

## **Putting in Place the Training Capacity Needed to Implement the Global Strategy for Agricultural Statistics in Africa**

### **Graham Eele (World Bank), and Oumar Sarr (UNECA)**

The urgent need to improve agricultural statistics was recognized by the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC), which, at its 40<sup>th</sup> Session in February 2009, recommended the development of a Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics. The purpose of the Global Strategy is to provide a framework for national and international statistical systems to produce the basic data and information on agriculture to guide the decision making required in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The 41<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNSC endorsed the Global Strategy and recommended that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) take the lead in the preparation of an Implementation Plan for a comprehensive statistical capacity building program to rebuild or improve the statistical systems in developing countries.

A Meeting of Stakeholders in Africa was organized in Tunisia from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> February 2010 to agree on a unified approach for developing an implementation plan for Africa for the Global Strategy including a common program to guide capacity building efforts for improving agricultural statistics. It was agreed that the training component of this plan would be led by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). It is intended that the implementation plan will have a long term perspective (10 to 15 years), but this paper presents a proposal for the first phase of the program covering the next 5 years, that is, the period from 2011 to 2015.

The paper puts forward a proposed program that includes a number of aspects, including the development of education and training courses on the use of new methodological tools and new technologies (GPS, remote sensing). It supports the development of curricula for a broad package of training courses at different levels that will be implemented through regional centers of excellence for high level/advanced training, with initial and intermediate training being decentralized, as far as possible, to national training agencies (Statistical Offices and/or Universities). An important part of the proposal supports the training of trainers to make national capacity more sustainable and also promotes self-learning by developing new training tools, such as e-learning and distance learning. The program will also support the dissemination of handbooks and best practice through the Internet and other media and has been closely coordinated with the technical assistance component.