



The **AFRISTAT** Newsletter

Information Bulletin

Economic and Statistical Observatory for Sub Saharan Africa

Volume 1, Number 2
NOVEMBER 2004

EDITORIAL

CONTENTS

<i>Editorial</i>	1
<i>Common Minimum Statistical Programme</i>	2
<i>Activities of the Directorate General</i>	4
<i>Other Technical Assistance Missions</i>	5
<i>International Activities</i>	6
<i>NSO's Web Sites</i>	7
<i>Forthcoming events and seminars</i>	7

ADDRESS

Po Box E 1600
Bamako, Mali
Tel. (223) 221 55 00
221 60 73
221 60 71
Fax (223) 221 11 40
E-mail
afristat@afristat.org
Web site
www.afristat.org

Dear Colleague and Dear Reader,

The last semester was particularly rich in events. In April, the Council of Ministers of AFRISTAT was convened in Brazzaville (Congo) and made some important decisions and recommendations relating to the reconstitution of AFRISTAT own resources for the period 2006-2015. The respect of these commitments by Member states will certainly allow AFRISTAT to fulfil its mission of strengthening statistical capacities in Member states.

AFRISTAT technical assistance to Member states and activities are still dominated by the setting up of an efficient information systems for the design, implementation and monitoring of strategies of poverty alleviation. In addition to the launching of the UNDP funded project on regional monitoring of PSRP and MDG indicators, and the ACBF funded project on the improvement of labour market information systems funded, AFRISTAT has just obtained a grant from the World Bank for the implementation of poverty Monitoring and Evaluation tools.

On the other hand, AFRISTAT, on a French funding, continued its assistance to all Member states in the development of their own web sites ([see addresses at the end of this bulletin](#)). Although they do not yet include all the expected information, these Web sites have already proved to be an important tool for the improvement of data dissemination. This initiative needs to be encouraged and further developed.

AFRISTAT has also initiated a survey on the mid-term progress on the implementation of the Common Statistical Programme (PROSMIC) in Member states. This programme was designed to cover the 2001-2005 period.

On the internal side, this semester was marked by the appointment of Mr. Martin Balépa as the Director General. On the other hand, the new Deputy Director General joined the Organisation on 2nd of July 2004. I wish him full success in his work.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that this bulletin should be seen as a forum for sharing experiences between countries and announcing special events. We therefore encourage you to participate in its enrichment by providing special input and technical articles for publication.

Yours sincerely,

AFRISTAT Director General

Martin BALEPA

COMMON MINIMUM STATISTICAL PROGRAMME (PROSMIC)

During its eighth session in Paris on 19th September 2000, the Council of Ministers of AFRISTAT adopted a Common Minimum Statistical Programme -PROSMIC.

1.1. Economic Policy and Regional Integration

The development of the Common Minimum Statistical Programme of AFRISTAT¹ member states (PROSMIC) is one step in a long process of reflection, analysis and joint decisions to improve the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of economic policies and to support efforts for regional integration in Sub-Saharan countries.

During the last two decades, AFRISTAT member states, like other developing countries, had to face the effects of a serious economic and financial crisis in a changing world. The crisis has generated, through structural adjustment programmes supported by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, an increased demand for information that these countries are unable to meet.

In addition, there was, in the early 1990's, the start of a democratisation process, which in the long run, should make all economic and social actors aware of the need for a broader range of good quality information.

Lastly, the new context of market liberalisation and economy globalisation has highlighted the need for a greater economic integration in the coun-

tries concerned. It is for this purpose that were created, in 1994, the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) and the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), covering 14 out of the 16 AFRISTAT member states. These integration efforts have also strong requirements in terms of information.

The creation in 1993 of the Economic and Statistical Observatory for Sub-Saharan Africa (AFRISTAT) by member states of the Franc zone was one of the initiatives that were launched during the 90's to stop the decline of African statistics.

1.2. Genesis of the Common Minimum Statistical Programme

As soon as it was installed in its headquarters in Bamako, in January 1996, at the request of member states the Directorate General of AFRISTAT undertook a survey on the status of national statistical systems (NSS)², in order later on to formulate proposals for the sustainable development of statistics in these countries.

