

The Vice-President of the Republic of The Gambia, H.E. Mohammed B.S. Jallow

Statistician General of the Gambia Bureau of Statistics, Mr. Nyakassi M.B. Sanyang

Ladies and Gentlemen, Directors General of National Institutes of Statistics,

Director of the Statistics Department of the African Development Bank, Mr OMOTOSHO, SAMSON BABATUNDE

Director of the African Center for Statistics of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Mr. Oliver Chinganya

Ladies and Gentlemen, Representatives of Regional Economic Communities,

Ladies and Gentlemen, Representatives of Development Partners,

Honorable guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the African Union Institute for Statistics, I would like to thank the Government and people of the Republic of The Gambia for the warm hospitality accorded to all of us since we arrived. Your presence in our midst, H.E Vice-President, symbolizes the importance your government attaches to statistical development and innovation in the region. I would also like to give special recognition to the Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBOS), for hosting this statutory meeting of the African Union Commission here in Banjul, Republic of The Gambia.

As the Director of the Office of the Strategy Planning and Deliverer of the AUC, and as Ag. Executive Director of the AU Institute for Statistics (STATAFRIC), it is a pleasure and great honor for me to stand in front you today at this 18th Session of the Committee of Directors General of the National Statistical Offices of Africa (CoDGs), where once again, we will have the opportunity to discuss matters related to the development of statistics on the African continent.

As we may know, it is a common practice within the AUC to have the discussions of a subsidiary body like the CoDGs around a specific theme. Thus, the theme of the 18th session of the CoDGs 2024 is: *“Contribution of statistics to Educate an African, fit for the*

21st Century: Building resilient education systems for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning in Africa”.

In addition to that, this AU 2024 theme, was selected by National Statistics Offices and the Pan African Institutions to celebrate this year 2024 the African Statistical Day.

H.E. Vice Presidente

Ladies and gentlemen

The African Union Institute for Statistics (STATAFRIC) underscores the pivotal role of statistics in the formulation, planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting of policies. As a cornerstone of development programs, statistics ensure informed decision-making and effective governance. STATAFRIC places a strong emphasis on producing high-quality data that is relevant, accurate, timely, accessible, interpretable, and coherent. Recognizing the critical importance of statistical data in advancing the Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063, endorsed by the AU Heads of State and Government, the Institute calls for a unified effort. to advance the Agenda of the “Africa we want”. AU Member States, Regional Economic Communities, Statistical Training Schools and Pan African Organizations should come together and align their development programmes in line with the SHaSA 2 to produce an annual report for Agenda 2063.

STATAFRIC along with Pan-African organizations stands ready to empower the leadership of the African Statistical System and the National Statistical Systems as well.

H.E. Vice-President

Ladies and gentlemen

The continental development is driven by the African Union Agenda 2063 that envision to build an "integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa led by its people and representing a dynamic force on the international scene" and the implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015. To implement these development programs at national, regional and continental levels and ensure their success, there is a need for reliable and harmonized statistics in all the domains.

Therefore, to implement all these programmes at all levels and to ensure the success of achieving their objectives, it is imperative to develop reliable and harmonized statistics in all areas of African integration. In fact, the development of comparable statistics in time and space on the continent requires the adoption of harmonized and standardized definitions and concepts; the adaptation of international standards to African realities and

specificities; and the use of a common methodology to produce statistics and their dissemination by all African countries.

It is for all these reasons that the second Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA 2) adopted by the African leaders to support the implementation of the two agendas and integration programs in Africa and improve coordination and collaboration between National Statistical Institutes, Regional and Continental Statistical Organizations, and development partners.

H.E. Vice-President

Distinguished ladies

The 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA) offers a robust framework for measuring economic activity, serving as a cornerstone for informed policy-making and planning. The 2024 report highlights Africa's progress in implementing the 2008 SNA and its associated statistical systems while acknowledging significant challenges that persist. To further advance the reliability and effectiveness of national accounts, a sustained focus on capacity building, data integration, and resource allocation is imperative. Strengthening these areas will enhance the credibility of national statistics and support evidence-based economic decision-making across the continent.

Your Excellency, when we talk about the development of a strategy and roadmap to assist countries in modernizing their administrative data systems for statistical purposes, it involves several key components: Assessment and Planning, Framework development, Capacity Building (training program and institutional capacity), Data quality improvement, etc.

Furthermore, the status of the 2020 round of population and housing censuses in Africa has shown significant variability across the continent, influenced by several factors, including political situations, funding, and logistical challenges.

Planning for the 2030 population and housing censuses is underway, building on lessons from the 2020 round. Despite challenges, efforts are being made to improve data accuracy and ensure comprehensive coverage across African nations. The experience gained from this round will likely inform future censuses and improve data collection methodologies across the continent.

H.E. Vice-President

Ladies and Gentlemen

As we are aware about the AU 2024 Theme which is the contribution of the statistics to Educate an African, fit for the 21st Century.

In this regard, these eighteen sessions of the Committee of Directors General of National Statistics Offices, which brings us together here in this magnificent city of Banjul, The Gambia, from 9 to 12 December 2024, provide an opportunity to review the progress achieved by African countries, Regional Economic Communities, and Pan-African organizations in advancing and harmonizing statistical production across the continent. The session will evaluate reports from various specialized technical groups under SHaSA, review the 2018 statistical program of the three Pan-African institutions, and address both statutory and emerging statistical issues, including coordination efforts across Africa. Additionally, it will serve as a platform to prepare for the 56th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission, set to take place in New York in 2025. A key focus of this session is to enhance the technical capacity of Directors General in producing indicators critical for monitoring and evaluating Agenda 2063's Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan (STYIP) and Agenda 2030.

