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## Statistical Commission

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Item 3 (g) of the provisional agenda\*

**Items for discussion and decision: regional  
statistical development**

## Economic Commission for Africa on regional statistical development

### Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2022/324 and past practices, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Economic Commission for Africa, which includes thematic highlights on progress made on statistical development in the African region, with a specific focus on significant activities carried out towards transforming and modernizing the data and statistics value chain. The report contains an outline of activities undertaken to respond to the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on the African Statistical System and work done to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 of the African Union. The Commission is requested to comment on the work undertaken in Africa and identify possible areas of collaboration with other regions and partners.

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\* E/CN.3/2023/1.



# Report of the Economic Commission for Africa on regional statistical development

## I. Introduction

1. The Statistical Commission, at its fifty-third session, held virtually from 1 to 4 March 2022 ([E/2022/24-E/CN.3/2022/41](#)), requested the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) to submit a report on statistical development in the African region to the Commission at its fifty-fourth session, scheduled from 28 February to 3 March 2023.

2. The previous report ([E/CN.3/2018/9](#)) was presented to the Commission in 2017 and covered activities undertaken by ECA on statistical development in term of strategies, methodologies and key areas of focus, while indicating related challenges the African Statistical System faces, as well as some key initiatives in support of statistical development in Africa.

3. The present report includes thematic highlights on progress made on statistical development in the African region, with a specific focus on significant activities carried out towards transforming and modernizing the data and statistics value chain. The report contains an outline of activities undertaken to respond to the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on the African Statistical System and work done to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 of the African Union in the context of the data and statistics programme of ECA. The work under this programme is guided by the Statistical Commission for Africa.

4. The Statistical Commission for Africa was established by the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development of ECA in April 2007 as the highest intergovernmental body in charge of statistics and statistical development on the continent. The membership of the Statistical Commission for Africa comprises African countries, represented by their Directors General of national statistical offices. The Statistical Commission for Africa is leading the statistical renaissance in Africa. It reports to the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and, like other regional statistical commissions, to the Statistical Commission of the United Nations. The Statistical Commission for Africa meets every two years.

5. The eighth meeting of the Statistical Commission for Africa was held in Addis Ababa from 24 to 26 October 2022. The theme of the meeting was “Modernizing data ecosystems in Africa to support regional integration”. The theme was chosen to review current trends and discuss new and innovative statistical solutions to strengthen national statistical systems in Africa in the context of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

6. The data and statistics programme of ECA is implemented by the African Centre for Statistics of ECA. The Centre is responsible for improving the production, dissemination and use of quality and comparable data and statistics in Africa to support evidence-based policymaking, planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063. The Centre works in collaboration and coordination with other United Nations entities, pan-African institutions, namely, the African Development Bank and the African Union Commission, subregional institutions, bilateral and multilateral partners, academic and research institutions and global stakeholders, such as the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century. The key results of that work are summarized in the sections following the presentation of the data and statistics programme of ECA. More detailed information is available in the previous two progress reports on statistical capacity development in Africa ([E/ECA/STATCOM/7/6](#) and [E/ECA/STATCOM/8/2022/6](#)).

## II. Data and statistics programme of the Economic Commission for Africa

7. The objective of the data and statistics programme of ECA is to strengthen the production, dissemination and use of credible data, statistics and geospatial information at the national, regional and global levels for evidence-based policy- and decision-making. The programme is intended to lead Member States towards the transformation and modernization of their national statistical systems in order to meet users' needs, to the extent possible, and respond adequately to data needs. The expected results of the programme are as follows:

(a) Enhanced capacity and efficiency in the collection, processing, dissemination and use of comparable and harmonized statistics at various levels of disaggregation, with improved uptake and use of innovative tools and technologies and modern methods for statistical operations in national statistical systems;

(b) Improved uptake of data, statistics and geospatial information management, closer collaboration between components and stakeholders of the national statistical systems and national mapping agencies, and better coordinated geospatial data infrastructures;

(c) Increased commitment, investment and ownership of the processes of production, analysis, dissemination and use of statistics and spatial information, and strengthened capacity of Member States to integrate geospatial and statistical information infrastructures;

(d) Enhanced monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

8. The areas in which ECA delivers capacity development and technical assistance, undertakes methodological work and issues guidance to Member States are presented in the table below.

