



AFRISTAT  
OBSERVATOIRE ECONOMIQUE ET STATISTIQUE D'AFRIQUE SUBSAHARIENNE



**VOLUME 1**

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE SEMINAR  
ON THE INFORMAL SECTOR  
AND ECONOMIC POLICY IN  
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

*Bamako, 10 - 14 march 1997*

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The costs of the organization of the seminar and printing of these proceedings have been financed jointly by the following institutions :

*Eurostat, the Overseas Development Administration (United Kingdom), the World Bank, the International Labour Office, the French Ministry of Cooperation, Orstom (France) and Afristat.*



**VOLUME 1**

**OUTLINE, KEY POINTS AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS  
OF THE SEMINAR**



# C O N T E N T S

	<b>Pages</b>
<b>1. Foreword.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2. Outline of the seminar.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>3. Key points and recommendations.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>3.1. Key points of the seminar.....</b>	<b>22</b>
• Informal sector : definition and importance .....	<b>22</b>
• Survey techniques for measuring the informal sector.....	<b>24</b>
• Integration of the informal sector into economic information systems and national accounts .....	<b>26</b>
• Dissemination of results to users : analysis and economic policy.....	<b>28</b>
<b>3.2. Recommendations of the seminar.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>4. List of participants.....</b>	<b>33</b>





## FOREWORD

The seminar on the informal sector and economic policy in Sub-Saharan Africa held in Bamako (Mali) from 10 to 14 march 1997 was the first important international scientific activity organized by Afristat.

On behalf of the Scientific Committee, I have the honour and pleasure to present the proceedings of the seminar which are composed of three (3) volumes :

- volume 1 recapitulates, both in French and English, the objectives and organization of the seminar in one hand , the key points and the recommendations in the other.
- Volume 2 reproduces the papers presented during the plenary sessions .
- Volume 3 reproduces the papers presented during the working groups in the original version only.

M Eric Metreau, expert from Afristat in national accounts, has supervised the finalization of these proceedings. I would like to thank him on behalf of the Scientific Committee.

I would like to thank the following institutions which participated with Afristat to the organization and financing of the seminar : Eurostat, ODA (Overseas Development Administration, United Kingdom), the World Bank, the International Labour Office, the French Ministry of Cooperation, The French Orstom (Institut français de recherche scientifique pour le développement en coopération), Insee (The French National Statistical Institute) and DIAL (a European research center on economic development).

Apart from these institutions, I also would like to thank all people who contributed to the success of the seminar. In particular :

- the members of the Scientific Committee whose contribution made it possible to hold the seminar (Rémi BARDON from DIAL, as Scientific secretary , Philippe BRION from Insee, Jacques CHARMES from Orstom, Lamine DIOP from Afristat, Roger EDMUNDS and Robin ELLISON from ODA, Ralf HUSSMANNNS from ILO, Bernard LANGEVIN and Conceição VEIGA from Eurostat and Jacques LOUP from DIAL) ;

- Afristat's staff who steadily managed to solve all material problems involved in any big operation of this kind. Thus, participants worked serenely ;
- all participants who massively came up to the organizers expectation . The quality of the papers and discussions greatly contributed to the success of the seminar ;
- François ROUBAUD from Orstom who proposed to organize this seminar. During the first quarter of 1995, he took the first informal contacts with MM DIOP from Afristat, LANGEVIN from Eurostat and LOUP from DIAL who confirmed their interest in this initiative. At the end of August 1995 in Beijing , during the 50th session of the International Statistical Institute which was attended by MM ROUBAUD, DIOP (Director General, Afristat), TEDOU (Director of the National Statistical Office of Cameroon and President of the African Statistical Association) and CHARMES (Orstom) the decision was taken to organize the seminar.

Thanks to the diversity and quality of their professional experiences, all participants contributed to enlighten the debate. The quality of papers and discussions during the plenary sessions and working groups and the firm will of the organizers to reach a consensus led to the adoption of 11 recommendations at the end of the seminar.

Finally, I hope that these proceedings will contribute to strengthen cooperation in the field of production and utilization of statistics on the informal sector.

***Lamine DIOP***

***Director General, AFRISTAT***

## OUTLINE OF THE SEMINAR

### ***BACKGROUND : Need for a reliable statistical system on the informal sector and micro-enterprises***

Statistical information about the informal sector and small enterprises in Sub-Saharan Africa is still very sketchy in spite of their major economic significance. Regardless of any reasonable assumptions on the continent's growth over the coming years, employment in the informal sector is nevertheless bound to increase, in the short term as well as in the long term. If the purpose of a national statistical system is to help with the management of economic policy, the integration within the system of measurements of the informal sector would appear to be absolutely essential. This imperative is even more vital in Sub-Saharan Africa because the informal sector is directly linked to the main objectives of development (increased production, job creation, combating poverty).