The survey showed that national statistical systems in member states are generally characterised by:

- Inadequate human, material and financial resources;
- Lack of clearly defined priorities and absence of work plans both at the level of NSOs and other institutions in charge of data collection;
- Absence or non functioning of co-ordination mechanisms at the national level;

- Rapid rotation of high level staff whose skills are not sufficiently valued in the NSOs;
- A relative isolation of statistical services, which have few contacts between them. This is a major reason for the absence of comparability between the statistics produced;
- A statistical output inappropriate to the needs of users, especially national decision makers, due to the lack of accuracy and considerable delays in their publication.

Now, the economic crisis has highlighted the necessity to have reliable and up-to-date statistics for the design, implementation and evaluation of economic reform policies and to measure their impact on society. In addition the renovation and reinforcement of the regional integration process require comparable and harmonised statistics for macro-economic surveillance and sector policies.

Unfortunately, it is obvious that national statistical systems have many difficulties in meeting demands for economic and social information. In fact, their operating conditions have considerably deteriorated due to the economic crisis and they are not able to define a minimum statistical programme properly co-ordinated at the national level.

In addition, the lack of contact between statisticians and their colleagues in other states and the lack of dialogue with users often lead them to disregard the need for regional and international comparability.

To face all these issues, AFRISTAT member states decided to develop and implement a Common Minimum Statistical Programme (PROSMIC).

¹ At the date of completion of the PROSMIC, AFRISTAT had 16 Member states: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Comoros, the Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Chad and Togo.

² A National Statistical System (NSS) includes, in its broader conception, the National Statistical Office, statistical services of technical Ministries and of the Central Bank, as well as other structures contributing to the production of statistics of public interest.

1.3. Nature of the Common Minimum Statistical Programme

PROSMIC was designed as a reference framework for the medium term development of statistics within AFRISTAT member states. It covers the period 2001-2005.

Before giving details on the content of the programme, the subject of part III of this document, it is useful to give the exact meaning of each term of its title;

- **Common:** to all member states. The similarity of problems encountered and needs expressed will allow the implementation of common priority actions, fostering economies of scale and the creation of synergies (and a healthy competition) between NSOs. Fourteen out of 16 AFRISTAT member states belong to two economic and monetary unions. Thus it is necessary, while bringing these states to concentrate their efforts on covering essential national needs for statistical information, to take into account, whenever possible, regional harmonisation needs for UEMOA and CEMAC. And, finally, a joint programme is a very demanding objective. It requires an active mobilisation of those who committed themselves to achieve it and well defined rules established in advance to take into account the inequality of situations at the outset.

- **Minimum:** given their limited resources, national statistical systems in general, and national statistical offices in particular, should concentrate their efforts on priority statistical activities. The programme is thus centred on six areas identified as priorities both by statistical officials and users. For each of these areas, the choice of outputs and activities to be undertaken was made with this concern in mind. Of course, countries with better infrastructures/resources are free to go beyond the required minimum.

- **Statistical:** is to be understood in a broad sense, i.e. the organisation of the system for the availability of information.

- **Programme:** this is a multi-annual commitment for statistical investment. A volunteer approach is implied.

The PROSMIC is not intended to replace national statistical programmes, nor the programmes, which sub regional organisations (in particular the UEMOA and the CEMAC) intend to draw up.

It is a co-ordinated initiative to rebuild the national statistical systems of the member states on a more solid basis by focusing for five years on a restricted number of priority areas in order to provide the member states with lasting capacities for statistical production, analysis and dissemination in the chosen areas.

1.4 Guiding principles

The design of PROSMIC builds on the following guiding principles:

1. Like a country's economic and social development, statistical development can only be achieved as a long-term exercise: successive non co-ordinated sectoral statistical projects cannot guarantee the harmonious development of sustainable statistical information systems.
2. National statistical offices are the backbone of national statistical systems: improving statistical information is impossible without reinforcing the NSOs.
3. Statistical production is not an end in itself: its final objective is to meet users needs.
4. The subsidiarity principle which is the very foundation of AFRISTAT should be the major concern of any joint programme of statistical development in

member states: actions should be carried out at which ever level (national, sub-regional and regional levels) ensures maximum efficiency.

1.5 Areas covered by PROSMIC

There are six priority areas selected for this programme:

- Statistical co-ordination;
- National accounts;
- Economic and social short-term analysis and forecasting;
- Data dissemination;
- Statistics for monitoring household living conditions and poverty;
- Agricultural statistics.