### ECA areas of activity of the data and statistics programme

| <i>Geospatial information management systems</i>   | <i>Economic, infrastructure and agricultural statistics</i>  | <i>Demographic and social statistics</i>   | <i>Statistical development and data outreach</i>  |
|--|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National spatial data infrastructure</li> <li>• Integrated Geospatial Information Framework</li> <li>• Integration of statistical and geospatial information</li> <li>• Geospatial data, information and knowledge resources, tools, applications and services</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• System of National Accounts</li> <li>• Beyond gross domestic product</li> <li>• Natural capital accounting</li> <li>• Consumer price index</li> <li>• Infrastructure statistics</li> <li>• Energy</li> <li>• Agriculture</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poverty</li> <li>• Gender</li> <li>• Social statistics areas (education, health, human settlements, etc.)</li> <li>• Migration</li> <li>• Population and housing census</li> <li>• Civil registration and vital statistics</li> <li>• Legal identity</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statistical databases, dashboards and publications</li> <li>• Administrative data</li> <li>• National strategies for the development of statistics</li> <li>• Statistics legislation</li> <li>• Data and metadata exchange</li> <li>• Statistical leadership</li> <li>• Big data and data science</li> <li>• Statistical coordination</li> </ul> |

### III. Impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic and resilience of the African Statistical System

9. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the activities of national statistical systems across the world, including those in Africa. An assessment of the impact of the crisis on national statistical offices, conducted by ECA in April 2020,<sup>1</sup> showed that the pandemic had had a significant impact on data collection operations. Twenty-five per cent (42 out of 168) of planned surveys had been halted or suspended and a further 48 had been postponed. In addition, ongoing surveys recorded higher non-response rates and low sample coverage. Activities of population and housing censuses had been halted or suspended in 21 per cent of countries where censuses had been planned for 2020 and postponed in 37 per cent of cases.

10. The pandemic has limited the resources and responsiveness of national statistical offices, mainly because their operations rely heavily on traditional approaches, such as face-to-face data collection and use of paper-based questionnaires, with limited data interoperability, limited use of administrative data and lack of use of new sources of data.

11. To better understand the impact of the pandemic on the national statistical programmes, discuss mitigation measures at the national level and coordinate support to countries at the regional level, ECA organized two teleconference meetings with the Directors General of national statistical offices in April 2020 and one meeting with key institutions supporting national strategies for the development of statistics in Africa in May 2020. Those meetings enabled the sharing of experiences on mitigation measures put in place at the national and regional levels to continue delivering the core mandate of the statistical offices and supported the coordination of partners' interventions. The meetings also facilitated the coordination of stakeholders and partners of the African Statistical System in their response to the pandemic.

12. As part of a coordinated approach designed to strengthen the response of African countries to COVID-19 and to enhance their access to life-saving health technologies, the United Nations in Africa, under the leadership of ECA, launched the Africa United Nations Knowledge Hub for COVID-19. The Knowledge Hub provides different pathways to the information and knowledge resources generated by the United Nations and its partners on the effects of COVID-19 in the region. These knowledge resources include technical reports, impact studies, analyses, data, presidential addresses, government decrees and news and research papers that are contextualized and harmonized for ease of use and reference.

13. ECA tailored its work programme to support and build the resilience of national statistical systems to the impact of COVID-19. Work conducted during the crisis includes the following:

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations, Economic Commission for Africa, "Quick assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Africa NSO operations", 1 September 2020.