In spite of the difficulties, the situation concerning statistics on the informal sector and small enterprises is changing. First of all, the number of surveys has increased in many countries in recent years. They are often one-off or trial efforts, but there are now also some large-scale exercises. Secondly, there has been considerable progress among the main international institutions responsible for coming up with standards and recommendations with the aim of harmonising statistical concepts and methods. For example, the 15th International Conference of Labour Statisticians, organised by the International Labour Office, resulted in a number of recommendations on employment statistics in the informal sector (1993). At the same time, the third revision of the United Nations' System of National Accounts (SNA) indicated how the informal sector should be treated in the accounts.

The informal sector is thus defined as a set of economic units belonging to the institutional sector of households as unincorporated enterprises. It includes:

- Own-account enterprises with no permanent employees;
- Microenterprises with permanent employees but below a certain size threshold and/or unregistered.

For both categories, the registration of the economic units may or may not be taken into account.

For several years, even before the new definition was adopted, estimates and surveys had endeavoured to apply the criteria of such a definition. The circumstances are thus right for an attempt to capitalise on all this experience. Afristat has organized a seminar on the subject in collaboration with Eurostat, DIAL (a European research centre in economic development), the International Labour Office, the United Kingdom's Overseas Development Administration, the French National Statistical Institute (Insee), the Orstom (Institut français de recherche scientifique en coopération pour le développement), the World Bank and the French Ministry of Cooperation.

This seminar was a first step reflecting the desire to have statistics on the informal sector and small enterprises permanently incorporated in national statistical information systems in Africa.

### **SEMINAR OBJECTIVES :**

The seminar was geared to two types of specialist :

- producers of data on the informal sector, who therefore have a statistical approach to the matter;
- users, in the broadest sense, of such data (the aim of this broad definition of typical users is to cover as many fields as possible for the exploitation of the data, thereby targeting people ranging from national accountants looking for macroeconomic estimates for the informal sector to decision-makers who have to formulate policies to encourage and develop small businesses).

The expected objectives of the seminar were thus threefold :

**1.** to review the state of statistical knowledge about the informal sector and small enterprises in Sub-Saharan Africa so that proper use can be made of what has been achieved in this field. The meeting therefore needs to tackle four topics :

- the operational definitions of the informal sector and the latter's position in relation to the general system of enterprises ;
- survey methodologies;
- use and dissemination of the survey information ;
- analysis of the survey results for the formulation of economic policies ;

2. To lead to a number of recommendations on these various topics with a view to harmonising concepts, classifications, methodologies and indicators on the basis of existing international recommendations. Thereafter, the procedures for incorporating the informal sector in the national accounts need to be specified.

3. To foster the development of south-south cooperation on statistics on the informal sector; in particular, through exchanges of African experts capable of offering technical support to statisticians who want to get involved in this area.

### **ORGANIZATION :**

It is against this background that the seminar was organized in Bamako (Mali) on 10-14 March 1997.

As the seat of Afristat, Bamako was chosen in order to benefit from the start-up of this supranational institution's activities and to make use of the synergy of inter-regional efforts in this field. The choice also symbolises the desire for the exchange of information at subregional level and for inter-African cooperation.

The seminar was organised by Afristat, with the technical assistance of DIAL (a European research centre in economic development) and was jointly financed by Afristat and the following bodies:

- Eurostat (European Commission DG responsible for statistics);
- ODA (Overseas Development Administration, United Kingdom);
- The World Bank ;
- ILO (International Labour Office) ;
- The French Ministry of Cooperation ;
- Orstom (Institut Français de Recherche Scientifique pour le Développement en Coopération, France).

This made it possible to bring together twenty five countries from every part of Sub-Saharan Africa, ranging from Dakar via Nairobi and Johannesburg to Antananarivo.

Apart from the organizations already mentioned, the French national statistical institute (Insee) was member of the scientific committee of the seminar. This committee was chaired by DIAL.