1.6 PROSMIC's content and coverage

For each of the six selected priority areas, PROSMIC proposes **specific objectives** that all member states must have achieved by 2005. Then, for each specific objective, there was a process of identification of **expected outputs** and of **activities** to be carried out. For each expected output, there are generally several corresponding activities.

The programme provides for two types of activities:

- National activities;
- Regional activities.

The first types are carried out by national statistical systems, while the second are done by AFRISTAT or with its assistance. National activities are essentially operational activities meant to strengthen national statistical systems in PROSMIC priority areas.

Regional activities include conceptual and methodological work, training seminars and workshops, as well as technical support to national statistical systems, for the purpose of a better implementation of national activities and an improved comparability of the data produced to meet the

requirements of regional integration.

PROSMIC's purpose is to help all member states to reinforce, improve and adapt their statistical systems so as to produce regular relevant and reliable information in the areas cov-

ered, and to develop their analysis capacities in collaboration with other national and international institutions. This comes specifically through a better institutional integration of structures contributing to statistical production in these areas, through the reinforcement of

human capacities in these structures, and through integrated systems of statistical operations.

Activities of the Directorate General from January 2004

◆ **AFRISTAT reconstitution of own resources for the period 2006-2015**

The 13th session of the AFRISTAT Council of Ministers, chaired by Mr. Paul Antoine Bohoun Bouabre, Minister of Economy and Finance of Côte d'Ivoire was largely dominated by discussions on the AFRISTAT resources for the 2006-2015 period. Decisions were made and also recommendations proposed for the effective collection of funds not only from Member states, but also Central banks, regional integration institutions and other donors.

At the request of the Minister of Economy and Finance of Mali, a delegation conducted by a high representative of this Ministry and the AFRISTAT Director General visited the African Development Bank (ADB) to discuss its possible contribution to the AFRISTAT Fund. This mission also discussed the possible administration of the fund by the ADB

◆ **Short-term economic analysis**

A seminar was organised from 14th to 18th June in Bamako to discuss recent economic developments in AFRISTAT West Africa Member countries. The venue in Bamako of the seminar on the design of web sites (see last page) gave the opportunity to share experiences and discuss issues of the dissemination of statistical information.

A similar seminar took place earlier in Libreville from 15th to 18th March to discuss economic

developments in Central African states.

◆ **World Bank Institutional Development Fund (IDF)**

AFRISTAT has just obtained a 410 000 US\$ grant from the World bank for the implementation of poverty Monitoring and Evaluation Tools. More precisely, this will consist in implementing information systems in AFRISTAT and in three pilot Member states, in order to provide relevant data for poverty analysis, the design of poverty lines and poverty mapping.

◆ **General Data Dissemination Systems (GDDS)**

A new agreement was signed with the IMF for the April 2004-March 2005 period. The objective is the improvement of real sector statistics, as described in the GDDS metadata, in the UEMOA countries, Guinea and Mauritania.

During the first semester technical assistance missions on the production sector, labour market indicators and national accounts were undertaken in Burkina Faso, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Togo.

◆ **Regional project for the monitoring of MDG and PSRP**

The launching of activities of this UNDP funded project started with a series of circular missions in Burkina Faso, Cabo-Verde, Congo, Guinea, Mauritania, Chad and Togo. The objective of these missions

was to present the project, identify weaknesses and particular issues in countries in the area of statistical coordination. These missions also identified local corespondents.

◆ **Labour Market Information System**

The general objective of the project is the improvement of the labour market information systems and poverty monitoring needed for the formulation and evaluation of development politics.

According to the project document the specific Project objective is to strengthen governments, national institutions and social partners of recipient countries capacity to regularly collect, analyse and disseminate labour market information and monitor data on poverty.

Four domains, on which the project capacity building activities will be centred on, were identified:

1. Advocacy for the improvement of the labour market information systems
2. Use of new technologies of information and communication (NTIC)
3. Strengthening of employment and poverty data analysis capability
4. Networking and coordination in the information production, storage and dissemination

These four domains include all the activities to be carried out to fulfil the objectives.

AFRISTAT is the executing agency. This pilot phase in-

cludes five participating countries: Cameroon, Mali, Nigeria, Uganda and Zambia.

The Regional Project Unit (RPU) is Bamako based, hosted by AFRISTAT Headquarters. There are also five Country Project Units (CPU). The Regional Project Coordinator, Dr Abel Nkougourou EBONGUE, joined the project on 16th June 2004.