(a) The production of briefs<sup>2</sup> and organization of webinars to understand the impact of the pandemic and to support business continuity in civil registration systems, vital statistics and gender statistics;<sup>3</sup>

(b) The provision of an application on alternative data collection techniques for compiling specific statistics in high demand, such as the consumer price index, capacity development through regional webinars and e-training workshops and technical assistance to Member States in applying web scraping, scanner data, computer-assisted telephone interviews and telephone surveys for consumer price index data collection;<sup>4</sup>

(c) The launch of the ECA Price Watch Centre for Africa as a tool for disseminating price statistics and engaging policymakers in the use of statistics for decision-making;

(d) Capacity development support for integration of statistical and geospatial information and use of spatially enabled data for informed decision-making during the COVID-19 crisis;<sup>5</sup>

(e) Operational and methodological webinars to foster constructive exchange of experiences among national statistical offices.<sup>6</sup>

14. All these activities, together with initiatives of other stakeholders of the African Statistical System and partners, helped to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, Economic Commission for Africa, “Technical brief No. 1: Rapid assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa”, 2021. Available at <https://ecastats.uneca.org/acsweb/Portals/0/EN-%20Technical%20brief%20no.1.pdf?ver=2021-05-29-093514-053>; United Nations, Economic Commission for Africa, “Technical brief No. 2: Civil registration systems as enablers of emergency response to the COVID-19 crisis: Namibian emergency income grant”, 2021. Available at <https://ecastats.uneca.org/acsweb/Portals/0/EN-%20Technical%20brief%20no.2.pdf?ver=2021-05-29-095625-777>; United Nations, Economic Commission for Africa, “Technical brief No. 3: E-notification of vital events: innovations adaptable to business continuity of civil registration in emergency situations”, 2021. Available at <https://ecastats.uneca.org/acsweb/Portals/0/EN-%20Technical%20brief%20no.3.pdf?ver=2021-05-29-100308-413>.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations, Economic Commission for Africa, “Impact of COVID-19 on gender statistics activities in African countries”, December 2020.

<sup>4</sup> “Regional seminar on data collection for compilation of consumer price index in combat with COVID-19”: <https://ecastats.uneca.org/acsweb/FocusAreas/ESNA/CPI2020.aspx>; “E-training webinar on alternative techniques for consumer price index data collection”: <https://uneca.org/events/data-and-statistics/e-training-webinar-alternative-techniques-cpi-data-collection>; “Regional webinar on applying computer-assisted telephone interview and phone survey in data collection for consumer price index”: <https://ecastats.uneca.org/khub/en-us/catiandphonesurvey2021>; “Sub-regional e-training webinar on the use of computer-assisted telephone interview/ computer-assisted personal interview for consumer price index data collection”: <https://ecastats.uneca.org/khub/en-us/CatiandCapiforCPI2022>.

<sup>5</sup> This includes the compilation of efforts by African countries to track and visualize the status of COVID-19 into a compendium of national dashboards.

<sup>6</sup> The webinars were jointly organized by the Economic and Statistical Observatory for Sub-Saharan Africa, ECA, the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) and the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century. To date, nine webinars have been organized on the following themes: (a) building better gender data in Africa: challenges and prospects; (b) economic censuses and business directories: strategies implemented and for what purposes?; (c) dialogue between the media and producers of official statistics; (d) demographic and civil status statistics: what’s new for national statistical offices?; (e) telephone surveys in response to COVID-19: challenges and perspectives; (f) how would the quality approach in statistics have helped to mitigate the inconvenience caused by COVID-19?; (g) communicating statistics in times of crisis: the role of national statistical offices in countering misinformation; and (h) food security in times of COVID-19: what measurement challenges?

national statistical systems in Africa. They paved the way for the transformation and modernization of official statistics on the continent.

#### **IV. Transformation and modernization of national statistical systems**

15. The COVID-19 crisis highlighted the vulnerability of African national statistical systems. During teleconferences of heads of national statistical offices, organized by ECA to deliberate on the impact of COVID-19 on statistical activities, the Directors General of national statistical offices discussed mitigation measures to continue delivering the core mandate of the statistical offices and concluded that there was an imperative need to transform and modernize national statistical systems on the continent.

16. At its seventh meeting, held from 13 to 15 October 2020, the Statistical Commission for Africa approved the creation of the African group on transformation and modernization of official statistics, comprising 10 Directors General of national statistical offices, and requested that ECA undertake its operationalization (see [E/ECA/STATCOM/7/13/Add.1](#)).

##### **A. African group on transformation and modernization of official statistics**

17. The mission of the group is to strategically guide and coordinate work on the transformation and modernization of national statistical systems in Africa.

