

# TAKWIMU YOUNG AFRICAN STATISTICIANS PROGRAMME

## Concept Note – Final Draft – (01 July 2021)

### 1. Background

- 1.1. Statistical development in Africa requires sound training of young statisticians and their involvement in statistical affairs on the continent. Meeting the data needs from National Development Plans, the Continental Agenda 2063 and the global Agenda 2030, demands a special focus on African young statisticians as they remain the future of the continent and they already play an important role in the current statistical landscape.
- 1.2. Statistics South Africa in 2008 initiated the ISibalo programme with the support of the ECA in response to growing concerns about the dearth of African statistical research and knowledge driven by Africans themselves, and also in response to the demographics of the African statistical community. ISibalo was borne out of the need to nurture, grow and mentor a cadre of future statistical professionals and leaders. Since its inception in 2008, Statistics South Africa has borne the administrative, financial and intellectual costs of birthing, growing and driving this programme. The African continent remains deeply grateful for the visionary role that Statistics South Africa has played.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.3. Since 2008, many of young statisticians have been involved in a number of the continental statistical activities, which included among others, organization of special seminars, participation in Experts Group Meetings (EGM) and workshops, contribution to the Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom) and the African Symposium on Statistical Development (ASSD). They also took part in the early planning of Africa's responses to both Sustainable Development Goals and 2063 Continental Agendas.
- 1.4. Other initiatives at the sub-regional level include the young statisticians' programme of the AFRISTAT (Economic and Statistical Observatory of Sub-Saharan Africa) which hosts young statisticians and demographers for internships programme as part of its recruitment programme for young statisticians. These young statisticians come from a network of francophone Statistical Training Centres in partnership with the Support Centre for African Statistical Training Centres - CAPESA (French abbreviation for Support Centre for African Statistical Training Centres). The Support Centre works with statistical training centres in French speaking countries in West and Central

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page\\_id=6509](http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=6509)

Africa to ensure among others harmonization and a high-quality standard in initial statistical training.<sup>2</sup>

- 1.5. The West Africa Young Statisticians Association was founded in 2016 at International conference, Statistical Application for Development in Africa (SADA2016) hosted at Institut des Sciences Biomedicales Appliques (ISBA) Cotonou. The objectives of West Africa Young Statisticians Association are to foster statistics and its applications, to promote statistics at the grassroots through mentorship in the field of Statistics, and to increase the contribution of statistics to Africa development. It also cooperates with other organizations in the advancement of statistics, stimulates research, promotes high professional standards and integrity in the application of statistics.<sup>3</sup>
- 1.6. Furthermore, the African Group on Statistical Training and Human Resources (AGROST) was established in 2009 to promote statistical training through a better coordination between Statistical Training Centres (STCs), to harmonize curricula, to facilitate experience sharing and help STCs acquire more capabilities in terms of knowledge and infrastructure. AGROST hosted by UN Economic Commission for Africa, is one of the Specialized Technical Group of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA) that reports to both, the UN Statistical Commission for Africa of the ECA and the Committee of Directors General of the AUC.
- 1.7. The African statistical development landscape evolves through transitions arising from a shift towards more digital technologies; high quality data for development in light of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Africa's own Agenda 2063 and change of guard as older professionals in the statistical community hand over to younger professionals. It is therefore imperative that, building upon existing initiatives, Young African Statisticians are mobilized to play their essential role in the statistical development in Africa. This shall be done through a consolidated and harmonized programme, under the leadership of a mandated institution working in the area of statistical development and strongly connected to the Statistical Commission for Africa and the UN Statistical Commission, in this, UN Economic Commission for Africa.
- 1.8. Both Agendas 2030 and 2063 cannot be achieved if women are left behind. The gender gap in the statistician profession should be addressed, including through awareness campaigns and promotion of the profession among young females in the spirit of leaving no one behind.
- 1.9. Within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the statistical community has globally recognized that producers of official statistics need to transform and modernize themselves to adequately respond to all data demands arising from SDG, Agenda

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.afristat.org/accueil-des-jeunes-statisticiens/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://waysas.org/>

2063, national development plans and other agendas and frameworks. This transformation and modernization cover all areas of official statistics, including the institutional statistical environment, production processes, coordination and collaboration.

- 1.10. The SDGs and Agenda 2061 and now current COVID-19 global pandemic call for urgent and massive development of statistical skills. An imperative from the African Statistical community is to prepare Young African Statisticians to adequately respond to the current data deluge and demand, and to future data demands. For all these reasons, the creation of a dedicated programme for Young African Statisticians at ECA with the support of all African countries, other Pan-African institutions, Statistical Training Centres and statistical partners is necessary.