The Project governing body is the Project Regional Steering Committee (PRSC). It held its first meeting on 26 – 28 July 2004 in Bamako and approved the RPU action plan as well as CPUs work programmes and budgets for the August 2004 – July 2005 period.

◆ Design of autonomous Web sites in AFRISTAT Member states

Works have continued. At that date, Web sites for nine countries can be accessed on line: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo-Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Gabon, Mali, Mauritania and Senegal. See addresses at the end of this bulletin. Web sites for the remaining countries are expected to be on line by end of December 2004. These works are financed by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

◆ ECOSTAT Programme

► AFRISTAT signed an agreement with the ECOWAS Secretariat for the conduction

of a project on the harmonisation of national accounts and consumer prices indices in ECOWAS countries. There is in addition, a component to design a web site, as a pilot country, for Nigeria.

◆ Burundi

► AFRISTAT signed an agreement with the UNDP office in Burundi for the setting up of a system for the monitoring and evaluation of poverty. This is part of a broader programme, which includes other two components, namely the Monitoring of PSRP and the Monitoring of Policies.

Other Technical Assistance Missions

◆ Short-term Economic Analysis

The expert provided technical assistance to Cameroon and Mauritania for the design of a short-term statistical bulletin as well as the analytical note on short-term economic developments.

The expert along with an expert in data dissemination provided a training course on short-term economic analysis and seasonal adjustment, at the attention of the Direction de la Prévision et de la Conjoncture in Côte d'Ivoire.

◆ National accounts

Works have continued for the implementation of the 1993 SNA using the ERETES software in Member States. Missions have been conducted in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Togo.

Also works have been initiated in Cabo-Verde, Congo, Gabon and Mauritania.

◆ Poverty Analysis and Household Living Conditions

An expert visited Equatorial Guinea to finalise terms of reference of a project, which aims to carry out a national survey for the evaluation of poverty. He also worked on the possible extension of the HCPI to the whole country.

Assistance has been provided to Congo in order to organise and start works on the Household Congolese survey (ECOM).

Assistance has been provided to Burkina Faso, Gabon, Mali and Chad for issues related to data capture and data correction for household surveys.

◆ Data dissemination

The two experts on data dissemination visited Guinea, along with two World Bank senior staff, to start the project on the implementation of a databank and a database at the NSO. The database will also

be implemented at the Central Bank. This project aims to provide relevant information for the monitoring of PSRP and the preparation of statistical publication. The project is financed by the Guinean Government from a World Bank IDF. This project will include 12 weeks of technical assistance.

◆ Agricultural statistics

The expert in charge of agricultural statistics provided training courses to ENSEA students on methodologies, concepts and definitions of agricultural statistics.

He particularly focused on new data collection tools, including tele-detection, GPS, etc.

Assistance was provided to Mauritania (Ministry of Rural Development) to assess methodology of the 2003 market garden survey and propose a revised methodology for the forthcoming 2004 survey.

◆ **Mr. Hubert Gbossa** attended in Paris on 20th January the Steering Committee of the ERETES System for the compilation of national accounts. He also attended, previously, the 10th Conference of the National Accounts Association (ACN).

◆ From 2nd to 10th February, **Mr. Martin Balépa**, AFRISTAT Director General, visited Paris and Luxembourg to discuss with high representatives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Treasury, French Agency for Development (AFD), Insee, Dial and Eurostat. Discussions mainly focused on the reconstitution of AFRISTAT own resources for the 2006-2015 period as well as on the important projects, funded by international donors, which are carried out by AFRISTAT.

◆ **Mr. Ousman Koriko** attended from 22nd to 24th February a technical meeting with WAEMU Commission in Ouagadougou to discuss on works carried out by AFRISTAT at the request of WAEMU Commission. This includes the Harmonised Consumer Price Indices, and surveys on the informal sector.

◆ **Mr. Martin Balépa** attended the 35th Session of UN Statistical Commission in New York from 3rd to 5th March. He also visited Washington to discuss with IMF representatives on the SGDD project carried out by AFRISTAT.

◆ **Mr. Hubert Gbossa** attended the Franc Zone Coordination Meeting on 19th March in Douala.

◆ **Mr. Martin Balépa** attended the annual meeting of the Technical Advisory panels and Networks (TAP-NETs), organised by ACBF on 25th and 26th March in Harare (Zimbabwe).