## PARTICIPANTS :

Apart from the co-organisers mentioned above, the seminar was attended by :

### **Delegations from twenty five English-speaking, French-speaking or Portuguese-speaking countries of Sub-Saharan Africa.**

They have been selected on the basis of two criteria: either they already have some actual experience which deserves to be shared or else they want to be involved in the short-term in the production and analysis of statistics on the informal sector. The following twenty five countries have been invited :

- French-speaking: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Togo ;
- English-speaking: Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe;
- Portuguese-speaking: Cape Verde, Moçambique, Sao Tomé & Príncipe.

**Forty other participants.** (experts, representative of international organizations). Apart from the organizations already mentioned, the following bodies had also been invited to send representatives because of their experience in various fields of statistical and economical inquiry :

- Experts from international organizations : (UNDP, United Nations Statistical Division, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa) ;
- Experts from regional organizations (BCEAO (Central Bank of West Africa States) BEAC (Bank of Central African States), ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States),
- Representatives from the national statistical institutes of France (Insee), and Portugal (INE) .

The seminar was also attended by representatives in the host country of users of statistical information on the informal sector (national administration, non-governmental organisations, aid donors).

**MAIN TOPICS :**

The seminar provided an opportunity for the various delegations to exchange experience in connection with four main topics.

**TOPIC 1 - Informal sector: definition and importance.**

The purpose of this topic is to outline the scope of the seminar. The idea is to define the concept (cf. the definition of the 15th International Conference of Labour Statisticians in 1993) and to relate the informal sector to the economy of developing countries, especially with regard to small and micro-enterprises and to the underground economy (which also includes the drugs trade, fraud, etc). This will involve comparing the benefits and drawbacks of using this concept both for statistical observation and for economic analysis.

The next step will be to look at the study of the informal sector in terms of "who for?" and "what for?". One of the feasible replies is that it is a matter of conducting a fairly reliable statistical observation of an area which has been little studied in the past, in an attempt to identify its links with the rest of the economy from the angle of national accounts and more generally of economic information systems. The possibility of looking at other requests or ideas for studying this sector will have to be discussed.

**TOPIC 2 - Survey techniques for measuring the informal sector.**

Once the concept has been clarified, the next question is how to measure it and how accurate such a measurement can be. For a long time, indirect measurement of the informal sector was the preferred method of assessing in macroeconomic terms the significance of the informal sector in the economy, and it gave more or less reliable results. In more recent years, however, direct measurements have been successfully made. The purpose of this topic is twofold :

- to present the basic methodological principles of various survey systems, simple or mixed, for investigating enterprises or households ;
- to review the range of experience accumulated in this field by those attending the seminar.

**TOPIC 3 - Integration of the informal sector in economic information systems and national accounts.**

Existing statistics on the informal sector are generally presented separately in national statistical systems. National accounts systems, in particular, take little account of this sector, the contribution of which to national production, because it is poorly known, is often minimised.

It is thus necessary to analyse how the statistics dealing with this sector can be incorporated in the compilation for the national accounts and, more generally, how the contribution of the informal sector in areas such as production, employment or intermediate consumption can be taken into account in national economic information systems.

**TOPIC 4 - Dissemination of results to users: analysis and economic policy.**

Better statistical knowledge of the informal sector should result in a better analysis of how the sector operates. It is a matter of thinking about the analytical procedures and about the statistics that are needed to ensure that they work. These analyses should make it possible for decision-makers to formulate economic policies suited to the situation of this sector with a view to promoting its integration in the economic life of the country. Various tools for analysis have been tested, and the situation needs to be reviewed.

**AGENDA :**

The attached programme shows the agenda of the seminar. Each topic, apart from Topic 1, is approached in two different ways:

- firstly, by papers at the plenary sessions on concepts or actual experience in the field ;
- secondly, by meetings in working parties, with smaller numbers of participants to facilitate more fruitful discussion.