H.E. Vice-President

Distinguished ladies

Statistical capacity development in Africa is essential for improving data quality, accessibility, and reliability, which are crucial for informed decision-making and effective governance. The report produced this year underlines the status, challenges, and initiatives related to statistical capacity development across the continent.

It is therefore imperative for the actors of the African Statistical System to work hard so that the statistics produced acquire legitimacy, gain credibility, improve, become reliable and inspire confidence among users.

African Statistical Systems must be strengthened and adequately resourced to ensure the production of reliable, timely, relevant, and comparable statistics across all economic and social sectors. It is essential to adopt harmonized methodologies for data collection and calculation, enabling consistency and comparability of statistics across all African countries. This will support evidence-based decision-making and foster regional and continental integration efforts.

H.E. Vice-President

Ladies and Gentlemen

Education in Africa is a diverse and multifaceted topic, as the continent is home to 55 countries with varying systems, policies, and challenges. While there have been significant strides in improving access to education in many parts of Africa, the region still faces numerous hurdles in achieving equitable and high-quality education for all.

Most African countries follow a similar structure of education as other parts of the world, typically divided into: (i) Primary Education which is often free and compulsory, though not universally enforced; (ii) Secondary Education in which the enrollment rates drop significantly compared to primary education due to financial, social, or logistical barriers; and (iii) Higher Education which includes universities, colleges, and vocational training institutions. Access is limited, with low enrollment rates compared to global standards.

So, the increased enrollment, for this, efforts such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the current Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have driven initiatives to increase access to primary education. Enrollment rates for primary school have risen dramatically in countries like Rwanda, Kenya, and Ghana.

For Policy Reforms, many governments are implementing policies to improve education access, including free primary education (e.g., Kenya, Tanzania); and

For Technology in Education, the digital tools and platforms are being adopted to bridge gaps, especially in remote areas (e.g., e-learning platforms in South Africa and Kenya).

As challenges: (i) Schools in rural areas often lack adequate buildings, furniture, and resources like textbooks; (ii) Many schools have an insufficient number of qualified teachers, leading to overcrowded classrooms and low student-to-teacher ratios; (iii) Cultural and economic factors often limit girls' access to education, particularly at secondary and tertiary levels; (iv) Many African countries allocate insufficient budgets for education, resulting in underfunded public schools; (v) Armed conflicts, especially in regions like the Sahel and parts of East Africa, disrupt schooling for millions of children; and (vi) Instruction in colonial languages (e.g., English, French) can be a barrier for students who speak indigenous languages at home.

The future of education in Africa depends on sustained investment, innovative solutions, and regional cooperation. The African Union's Agenda 2063 envisions an Africa with a well-educated and skilled workforce. Achieving this goal will require addressing systemic challenges and leveraging the continent's young and growing population.

H.E. Vice-President

Dear Colleagues,

The African Union Institute for Statistics is assisted by World Bank financial and technical support on the implementation of the second Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in African (SHaSA 2) three main projects: the East African Community project, the HISWA Project and HISWACA Project.

Also, the European Union and the African Union launched in January 2016 the Pan-African Statistics Programme (PAS) as part of the broader Pan-African Programme. Its objectives build on the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA) and the African Charter on Statistics and aims to support the AU in the implementation of its integration agenda through better availability of quality official statistics.

The PAS II was launched in 2022 based on the success of the PAS I, by EU and AU, within the Joint Vision for 2030 adopted by Heads of State and Governments at the 6th EU-Africa Summit the PAS II Programme funded by the EU. Allow me to commend on the support provided *by all the grants and components* with an emphasis on the Eurostat that provides direct support to STATAFRIC as well as the African Statistical System. We welcome in particular its support to the SHaSA 2 specialized technical groups (STGs) and selected RECs in their efforts to produce quality and harmonized statistics. We also value its support of peer reviews of National Statistical Systems, as well as its technical support to AU member states in the compilation of improved statistics in international trade, national accounts, agriculture, environment and climate change.

Furthermore, by the financial and technical support from Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), STATAFRIC is working on the second phase of the migration statistics project, spanning from January 2023 to December 2026, building on the achievements of the initial phase conducted between January 2019 and December 2022. This collaborative endeavor involves STATAFRIC and six Regional Economic Communities (RECs): East African Community (EAC), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU). The overarching objective is to enhance the situation of migrants in Africa and amplify their contribution to continental development. The project aims to ensure the availability of pertinent, high-quality migration statistics for informed decision-making.

H.E. Vice-President

Ladies and gentlemen,

Before ending my remarks, on behalf of H.E. Dr. Moussa Mahamat Faki, Chairperson of the AUC, I would like to thank all the participants who were kind enough to respond

favorably to the invitation of the AUC. I remain convinced that our deliberations will significantly contribute to the influence of statistics among our decision-makers and to improving the quality of statistics produced on the continent. I would like to reiterate the firm commitment of the AU Commission to support its Member States in the production and harmonization of statistics on the continent. I call for fruitful collaboration with our partners.

Lastly, I want to thank, and I thank the Government of the Republic of The Gambia for all the facilities they have put in place in order to make it possible for us to meet here today and in a comfortable environment.

Thank You very much!

Merci beaucoup!

Shukran jazilan!

Muito obrigado!

¡Muchas gracias!