◆ **Mr. Eloi Ouedraogo** attended a regional training organised by the Partenariat pour le Développement Municipal (PDM), in Ouagadougou (**Burkina Faso**) from 3rd to 9th April. He had a presentation during the session on data collection.

◆ **Mr. Christian Girier** attended a seminar organised by CEMAC on community macro economic convergence, in Douala (**Cameroon**) from 5th to 9th April. He had a presentation on mid-term forecasts for the real sector.

◆ **Mr. Hubert Gbossa** and **Mr. Ousman Koriko** attended the first consultant meeting of the statistical harmonisation project (ECOSTAT) from 20th to 23rd April in Accra (Ghana).

◆ **Mr. Martin Balépa**, AFRISTAT Director General and **Mr. Gabriel Doffou** attended from 24th to 4th May 2004 in Yaoundé (**Cameroon**) the 3rd regional Seminar on the International Comparison Programme for Africa (IPC). AFRISTAT, as well as COMESA, ECOWAS and SADC will work on the implementation of this programme and provide assistance to countries for the compilation of purchasing power parities.

◆ **Mr. Pierre Beziz** chaired a session on statistical data bases during the training on Market Information System organised by IFDC (International Fertilizer Development Centre) in Lomé (**Togo**) from 3rd to 7th May 2004. He also had a presentation of data collection procedures in AFRISTAT.

◆ **Mr. Martin Balépa** attended the first ABSA (Advisory Board on Statistics in Africa) meeting and the first meeting on the development of statistics in Africa in Addis Ababa from 10th to 13th May 2004. These meetings were jointly organised by the Economic Commission for Africa, ADB and Paris21.

◆ **Mr. Hubert Gbossa** attended the scientific Council of the Sub Regional Institute of Applied Economy and Statistics (ISSEA) from 24th to 28th May in Yaoundé.

◆ **Mr. Eloi Ouedraogo**, **Mr. Gérard Osbert** et **Mr. Siriki Coulibaly** attended working groups on the preparation of the international seminar on « Governance, Democracy and fight against poverty in Mali » which was organised in Bamako on 11th and 12th June 2004. During this Seminar **Mr. Martin Balépa** had a presentation on « Qualitative household surveys on democracy and governance in Africa: main issues and concerns ».

◆ **Mr. Martin Balépa** attended the Paris21 steering Committee on 14th June in Paris.

◆ **Mr. Hubert Gbossa** attended the meeting of Governors of Central Banks for West Africa on the issue of macro economic and monetary convergence in the framework of the new common currency.

◆ **Mr. Hubert Gbossa** attended the meeting of the Technical Committee for the monitoring of WAEMU Commission programmes, from 28th to 30th June in Cotonou (Benin).

◆ **Mr. Martin Balépa** attended the 16th session of the Conference of Directors of Statistical High Schools in Africa (CODESA), which was organised in Paris on 30th June in Paris. Previously, he attended the Seminar on the mid-term evaluation of the statistical Master Plan of Mauritania. On 27th June in Nouakchott.

Web sites of AFRISTAT NSOs (1st group)

Country	National statistical Offices	Adress
Benin	Institut national de la statistique et de l'analyse économique	www.insae.bj
Burkina Faso	Institut national de la statistique et de la démographie	www.insd.bf
Cabo Verde	Institut national de la statistique	www.ine.cv
Côte d'Ivoire	Institut national de la statistique	www.ins.ci
Cameroon	Direction de la statistique et de la comptabilité nationale	www.statistics-cameroon.cm
Gabon	Direction générale de la statistique et des études économiques	www.stat-gabon.ga
Mali	Direction nationale de la statistique et de l'informatique	www.dnsi.gov.ml
Mauritania	Office national de la statistique	www.ons.mr
Senegal	Direction de la Prévision et de la Statistique	www.stat.sn

Forthcoming Meetings, Workshops and Seminars

Workshop on Phase 3 data processing from 1-2-3 survey in UEMOA major cities
Bamako, 8th to 19th November 2004

African Statistics Day
Managing for Development Results: the Role of Statistical Information
18th November 2004

Workshop on Short-term Economic Development and Analysis for UEMOA Countries
Bamako, 13th to 17th December 2004

The AFRISTAT newsletter can be obtained on a simple request, and is available on Internet :
<http://www.afristat.org>

Director of publication : Mr Martin BALEPA
Editor : Mr Pierre BEZIZ