## AGENDA

Day	Time		Contents	Speaker/Chairman	
Monday	A.M.	9.00-10.00		<b>Registration of participants</b>	
		10.00 - 10.30	PS	- Welcoming speeches by - L DIOP (Afristat) and - B ADJI (Vice Governor, BCEAO) - Official opening of the seminar by the Ministry of Industry, Handicrafts and Tourism	Mrs F. Haïdara Minister of Industry, Handicrafts and Tourism
		11.00 - 12.30	PS	- Statements by the representatives of - Eurostat - French institutions (DIAL, Insee, Ministry of Cooperation, Orstom) - ODA - ILO - Presentation of the practical arrangements for the seminar	L. Diop, DG Afristat
	PM	14.30 - 17.30	PS	Topic 1 : Plenary Session	O. Ajayi (FOS, Nigeria)
				Informal sector : background and statistical definition	R. Hussmanns (ILO)
				La nouvelle définition internationale du secteur informel et ses conséquences sur les systèmes et méthodes de mesure.	J. Charmes (Orstom- France)
				L'observation du secteur informel. Son insertion dans un système statistique global	B. Savoye (Insee - France)
Tuesday	AM	9.00 - 12.30	PS	Topic 2 : Plenary Session	S. Diarra (DNSI, Mali)
				La mesure statistique du secteur informel en Afrique : les stratégies de collecte des données	F. Roubaud (DIAL-Orstom - France)
				L'enquête 1 - 2 - 3 sur l'emploi et le secteur informel dans l'agglomération d'Antananarivo en 1995 : synthèse méthodologique	F. Rakotomanana (Instat, Madagascar)
				Surveys of the in informal sector in Tanzania : methods, results and problems of data collection.	G. K. Ngoï (MLYD, Tanzania)
	P.M.	14.00 - 17.30	WP	Topic 2 : Working Parties	
				1. Household surveys : national experiences Working Party I	G. K. Ngoï (MLYD, Tanzania)
				Techniques d'enquête permettant la mesure du secteur informel : cas du Mali à partir de l'enquête secteur informel 1989	S. Diarra (DNSI, Mali)
				Experiences of data collection on informal sector from Household Budget Survey	OJM, Chinganya (Censtat, Zambia)
				Essai de panélisation de l'enquête 1 - 2 - 3 sur le secteur informel à Yaoundé	Kingne (DSCN, Cameroun)

## AGENDA

Tuesday	P.M	14.00 - 17.30	WP	Household surveys : national experiences Working Party II	P.Y. Backiny (DSCN, Cameroun)
				Survey techniques for measurement of the informal sector : sample design for the 1991 and 1995 surveys	CPB Mkai (CBS, Tanzania)
				Méthodologie d'une enquête nationale sur les activités informelles : le cas du Niger	A. Beidou (DSCN, Niger)
				Utilisation de la télédétection pour l'élaboration du plan de sondage : cas de Yaoundé	F. Roubaud (Dial, Orstom, France)
				Entreprise surveys : national experiences Working Party I	D. Santos (INE, Portugal)
				Evaluation des activités économiques du secteur informel urbain au Bénin	D. M. Moustapha (INSAE, Bénin)
				Collection and compilation of employment data for the informal sector in Kenya	JM. Katabwa (CBS, Kenya)
				Entreprise surveys : national experiences Working Party II	N. Wadagni (BCEAO, Dakar)
				Enquête sur le milieu urbain de Mauritanie : objectifs et méthodologie	S. Ould Baheida (ONS, Mauritanie)
Wednesday	A.M	9.00 - 12.30	PS	Reports on Topic 2 working parties	A. Adjogou (CEDEAO, Lagos)
	P.M	14.00 - 15.30	PS	Topic 3 : Plenary Session	I. Kleinschmidt (CSS, South Africa)
				Intégration du secteur informel dans les systèmes d'information économique et la comptabilité nationale.	H.V. Gbossa (Afristat)
				The measurement of informal sector services in the Ghanaian National Accounts	K. Addomah-Gyabaah (GSS, Ghana)
				Le secteur informel dans la comptabilité nationale : cas du Sénégal	B. Fall (DPS, Sénégal)
	16.00 - 17.30	WP	Topic 3 : working party I	H.V. Gbossa (Afristat)	
			Les enquêtes légères sur le secteur informel au Burkina Faso pour une intégration des activités informelles aux comptes nationaux	E. Bayala (INSD, Burkina Faso)	
			Intégration du secteur informel dans les comptes nationaux du Niger	T. Almadjir (DSCN, Niger)	
			The informal economy in Mozambique : an introductory study	PG. Ardeni (CIS, Mozambique)	

**AGENDA**

Wednesday	PM	16.00- 17.30	WP	Topic 3 : working party II	M. W. Van Tongeren (United Nations N.Y.)
				Estimating the contribution of household production activity to GDP with an application to Ghana	J. Round (ODA, Great Britain)
				Notes on the measurement of the informal sector within the context of the 1993 SNA with special reference to Ghana	M. Powell (ODA, Ghana)
				L'expérience camerounaise sur l'intégration du secteur informel dans les comptes nationaux	G. She Etoundi (DSCN, Cameroun)
Thursday	AM	9.00 - 11.00	PS	Reports on Topic 3 working parties	M. Ould Zamel (ONS, Mauritanie)
				11.30 - 12.30	PS
		Utilisation des enquêtes pour la définition de politiques de promotion du secteur informel : Micro-entreprise et modernisation	G. Aryee (BIT, Zimbabwe)		
		Some wider social and socio-economic aspects of the informal sector	R. Edmunds (ODA, Great Britain)		
	PM	14.00 - 17.30	WP	Topic 4 : working party I	B. Langevin (Eurostat, Luxembourg)
				An analysis of the informal sector in South Africa based on the 1995 October Household Survey	J. Lestrada Jefferis (CSS, South Africa)
				Rôle du secteur informel dans l'emploi des jeunes	B. Diallo (DNSI, Mali)
				Topic 4 : working party II	E. Aggrey-Finn (Minagri, Ghana)
				The needs for an actual use of informal sector survey results for analysis and policy purposes in Tanzania	J.B. Mwinuka (PC, Tanzania)
				La demande de consommation des ménages auprès du secteur informel : phase 3 de l'enquête 1 - 2 - 3 de Yaoundé (1993)	P.Y. Backiny (DSCN, Cameroun)
				Experience of the EAMAT regarding informal sector survey activities	R. Knop (BIT, Ethiopia)
Friday	AM	9.00 - 10.30	PS	Reports on Topic 4 working parties	P. Rajaobelina (INSTAT, Madagascar)
		11.30 - 12.30	PS	General conclusion and recommendations	L. Diop (Afristat)

**PS** = Plenary Session  
**WP** = Working Party



## KEY POINTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A seminar on the informal sector and economic policy in Sub-Saharan Africa was held in Bamako (Mali) from 10 to 14 March 1997. The seminar was organised by Afristat with the support of DIAL (a European research centre in economic development) and jointly financed by Afristat, Eurostat (European Commission DG responsible for statistics), ODA (Overseas Development Administration, United Kingdom), the World Bank, ILO (International Labour Office), the French Ministry of Cooperation and Orstom (Institut français de recherche scientifique pour le développement en coopération, France). The French National Statistical Institute (Insee) was a member of the Scientific Committee of the seminar.

The seminar was opened by Mrs Fatou HAIDARA, Minister of Industry, Handicrafts and Tourism of the Republic of Mali.

The seminar was attended by about 90 experts from 25 French, Portuguese and English-speaking African countries, 3 European countries, African subregional and regional economic organisations and several international institutions.

The objectives of the seminar, which was intended for producers and users of data, were threefold :

- To review the state of knowledge about statistics of the informal sector and small enterprises;
- To formulate recommendations for the harmonisation of concepts and methodologies in use in Sub-Saharan Africa;
- To foster the development of south south cooperation in statistics.

The deliberations of the seminar, which were held in plenary sessions as well as working groups, focused on four topics :

- Informal sector : definition and importance;
- Survey techniques for measuring the informal sector;
- Integration of the informal sector into economic information systems and national accounts;
- Dissemination of results to users for analysis and economic policy purposes.

A summary of the key points of the seminar and the text of recommendations adopted by the participants are reproduced hereafter.

## KEY POINTS OF THE SEMINAR

### I. INFORMAL SECTOR : DEFINITION AND IMPORTANCE

Those attending felt that too many variants had been accepted for the definition of the informal sector by the 15th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), given the adjustments which individual countries were expected to make. The definition adopted is likely to make international comparisons difficult. Also, the use of suitable sub-categories for the various segments of the informal sector was suggested and that would in itself facilitate international comparability by specific segment.

In view of the complexity of the informal sector, emphasis was laid on the need for a statistical definition based on several criteria. However, these various criteria should be ranked in order of priority and it would be preferable to establish an operational definition based on those criteria, in line with the framework adopted by the 15th ICLS. The definition must be sufficiently simple to be implemented in field studies.

With a view to defining the informal sector, the 15th ICLS recommended using, in addition to the legal form of the enterprise, full accounting procedures and the destination of products, the criteria of non-registration for administrative purposes and/or size expressed in terms of number of employees.

As to which of the latter two criteria should be chosen for defining the informal sector, it was pointed out that the choice depended on the use to be made of the statistics. Participants agreed that the criterion of size was more appropriate for the purposes of analyses and economic policy because it reflected the way in which informal sector enterprises are organised and pursue their business. On contrast, the non-registration criterion seems to be more appropriate for national accounting purposes, at least for French-speaking countries, because it complements the formal sector more effectively. It was suggested that the two needs could be reconciled by defining the scope of any survey by the size criterion and obtaining information on registration during the course of the survey itself.

