

Bamako Declaration

On the coordination of aid in French-speaking Africa in the field of statistics

I. Synopsis of issues

The conference dedicated to the coordination of aid in French-speaking Africa in the field of statistics, held on 31 October 2007 in Bamako (Mali), chaired by Mr. Ousmane MATAR BREME, the Minister of Economy & Planning of the Republic of Chad, and chairman of the AFRISTAT Council of Ministers, agreed on the idea that development strategies and, in particular, those aimed at stimulating growth and reducing poverty, must be backed by the implementation of a high-quality and efficient statistical system that will ensure the monitoring and evaluation of implemented policies.

The participants to the conference¹ particularly:

- took note that AFRISTAT, since it was set up, has launched several medium-term strategic programmes and pointed out that the most recent, covering the period 2006-2010, includes a reference framework and methodological support for designing an information system to monitor and evaluate growth and poverty reduction strategies;
- approved the drafting and, subsequently, the implementation of National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) in compliance with the action plan set out in Marrakech in February 2004 and acknowledged the need to make each country's NSDS into the single national reference framework, for the programming of support to statistical capacity building;
- acknowledged the role played by the General Data Dissemination System (GDDS) in the strategic programming of statistical activities and in the improvement of the quality and availability of data for macroeconomic summaries;
- hailed the development, by the African statistical community, of the Regional Reference Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa (RRSF);
- took note of the persistence of hurdles in the way of the good operation of national statistical systems (NSS) of African countries, due partly to the lack of resources allocated to statistical production.

The presentations as well as the lengthy and constructive debates that unfolded during the conference led to the following guiding principles, outlined in the four points set out hereafter.

A. Enhance the coordination and programming of statistical activities

Conference participants voiced their approval of the visions and strategies developed to improve the coordination of projects and programmes in the field of statistics, in compliance with the principles and recommendations of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. They agreed that more rigorous programming of statistical activities is required to improve support for countries in order to:

- back the collection, analysis and dissemination of data;
- take into account the ability of the NSS to absorb the aid provided by Technical and Financial Partners (TFPs);
- optimise the efficiency of the support provided and contribute to the implementation of sustainable statistical expertise.

They agreed they were in favour of redefining, if necessary, current projects and programmes to improve their consistency and conduct within the framework of NSDS.

Despite the progress that has been achieved, the main problem facing statistical programming in French-speaking Africa remains the poor coordination between TFPs, on the one hand, and between TFPs and beneficiary civil services of States, on the other hand. The setting up of a network dedicated to exchanging information about the statistical programmes of African countries and the revitalisation of National Statistical Councils in States should be a step in the right direction to solve this problem.

Studies reviewing the support provided by TFPs to African States in the field of statistics, recently carried out by the international community, further highlight this coordination problem; in particular, information about programmes run by sub-regional and/or national agencies of international organisations is sometimes difficult to come by.

¹ The list of States, Organisations and Institutions that attended the conference is provided in the Appendix.

It would be a positive development if TFPs were to improve their communication about the annual and long-term projects of their programmes aimed at supporting statistics. