



**WORKSHOP ON IMPROVING STATISTICS FOR FOOD SECURITY,  
SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT:  
ACTION PLAN FOR AFRICA (2011-2015)**

**27 - 29 AUGUST 2012  
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

**STATEMENT  
BY  
THE DEPUTY EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
UN ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

The Representative of the African Development Bank to Ethiopia,  
The Director, African Centre for Statistics,  
Your Excellencies,  
The Manager, Central Statistics Authority of Ethiopia,  
Invited Guests,  
Workshop participants,  
Ladies and gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to this very important workshop. Let me in a special way welcome the AfDB Representative to Ethiopia.

The **UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)** works closely with the **African Development Bank (AfDB)**, member countries and development partners to find solutions to problems in different areas of national and regional development in Africa. In the area of statistics, the **African Centre for Statistics** which has division status was established in 2007 by UNECA as part of its restructuring to serve Africa better. In the same year, the **Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa)** which is the apex inter-governmental body in charge of statistics and statistical development in Africa was established. And together with the AfDB, the African Union Commission and the African Capacity Building Foundation, an **African Statistical Coordination Committee** was established also in 2007 to, among other things, coordinate statistical development in the continent. These efforts have improved the way regional and international organizations support statistical development in Africa.

It is in the above spirit that this workshop is jointly organized by the UNECA, the AfDB and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and hosted by the Central Statistical Agency of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development of Ethiopia. As you would expect, most of the funding for holding this workshop came from the AfDB. Let me, therefore, take this opportunity to thank AfDB and FAO for the great role they have played in organizing this workshop and the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia for hosting the workshop.

It goes without saying that agriculture is very important components of national economies of African countries in terms of their contribution to GDP, employment and exports. It is very important to mention that all the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** have direct or indirect linkages to agriculture. It is for these reasons that in 2003, African Heads of State and Government adopted an Africa owned and led initiative, the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP), to assist African countries to revitalize agriculture growth as a strategy to combat poverty and hunger.

The said importance of the agricultural sector requires that its planning, management and monitoring be based on sound evidence, i.e. comprehensive, reliable, consistent and timely statistical data in a form that renders them intelligible and usable.

Although some significant progress had been made in statistical development in Africa due to several initiatives including those I have mentioned above, there are serious deficiencies in statistical information in Africa which are still hampering Africa's development and integration processes. In particular, there still remains a gap between data demand and supply; and the quality of available statistical information on some key development indicators in agriculture, rural development and other areas by and large remains unsatisfactory. This is very much true of basic agricultural data as it is for emerging or new development areas including global warming, environment, etc.

I am glad to inform you that the challenges of agricultural statistics have been a subject of discussion at various fora including successive UN Statistical Commission meeting in New York. In 2010, a **Global Strategy for Improving Agricultural Statistics** was designed and endorsed by the United Nations Statistical Commission. This strategy should go a long way in addressing challenges of collecting, managing, disseminating and using agricultural statistics in our continent in the 21st century. I am also happy to mention that as a region, Africa has already designed an **Action Plan for Implementing the Global Strategy**. This Plan has been endorsed in different fora including the Statistical Commission for Africa and the UN Statistical Commission.

This workshop was organized to expose you to the said Action Plan and how it will be implemented in our countries, beginning with undertaking **capacity and needs assessment**. The assessment will provide a rational basis for developing action plans at country level as well as technical and financial assistance programmes at continental level.

I would, therefore, wish to urge you to: (a) internalize and embrace the Action Plan for Africa of the Global Strategy for Improving Statistics for Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development as a blue print for the development of agricultural statistics in Africa; (b) get empowered to participate effectively in the capacity and needs assessment; and (c) design an implementation action plan for your country.

With these remarks, I wish you good deliberations.

**Thanks you very much for your attention.**