Several participants stressed that, although the unit to be used for defining the informal sector is the production unit, the unit for analysis must be adjusted in the light of different needs : individual (for measuring employment), production unit (for measuring production), household (for

studying living conditions) ; this is because the same individuals or households can be working in formal and informal units at the same time. For this reason using the term “ sector “ for the informal economy does not reflect *stricto sensu* the concept of institutional sector or sub-sector, as defined in the System of National Accounts (SNA). For the purpose of national accounts, the most appropriate unit of analysis for the informal economy is the production unit (establishment) not the household.

It was also pointed out that, in some countries, cross-border trade affects the size and vitality of the informal sector ; because of this the place of residence of informal operators is an important factor to be taken into account in any measurements.

The types of production unit suggested in one of the papers given at the seminar (large enterprises, medium-sized enterprises, micro-enterprises and small trades) seem too complex for practical use. On the other hand there was a proposal to make more extensive use of tax files, not just relying on statistical and tax statements but expanding information obtained from this source to include enterprises taxed at a standard rate.

Clarification was provided on the following points :

- There is no international recommendation regarding the minimum age to be used when collecting data on informal sector workers. In many countries, there are a significant number of children working in the informal sector and the age at which they start to work varies greatly from one country to another. Efforts should be made in informal sector surveys to collect information on children working in the sector, irrespective of their age ;
- the reasons which lead individuals (male or female) to take up informal activities are many. They vary from survival strategies to a desire for independence, from high-profit motives to a concern to perpetuate craft traditions ; the informal sector is not synonymous with poverty ;
- from a conceptual point of view, the informal sector can include agricultural activities. For practical reasons to do with collecting information, the 15th ICLS however recommends excluding agricultural activities from surveys of the informal sector ; such activities will be covered by specific studies ;
- the 15th ICLS recommends that no occupation should be excluded a priori from the informal sector, whatever the level of technology used or the turnover achieved ;

- since the adoption of the international definition of the informal sector in 1993, surveys have been conducted in a number of countries, and also in Africa, without any major problems arising in terms of applying the definition.

## II. SURVEY TECHNIQUES FOR MEASURING THE INFORMAL SECTOR

Of the four possible methods (indirect approach, household surveys, surveys of establishments, mixed surveys), two are used in the main for measuring production units in the informal sector :

- surveys of establishments, using a field survey of all establishments and taking a sample where necessary, initially from a list and later from a rolling panel ;
- so-called “ mixed “ surveys carried out in two phases ; the initial phase involves conducting a basic survey of households which enables those in charge of an informal production unit to be identified. The second phase surveys all or a sample of these informal production units.

It should be noted that in both cases the study unit is the informal production unit whose method of economic operation is studied (production method, method of financing, etc..).

Participants related their experience of surveys of informal establishments in various countries (notably Benin, Kenya, Mauritania). These surveys involved conducting a census of informal establishments followed by a survey, sometimes using different questionnaires, depending on the business of the establishments. The main problem is to cover the sector, comprehensive coverage being difficult ; there is also the question of updating a file on informal establishments.

Several mixed surveys were presented, notably those conducted in Mali, Tanzania, Yaoundé, Antananarivo and Niger. In certain cases the phase 1 survey was a classic labour force survey whereas in Tanzania in order to provide good coverage of the informal sector it was decided right from the outset to conduct stratified sampling of enumeration districts according to the prevalence of informal activity, for primary survey units, and stratified sampling by type of informal activity, for subsidiary units. In Antananarivo and Yaoundé, a phase 3 survey of household consumption was undertaken in order to find out more about the behaviour of house-



holds in terms of studying informal sector demand : types of product, place of purchase . In Dar-es-Salaam, a phase 3 survey of employees enabled additional information to be collected from employers in the informal sector, for example regarding working conditions. Three countries, Mali, Tanzania and Niger, presented mixed country-wide surveys which included rural areas.

When defining which units should be regarded as informal there appeared to be a difference between English and French speaking countries : the latter being more inclined to use the criterion of non-registration for statistical purposes whereas Tanzania, for example, uses criteria such as establishment size.

The need for comprehensive coverage of the sector, for macro-economic purposes such as national accounting, argues for the “ mixed survey “ approach. However the effectiveness of this method is connected with two factors :

- the time between the phase 1 survey and the survey of establishments needs to be as short as possible because of the high turnover in the informal sector ;
- although the “ mixed survey “ approach allows comprehensive field cover, it does not necessarily give precise results for specific branches of activity. In such cases it may be necessary to focus the phase 1 survey so as to obtain a sufficient number of informal units of the relevant type to sample.

