ECA continued their support for leadership training, with 21 heads of national statistical offices participating from Botswana, Cabo Verde, the Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, the Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Somalia, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. The training was provided in two parallel groups: one conducted in English and one in French.

VI. Statistical capacity-building programmes of partner entities

45.   At the regional level, ECA developed a space for reference resources on the website of the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems, in order to facilitate access to materials on civil registration and vital statistics, including guidelines, manuals, research, advocacy, communication materials and links to the civil registration and vital statistics websites of members of ECA. On activities related to establishing a curriculum for professionals working in civil registration and vital statistics systems, with a view to increasing the quality of the data

generated from such systems, discussions were initiated with academic institutions and registrars general, in South Africa among other countries, and are still at the conceptualization stage.

46.   Cognizant of the pivotal role of statistical training centres in developing the capacities of the future leaders of statistical systems in Africa, ECA strengthened its partnerships with such centres in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania; Dakar; Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire; and Yaoundé. To support the centres, ECA provided training for trainers, in partnership with FAO, under the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics.

47.   The strong partnerships that ECA developed with the statistical training centres in such countries as Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and the United Republic of Tanzania led to 48 people (including 10 women) from the national statistical offices and agricultural line ministries of 24 members of ECA receiving scholarships to pursue a master's degree in agricultural statistics. The 24 students at the Eastern Africa Statistical Training Centre graduated in November 2023, the 12 students at the National Higher School of Applied Statistics and Economics in Côte d'Ivoire graduated in December 2023 and the 12 students at the National School of Statistics and Economic Analysis of Senegal graduated in January 2024. All but one of the graduates returned to serve their respective national statistical systems, including by contributing to peer-to-peer knowledge transfer through the training of trainers.

48.   Pan-African institutions met through the African Statistical Coordination Committee to strategize on mechanisms to achieve greater collaboration among regional and subregional institutions and on the coordination of statistical programmes to enhance and sustain the effectiveness of statistical support for African countries.

49.   At the meeting, the institutions made a number of recommendations, the most important of which were: to organize annual in-person committee meetings on the margins of major events in order to maximize participation while minimizing costs; to operationalize the remaining strategic thematic groups of the second Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa, while forging synergies with the other strategic thematic groups and the regional technical working groups of the regional economic communities; to extend an invitation to the statistical training centres for the nomination of a representative to the Coordination Committee; to urge ECA to propose a communication strategy to improve collaboration among pan-African institutions, with a view to making the Coordination Committee more efficient; and to consider whether the *African Statistical Yearbook* could be used as the basis for a single, continent-wide database.

50.   The African Development Bank, under its statistical capacity-building programme, the aim of which is to strengthen the responsiveness of statistical systems in Africa to the evolving development agenda through the implementation of the second Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa, supported statistical capacity-building programmes and continued to provide technical assistance to its subregional offices, members of ECA, the regional economic communities and the statistical training centres. For instance, it conducted a survey in November and December 2022 to determine how participating members of ECA went about updating the basket of goods and services included in the harmonized index of consumer prices and the outlets from which the prices were taken.

51.   As part of the efforts undertaken by the Bank to encourage members of ECA to integrate data collection under the International Comparison Programme into their regular national data-collection methods for the consumer price index in order to ensure the sustainability of the International Comparison Programme in the region, the Bank held a regional workshop on data editing and validation for the International Comparison Programme in January 2023.

The workshop was held soon after the main period for the collection of data for the Programme, from July to December 2022. Representatives of members of ECA, the regional economic communities and the statistical training centres received International Comparison Programme validation training tools and techniques. Additional technical assistance was provided to Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Djibouti, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Mauritania, Mozambique, Rwanda, Togo and the United Republic of Tanzania.

VII. Preparations for the fifty-fourth session of the Statistical Commission

52.   As detailed in the report on its fifty-fourth session (E/2023/24-E/CN.3/2023/37), the Statistical Commission welcomed the comprehensive report of ECA and commended the region on the progress it had made on statistical development in Africa for the transformation and modernization of national statistical systems; welcomed the methodological developments and guidance documents in the region; supported the road map for the transformation and modernization of official statistics in Africa, 2023–2030, as an important way forward, and noted with appreciation the work that the African Group of the Economic and Social Council had already undertaken in that area; encouraged partners to support the implementation of the road map and to align their programme support with the priorities identified in the document; acknowledged collaborations between ECA and other regional commissions to share substantial knowledge, as well as technological expertise to strengthen national statistical systems; and encouraged Member States from other regions to adapt and use the road map to help to modernize and transform their national statistical systems and bring them in line with national development plans.

VIII. Action to be taken by the Statistical Commission for Africa

53.   The Statistical Commission for Africa is invited:

(a)   To take note of the progress made on the conclusions and recommendations of the Statistical Commission for Africa at its eighth session, held in 2022;

(b)   To express its views on the extent to which those recommendations informed the plans and programmes of national statistical systems and helped to ensure the sustainability of their financing.

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