18. The objectives of the group are:

(a) To identify priority modernization and transformation areas and domains of focus;

(b) To identify challenges to the existing organizational structure of national statistical offices in Africa and propose a generic organizational structure that would accommodate changes;

(c) To oversee and approve the development of frameworks, guidelines, methods and standards to support the transformation and modernization of official statistics in Africa;

(d) To create, direct and oversee the work of subgroups that would deal with specific topics and issues;

(e) To advise the Statistical Commission for Africa on issues of strategic importance to the modernization and transformation of official statistics in Africa;

(f) To propose African champions who would foster statistical development, including transformation and modernization on the continent, and advise Heads of State in promoting a culture of evidence-based decision-making.

19. The Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, at its fifty-third session, held on 22 and 23 March 2021, welcomed the creation of the group and encouraged it to propose regional guidance and standards for the modernization and transformation of national statistical systems (see [E/ECA/CM/53/5](#)).

20. The Bureau of the Statistical Commission for Africa nominated the group members<sup>7</sup> for a four-year mandate, with due consideration for regional and linguistic representation and the different levels of statistical development of national statistical offices in Africa in order to ensure that no national statistical system is left behind.

21. The group adopted its vision for transforming and modernizing national statistical systems, entitled “Modernized statistical systems for a competitive and prosperous Africa”. In addition, it identified the three main thematic domains for transformation and modernization and approved the creation of three technical teams to conduct work in these thematic areas, namely:

- (a) Digitalization and integration of data science initiatives;
- (b) Survey methodology;
- (c) Coordination of the national statistical system and statistical legislation (including administrative data systems and other sources).

## **B. Outcome of the mandate of the group**

22. As the primary element of the work programme of the technical teams is the evaluation of the status of African countries in terms of the transformation and modernization of official statistics, ECA, the group’s secretariat, supported the teams in assessing the national statistical systems in Africa in the three main thematic areas outlined above. In the assessment report, the areas were highlighted in which countries should make efforts in each of the three thematic areas of focus.

23. A comprehensive report was produced on the transformation and modernization of official statistics in Africa. In the report, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and political, economic, social, technological and legal factors in the three thematic areas were identified.

24. ECA launched the following activities and programmes to support the transformation and modernization of national statistical systems in Africa:

- (a) Leadership programme in statistics to equip senior managers of national statistical offices with the skills required to lead their institutions;
- (b) Development and deployment of information technology tools (census field monitoring dashboard, census field support and issue tracking system, a provisioning tool for tablets) and a census e-question repository to support the undertaking of digital censuses in Africa;
- (c) Data science campus to provide leadership to set standards and strengthen the capacity of Member States to use innovative tools and solutions, methods and techniques in collecting, processing, analysing and disseminating data and statistics to measure national, regional and global development initiatives;
- (d) Programme for modernizing administrative data and registers for statistical purposes, integrating geospatial information systems and statistics and centralizing data produced by national statistical systems, with the aim of closing the data gap and enhancing monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa;<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The group comprises Directors General of the national statistical offices of the following countries: (a) for Central Africa: Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea; (b) for East Africa: Kenya and Rwanda; (c) for North Africa: Egypt (Rapporteur) and Morocco (second Vice-Chair); (d) for Southern Africa: South Africa (Chair) and Zambia; and (e) for West Africa: the Niger (first Vice-Chair) and Nigeria.

<sup>8</sup> This programme is funded by a grant from the European Union through Eurostat for the period 2021–2024.

(e) Initiatives of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework and regional initiatives to promote the integration of statistical and geospatial information aimed at modernizing national statistics;

(f) Modernization of national statistical legal frameworks and the design and update of national strategies for the development of statistics to support the transformation and modernization process.

25. A road map for the transformation and modernization of official statistics in Africa was developed and endorsed by the Statistical Commission for Africa in October 2022. The road map takes stock of the challenges and opportunities faced by the African Statistical System and sets out principles and priorities for transformation and modernization. It provides guidance on how countries can develop and implement national strategies for the development of statistics and annual statistical workplans to optimize transformation and modernization.<sup>9</sup>

### C. Takwimu programme

26. ECA launched the Takwimu<sup>10</sup> Young African Statisticians Programme in July 2021 as the continental network of young statisticians and data practitioners from African national statistical systems, statistical training centres, universities and research centres, civil society and the private sector, including those from national statistical associations and societies. The objective of the Takwimu programme is to create a forum where young African statisticians will serve as the locomotive for transforming and modernizing African statistical systems.