Once adequate mastery of measurement methods has been achieved, the latter must be standardised for a particular country to permit analysis of informal sector development. Changes, for example in defining which units should be regarded as informal, has made comparisons impossible in the past.

On the other hand, in terms of general harmonisation between countries, it would seem difficult for the moment to demand the adoption of identical concepts for defining informal units, since the informal sector can reflect different situations from one country to another. However it would be possible to pursue harmonisation on a regional basis.

As far as measurement methods are concerned, there seems to be preference for mixed surveys within the framework of survey covering all

informal activities. Of the possible options for the phase 1 survey, two seem to be particularly favoured : a labour force survey or a full census. The former has the advantage of providing a reference framework for national accounts whilst at the same time laying the foundation for an information system on employment, which has been lacking to date in Sub-Saharan Africa the latter enables sampling strategy to be improved for phase 2.

In order to ensure a regular input of statistics on the informal sector, it was suggested that the type of survey should be sufficiently light so as to be easily carried forward in time.

If a segment of the informal production sector is easily identifiable (in terms of geographical concentration), an “ establishment “ approach can be adopted alongside the mixed survey. In such cases care should be taken to avoid double counting (double measuring of the segment in question).

Rural coverage should not be ruled out, nor should conducting the survey in all towns in the country ; for rural areas, the possibility of using agricultural surveys as phase 1 surveys could be examined.

Additionally, in the absence of significant funding, an alternative solution might be to use household surveys (such as Social Dimensions of Adjustment (SDA) and budget-consumption surveys, etc..).

A comparative review, including cost elements, should be envisaged on the lines of those already carried out in Sub-Saharan Africa.

### **III. INTEGRATION OF THE INFORMAL SECTOR INTO ECONOMIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND NATIONAL ACCOUNTS**

Given the information currently available, the contribution of the informal sector to the national economy of Sub-Saharan African countries is considerable - between one quarter and two thirds, depending on whether or not agriculture is included. It will be noted however that a certain number of countries do not identify the informal sector separately in their national accounts. On the other hand, the majority of them make estimates which implicitly take it into account.

The methodology used varies considerably and depends on the sources and data available : it draws on :

- percentages, often inherited from very old sources ;
- surveys, some recent, some not, which are not specific to the informal sector or do not identify it as such ;
- surveys more specifically relating to the informal sector whose geographical and/or sectorial coverage is usually incomplete ;
- and where necessary comparisons between various available sources.

Moreover, for a wide variety of reasons, the approaches referred to during the course of the seminar can become inoperable in economically unstable countries.

Several presentations were made at the seminar on preparation of accounts but these exercises had been embarked upon before the introduction of the concepts defined by the 15th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (January 1993) and the fourth revision of the SNA (February 1993). The adoption of these concepts and definitions should lead to the use of more integrated methods for drawing up national accounts, to allow for comparison and choice between all available statistical sources. This modernisation should also make it possible to isolate the informal sector within the national economy as a whole and possibly identify several branches. This is the aim which Afristat intends to pursue when providing assistance with national accounts.

Manufacturing and trading accounts for branches allow the income generated by the informal sector to be measured ; this is one source of income for households. A full analysis of the informal sector implies integrating these two aspects of income and creating appropriate institutional sub-sectors within households. In order to make this integrated approach successful, specific statistical tools are needed (1-2-3 type surveys or SDA type surveys).

Achieving these results obviously assumes that statistical sources will provide suitable data. And that also implies the organisation and planning of close cooperation between national accountants and survey statisticians to allow standardisation of the terminology and concepts used. In order to achieve that coordination, the national accountant must state his needs and define his working methods clearly : in particular he needs to state how he intends to treat the anticipated statistical data.

As regards these needs, the following can be identified :

- the structural parameters of the informal sector, which will usually be limited, but sometimes thorough, must always be based on data for the working population obtained from population censuses or labour force surveys at national level ;
- at any rate, these permanent (annual) mechanisms for following up the informal sector are necessary because figures for annual change in this sector are rarely available ;
- these permanent mechanisms must be less substantial but be based on more detailed surveys of the informal sector such as mixed surveys. These detailed surveys should be carried out periodically and must be highly cost effective ;
- unregistered units cannot all be assimilated into the informal sector ; referring to censuses and/or surveys of establishments will help to supplement and update the list of enterprises belonging to the formal sector, which is complementary to the informal sector ;
- it should also be remembered that the activity of households which is pursued on a self-employed basis does not come under the informal sector ; this is difficult to measure and would require a specific statistical approach.

