
**African Centre for Statistics
Forum on African Statistical Development**

Ninth meeting
Addis Ababa (online), 14 December 2020

Communiqué

1. Representatives of African member States, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), United Nations agencies engaged in opportunity/issue-based coalitions, the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Development Bank (AfDB), African statistical training centres, regional and subregional organizations, the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21), the World Bank, the European Union and bilateral and international institutions attended the ninth meeting of the Forum on African Statistical Development, held virtually on 14 December 2020.
2. The overall objective of the ninth meeting was to foster connections among countries, partners and institutions that support statistics, with the view of addressing the needs of national statistical systems in order to bring about their transformation and modernization, while focusing, in particular, on the COVID-19 crisis.
3. The specific objectives of the meeting were to:
 - (a) Take stock of challenges faced by countries in addressing COVID-19-related issues and identify the needs of national statistical systems with a view to promoting their transformation and modernization;
 - (b) Take stock of opportunities and mechanisms offered by pan-African institutions, partners and organizations to assist countries in responding to the COVID-19 crisis, and to support countries in their statistical development.
4. ECA, AfDB, PARIS21 and the World Bank were commended for having organized the ninth meeting.
5. The meeting helped to draw attention to the challenges faced by national statistical systems in Africa in responding to data demands in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
6. Discussions took place on the ways in which partners could help countries achieve their statistical development goals and mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their national statistical systems. Presentations were also given by pan-African institutions and bilateral and multilateral partners on their statistical support to African countries and on issues relating to the modernization and transformation of national statistical systems in Africa.
7. ECA, the Economic and Statistical Observatory for Sub-Saharan Africa (AFRISTAT) and Malawi were commended for their reports on the challenges and needs of national statistical systems, within the context of the current and post-COVID-19 scenarios.



8. AUC was commended for its technical and capacity-building assistance to member States. The Commission was encouraged to continue its efforts to enhance statistical coordination and promote the transformation of African statistical systems.
9. AfDB was commended for its commitment to funding statistical capacity-building in the region, and particularly for its efforts to develop the Statistical Capacity Building Programme Phase V, which would help provide the critical data needed to understand the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. AfDB was encouraged to continue its efforts in that regard, which would support implementation of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa 2017–2026.
10. Noting the upcoming retirement of the Director of Statistics at AfDB, Charles Lufumpa, stakeholders expressed their appreciation for the contribution of Mr. Lufumpa to statistical development in Africa over the years and wished him well in his future endeavours.
11. ECA was commended for formulating the Guidelines for Developing an Integrated User Engagement Strategy for National Statistical Systems. The Economic Commission for Africa was encouraged to promote and disseminate the Guidelines in African countries and regional economic communities.
12. PARIS21 was commended for formulating the 2020 edition of the Partner Report on Support to Statistics (PRESS) with the aim of providing a full picture of international support to statistics. The PARIS21 secretariat was encouraged to continue implementation of its African statistical capacity development programme.
13. The French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) was commended for its statistical cooperation with African countries, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 crisis.
14. The United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office was commended for its support programme for the statistics sector in Africa, which included support to facilitate monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals.
15. Statistics Norway was commended for its efforts to support statistics capacity-building in Africa.
16. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation was commended for its statistics-related initiatives to improve national and subnational statistical systems in Africa, and for its innovative investments to strengthen local, African-led data ecosystems, including through public-private partnerships that involved young people at all stages of the data value chain.
17. The Millennium Challenge Corporation was commended for promoting data-driven development, supporting African countries' national statistical systems and for designing and implementing the Data Collaboratives for Local Impact programme, which had been launched with a view to improving the capacity of individuals, communities and organizations to use data to solve problems relating to HIV/AIDS, global health, gender equality and economic growth, improving the quality of statistics, promoting the use of non-traditional data sources and strengthening data governance and data privacy frameworks.
18. All the partners were commended for their respective statistical capacity-building programmes aiming at continuously enhancing the statistical capacity of member States and were encouraged to pursue their efforts to that end.

19. The Statistical Commission for Africa was commended for approving, at its seventh meeting, the creation of an African group on transformation and modernization of official statistics systems.
20. Pan-African institutions, governments and development partners were urged to support the work of the African group on transformation and modernization of national statistical systems, which must be fit for purpose and ensure that no one was left behind.
21. Pan-African institutions, member States and partners were urged to support efforts by ECA to strengthen the statistical research capacity and leadership skills of young African statisticians so that they could meet future data demands in the area of sustainable development.
22. Pan-African institutions were urged to improve the coordination of statistical capacity development activities on the continent, which should be led by African countries, while giving priority consideration to South-South cooperation.
23. Pan-African institutions, governments and partners were urged to strengthen their collaboration with a view to mobilizing further resources from governments and aid agencies to finance the generation of statistics, particularly as resources for development were becoming increasingly scarce.
24. ECA was requested to organize the tenth meeting of the Forum on African Statistical Development in 2022, in close collaboration with AfDB, AUC, PARIS21, the World Bank Group and other partners.
25. All relevant stakeholders were invited to endorse the present communiqué.