27. Meetings were organized to adopt the Takwimu concept note, the programme focus and the strategy for mobilizing young African statisticians from diverse backgrounds. The Takwimu strategy for the period 2022–2025 is being finalized with support from ECA. The programme aims at mobilizing, organizing and equipping young statisticians on the African continent with the necessary tools, skills and knowledge to contribute to and support the building of a robust statistical system that responds to users' needs.

28. The Takwimu programme seeks to enhance the exposure and visibility of young African statisticians at international conferences, such as through participation in the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, held in Kigali in March 2022, the eighteenth conference of the International Association for Official Statistics, held in Kraków, Poland in April 2022, and the eighth meeting of the Statistical Commission for Africa, held in Addis Ababa in October 2022. In addition, ECA organized and mobilized young African in the international competition for the Association's Prize for Young Statisticians.

### D. Regional Hub for Big Data

29. ECA signed a memorandum of understanding with the Government of Rwanda and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to establish the Regional Hub for Big Data to support African Member States in effectively using new data sources and applying data science tools and techniques for generating credible and insightful statistics. The Regional Hub was endorsed by the Statistical Commission for Africa.

<sup>9</sup> United Nations, Economic Commission for Africa, "Road map for the transformation and modernization of official statistics in Africa, 2023–2030", 2022.

<sup>10</sup> "Takwimu" means "statistics" in Swahili.



30. The objectives of the Regional Hub are:

(a) To facilitate cross-border collaboration on projects that seek to apply big data, alternative data sources and data science for official statistics and to fill data gaps relating to Sustainable Development Goal indicators;

(b) To share knowledge on newly developed methods, algorithms and tools by means of seminars, workshops and the United Nations Global Platform;

(c) To provide training on the use of big data and data science for the community of official statistics in Africa;

(d) To conduct research on the use of big data and data science for the development of new statistical methods and techniques in Africa;

(e) To provide capacity-building and training for statisticians and data scientists;

(f) To organize international seminars and workshops on data science and the modernization of official statistics;

(g) To support the development and maintenance of the United Nations Global Platform, in collaboration with other regional hubs, for the sharing of trusted data, trusted methods and trusted learning within the community of official statistics and its stakeholders.

31. The Regional Hub has been functional since 2021 and has undertaken several activities since then, including international workshops on big data and data science and activities to promote their use in official statistics in Africa. Initial collaborative projects and a regional assessment of institutional readiness for using big data and data science in official statistics are currently ongoing. The first collaborative project is in the area of web scraping for consumer price index data collection. In addition, the Hub steering committee has endorsed the road map for the period 2022–2023.

## **V. Methodological developments, guidance and technical documents and advocacy to support implementation of the African statistical agenda**

### **A. Methodological developments**

32. Considering the critical importance of compiling subnational gross domestic product (GDP) data to inform investment decisions, revenue mobilization and spatial economic development initiatives, as well as the growing wave of decentralization and devolution of administration in many African countries, ECA launched an initiative in 2017 to measure the GDP of cities in Africa. This initiative is designed to strengthen countries' capacity to measure subnational and city GDP and its contribution to the national economy. The technical methodological framework developed was tested in six pilot cities, namely, Accra, Harare, Kigali, Lusaka, Maseru and Yaoundé. The draft report was examined during an expert group meeting in June 2022. At its eighth meeting, held in October 2022, the Statistical Commission for Africa requested ECA to continue supporting African countries to scale up the initiative through the development of a common African guideline on the compilation of subnational GDP data.

33. ECA developed the African geospatial development index,<sup>11</sup> a conceptual index of multi-composite indicators designed to measure the progress made by African

<sup>11</sup> United Nations, Economic Commission for Africa, "The African Geospatial Development Index", 2022.

countries in managing geospatial information policies and resources. The index incorporates an emphasis on people, technology and the environment as the pillars of growth driven by geospatial technology. The index will also be used to examine national policy choices regarding the use of geospatial technology and the contribution of geospatial information to modernizing statistics. The index is intended for use by policymakers, the media, the private sector and non-governmental organizations to reform geospatial information for human outcomes.