The aim of a national accountant is to distinguish and measure each of the economic activities pursued in a country ; any statistical mechanism necessarily has inadequacies and contradictions. Comparison of these sources and use of indirect estimates are still needed therefore, especially to take account of statistical bias (including under-declaration) and the black economy.

#### **IV. DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS TO USERS : ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC POLICY**

Participants noted that the informal sector is very heterogeneous, ranging from the survival to growth enterprises. Equally there are many potential policy options that Governments may wish to investigate. These policies may target particular sub-sectors and address issues such as : access to credit ; training ; working conditions ; wealth creation ; social security ; literacy ; facilitating links between the formal and informal sectors ; promoting trade associations or cheap rental of locations.

As a result, the information needed may range from a broad overview of the informal sector to precisely targeted studies of various kinds. For example, general surveys may generate adequate estimates of employment in the sector and GDP and provide a starting point for further study. More detailed surveys of larger production units may then be required to investigate growth potential and more detailed household information may be required on various aspects of households where individuals are involved in the survival sector so that policies to increase wealth and alleviate poverty can be developed.

Participants agreed that, for policy purposes, data should generally be comparable with earlier estimates and usually need to be made available in a timely manner.

It was agreed that statisticians and policy-makers should ideally communicate effectively from the outset of the collection design stage through to disseminating and explaining results to make sure that the information presented would be relevant and applied. While using existing methods such as committees and workshops to present results can go some way to achieving this, participants saw a need for further attempts such as : marketing data more effectively by classifying users in government, other organisations and the wider public; designing targeted documents ; improving liaison with the mass media ; and by being more commercial where feasible. Participants also noted that policy-makers do not always see a need for information when developing policies, sometimes because of not having received a good statistical service in the past. As a result they can be reluctant to help to identify needs. In any case, statisticians need to use imagination and professional skills in seeking to meet their needs.



## RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SEMINAR

**1.** The definition of the informal sector adopted by the 15th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) should be used. This definition includes, in principle, informal agricultural activities ; it recommends, however, to measure them separately in order to facilitate the collection of data on the informal sector. The fact that the international definition provides several options to choose from affects international comparisons of data ; appropriate classifications should be used to improve such comparisons in identifying specific segments of the informal sector.

**2.** The choice between the criteria of non-registration and size in terms of employees should depend on the uses to which statistics will be put.

**3.** The production unit is the unit for defining the informal sector ; other units, such as the household or person, are also needed for analysis. Surveys should thus include all three of these variables.

**4.** For the purposes of an economic and social information system on the informal sector, mixed surveys (two phases) are recommended. In respect of the first phase, it is recommended to use :

- either a labour force survey which provides a reference point for the national accounts as well as a basis of an information system on employment ;

- or a sample of enumeration districts with a complete listing of households in the sample districts which makes it possible to optimise the sample design for the specific purposes of informal sector measurement.

For the second phase, a sample survey of informal production units is recommended.

**5.** Any system for measuring the informal sector should be supplemented, to the extent possible, by a statistical system which generates up-to-date information on the formal sector and serves as a tool to monitor its development.

**6.** To allow for inter-temporal analysis of the data, it is necessary for each country to have definitions and measurement methods that are compatible over time. In cases where new definitions and measurement methods have been adopted, the necessary steps should be taken to ensure that the new statistical series are comparable with earlier estimates.

- 7.** A harmonisation of concepts and methodologies should be envisaged to ensure that the data produced are comparable at the international level.
- 8.** In order to obtain time series data on the informal sector to meet the requirements of national accounts in particular, it is recommended to launch a system of “ light “ surveys conducted on an annual basis between two mixed surveys or other benchmark surveys.
- 9.** National accountants should make use of the new concepts developed (15th ICLS and SNA 1993) to distinguish informal activities.
- 10.** Survey statisticians should maintain close working relations with national accountants.
- 11.** Statisticians should design surveys and disseminate their results on the basis of the data needs of social and economic decision-makers. Moreover, they should encourage decision-makers to systematically use the survey results for the formulation of policies in respect of the informal sector. In this context, the potentials of the informal sector and its heterogeneity call for the consideration of other tools, which may or may not be statistical ones, in order to facilitate economic policy choices.



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