## **2. Target and Membership**

- 2.1. The ECA programme for young statisticians, coined as Takwimu<sup>4</sup> Young African Statisticians Programme (Takwimu YASP), is intended to create a network of young male and female statisticians and data practitioners from African National Statistical Systems<sup>5</sup>, Statistical Training Centres, Universities and research centres, private sector including those from national statistical associations and societies .
- 2.2. The programme also recognizes the collection of professions and skills that contribute to the skill-mix of the statistical value chain, which includes demography, population studies, methodology, economics, econometrics, mathematics, geography, geospatial information management, remote sensing, public health, development studies or economics, planning and other expertise required for stakeholder engagement, research, collection design, information technology, data transformation, analysis and data quality management in a statistical value chain.
- 2.3. “Young statisticians” refer to early and mid-career statisticians, data practitioners and related professions as per 2.2.

## **3. Mandate and objective**

- 3.1. Takwimu Young African Statisticians Programme will be institutionalized, through a resolution of the Statistical Commission for Africa’s of the UN Economic Commission for Africa. The Economic Commission for Africa will organize, in collaboration with the Bureau of the Statistical Commission for Africa, a preliminary forum in 2021 to discuss and adopt the programme.

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<sup>4</sup> “Takwimu” which means statistics in Swahili - the most spoken African language on the continent - is used to give African identity to the Programme.

<sup>5</sup> National Statistical System includes all agencies producing statistics all the Statistical departments, agencies and units that collect, process and disseminate official statistics, users and producers of statistics in a country.

3.2. The objective of this Takwimu Programme is to create a forum where Young African Statisticians will:

- Serve as the locomotive for transformation and modernization of the African Statistical Systems;
- Contribute to finding local solutions to African problems with regards to methodologies, new data sources and inspire young statisticians from the other parts of the world;
- Serve as vectors of African innovation and use of new data sources to respond to users' needs;
- Create awareness and promote the profession of statisticians, especially among African young females;
- Contribute to the harmonization of statistical training curricula on the continent and their alignment to the demands of job market and Africa's needs;
- Engage with senior statistical elders on mentorship, leadership training among others;
- Engage themselves for cross-fertilization on research ideas, peer-support and community outreach among others.

3.3. The programme also aims at bringing together career-young statisticians to help support their career development and enjoyment as well as providing a platform for networking and mentoring young statisticians by mature, experienced statisticians.

#### **4. Committee of the Takwimu Young African Statisticians Programme (YASP)**

4.1. The African Centre for Statistics of the ECA will serve as the secretariat of the Programme.

4.2. The principal mission of the Committee is to coordinate and provide strategic direction to the Programme's activities.

4.3. The members of the Takwimu YASP Committee commit to devote time to discharge their duties voluntarily.

4.4. The Committee and any future Takwimu YASP associated body shall adhere to gender balance as well as subregional and language representation.

4.5. The Committee will comprise:

- A Chairperson (from a country)
- A First Vice Chairperson (from a country)
- A Second Vice Chairperson (from a country)
- A Rapporteur (from a country)
- Representatives as ex-Officio of young statisticians from ECA, AUC, AfDB and the RECs (1 Representative per institution)

- 4.6. The Committee shall be elected for a period of 2 years. The Chairperson shall not serve more than 2 consecutive terms.
- 4.7. ECA, working closely with the Bureau of the Statistical Commission for Africa, shall facilitate the election of the interim Committee that will serve until the formal establishment of the Programme at the next Statistical Commission in 2022.
- 4.8. The Takwimu YASP Committee will mainly work remotely. The members of the Committee may physically meet at least once every two years preceding the Statistical Commission for Africa.
- 4.9. The Committee will co-opt other members as appropriate.

## **5. Method of work**

- 5.1. The Takwimu YASP will undertake various activities among and between its members and the statistical community at large. These include regional and sub-regional workshops, scientific programmes, and social events including undertaking specific research work.
- 5.2. The programme will undertake online activities along with periodic face to face meetings on the margins of major statistical events on the continent.
- 5.3. The Programme shall adopt its own rules and operational procedures but shall report to the Statistical Commission for Africa.

## **6. Support of the Programme**

- 6.1. The Economic Commission for Africa shall support the Programme as part of the Statistical Commission for Africa.
- 6.2. The African community of statistical elders shall play a consultative role for the development and sustainability of this programme.