34. In response to the message issued by Heads of State and Government in Africa in 2019, in the political declaration of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, calling for accelerated action by all stakeholders to fulfil the vision and goals of the 2030 Agenda (see General Assembly resolution 74/4), ECA adopted and refined the methodology developed by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to track progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa. The aim of this measure is, first, to provide insight into the work accomplished in previous years and, second, to shed light on expected performance in fulfilment of the targets and goals of the 2030 Agenda. The results obtained will enable countries to formulate timely policy interventions that follow an evidence-based approach. The methodology provides two measures for tracking progress: “the current status index”, which measures progress since 2000 towards a specific target, and “anticipated progress”, which measures the gap between the predicted value of an indicator and its corresponding specified target value, thus indicating the likelihood of the target value being achieved by 2030. The most recent results show that, out of the 169 targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, Africa is likely to meet only 9 at the current rate of progress.<sup>12</sup>

35. ECA created statistical development indicators to serve as a practical tool to enable countries to measure and assess progress in all relevant dimensions of statistical development, with the aim of promoting ownership and enhancing the sustainability of statistical development processes in Africa. The initial objective of the tool was to support the monitoring of progress achieved in statistical development and enhance the production of the high-quality, timely and reliable data required for tracking and reporting on progress in national development, the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. In that connection, several countries have used the statistical development indicators to establish baseline information and estimate progress in statistical development. The indicators will be reviewed for use as part of the toolkit for monitoring progress on the road map for the transformation and modernization of national statistical systems in Africa.

36. ECA has been supporting Member States to produce technical documents, update their methodological approaches in producing trade in value-added tables and update the 2008 System of National Accounts. Trade in value-added has been recognized as a modern technique to measure external trade and better understand the nature of global value chains by decomposing gross trade flows by country and sector and identifying value-added origins. Such analysis has become more important as the world has seen increased globalization, digitalization and growth of cross-border trade in services, and in the light of the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area. In addition, the involvement of African countries in the 2008 System of National Accounts aims at ensuring the inclusion of African peculiarities in the methodological update.

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<sup>12</sup> United Nations, Economic Commission for Africa, *Africa Sustainable Development Goal Progress Report 2021: Is Africa on Track to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030?* (Addis Ababa, 2022).

## B. Guidance and technical documents

37. ECA has prepared the following statistical guidelines and technical documents since 2018, jointly with key partners in some cases:

(a) The regional knowledge-sharing and information-sharing platform in Africa: The platform is aimed at promoting and improving the exchange and sharing of information on gender statistics issues among partners and member countries of the African programme on gender statistics;

(b) “Guidelines for developing an integrated user engagement strategy for national statistical systems” (published in 2020), intended to assist national statistical systems in developing robust and strategic user engagement programmes. The guidelines consist of a practical mix of instructions, tips and background needed to conduct a dialogue with users and identify what they need, when they need it and through what media;

(c) “Operational guidebook on how to do GDP rebasing” (published in 2018), elaborated by the African Centre for Statistics. This guidebook provides practical guidance for national accountants on GDP rebasing;

(d) “The minimum set of gender indicators for Africa: Phase 4 report” (published in 2020), a framework for harmonizing gender statistics on the continent, endorsed at the eighth meeting of the Statistical Commission for Africa. It comprises 53 indicators across six domains of economic structures (16 indicators), participation in productive activities and access to resources, health and related services (8 indicators), education (11 indicators), human rights of women and the girl child (8 indicators), public life and decision-making (6 indicators) and environment and climate change (4 indicators). This framework is aligned with the global minimum set of gender indicators agreed to by the Statistical Commission in 2013;

(e) “Guidelines for the implementation of national spatial data infrastructures in Africa” (published in 2019): These guidelines are tailored to the specific conditions of different African countries. ECA also supported the development of guidelines and protocols on geocoding and the use of spatial techniques to analyse and properly interpret census data and guidelines for the integration of statistical and geospatial information. It also boosted the capacities of African countries to identify second-level administrative boundary information and facilitated the development of the Africa GeoPortal, an online mapping service aimed at enhancing map production;

(f) “Standard guiding principles for the integration of statistical and geospatial information in Africa” (published in 2020; [E/ECA/STATCOM/7/5](#)): This strategic document with operational guidelines informs the establishment and implementation of national statistical geospatial frameworks based on experiences and best practices in other countries for the proper integration of statistical and geospatial information in African countries;

(g) “Manual on geocoding census data in Africa” (published in 2021): This manual integrates the population and housing census geospatial component throughout the entire census process to address the issue of low consideration of geocoding and spatial analytical components when census data are edited, tabulated and presented in Africa;

(h) “Manual on innovative geospatial decision support system for a transformative recovery from the impact of COVID-19 on the Congo basin forest”: This manual intends to assist the spatial planner in making choices on land use changes, especially in the Congo basin forest. It shows how the choices of the spatial

decision support system models may be used to determine the optimal decision path for recovery from the impact of COVID-19 on the Congo basin forest;

(i) “Guidelines on the drafting of memorandums of understanding for better coordination among national stakeholders of civil registration and vital statistics systems at the country level” (published in 2019): The purpose of these guidelines is to assist African countries in efforts to improve their civil registration and vital statistics systems with a well-functioning, formal and effective framework for stakeholder coordination at the country level. It is expected that, where countries have such memorandums of understanding in place, the coordination among key stakeholders will work well;

(j) “The civil registration and vital statistics systems improvement framework” (published in 2021): The goal of this framework is to strengthen vital statistics data collection and use for more effective planning and priority setting. The framework introduces a process-centric approach to improvement in order to increase civil registration and vital statistics system performance and service delivery to the population.

### C. Advocacy

38. African Statistics Day, which has been celebrated annually on 18 November since its adoption in May 1990 by the Conference of African Ministers responsible for Planning and Economic Development, remains the most visible and widely observed occasion to promote awareness of the importance of statistics and of data-driven policies and research in Africa. African Statistics Day has generated widespread interest and coverage not only among members of statistical communities, but also among journalists and the general public. Some countries have extended the celebration of statistics beyond one day to last the month running from 18 October to 18 November.

39. The theme for 2022 was “Strengthening data systems by modernizing the production and use of agricultural statistics: informing policies with a view to improving resilience in agriculture, nutrition and food security in Africa”. The theme reflects calls to modernize data systems for the production, dissemination and use of agricultural statistics. The celebration at the continental level gave ECA and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations the opportunity to present the second phase of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics in Africa. The Strategy provides for 50 scholarships at the master’s degree level to selected students from Member States. In addition, the Strategy involves planning regional workshops to impart basic theoretical knowledge and skills to data producers, in particular statisticians with no or limited background in agricultural statistics, and to economists or agronomists with basic knowledge in statistics.

40. Since 2018, the day of registration of vital statistics has been observed on 10 August to reaffirm African countries’ commitment to putting in place effective registration systems.<sup>13</sup> The theme for the fifth day, celebrated in 2022, was “Harnessing coordination, country leadership and ownership to strengthen integrated civil registration and vital statistics systems: a vehicle for #CountingEveryone”. The celebration gave the opportunity for countries and partners to advocate for political commitment at the country level, with African Governments taking leadership and ownership in strengthening their respective civil registration and vital statistics systems.

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<sup>13</sup> At the fourth session of the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration, held in Nouakchott in December 2017, the ministers recommended that 10 August be declared the day of registration of vital statistics and invited African Union member States to observe the day.

## **VI. Action to be taken by the Statistical Commission**

### **41. The Commission is invited:**

**(a) To take note of the progress made on statistical development in the African region towards transforming and modernizing national statistical systems;**

**(b) To take note and comment on the methodological developments and guidance documents in the ECA region;**

**(c) To comment on the work of the African group on transformation and modernization of official statistics and related activities;**

**(d) To call upon institutions and development partners to support the implementation of the road map for the transformation and modernization of official statistics in Africa and align their programme support to the priorities identified in the document.**

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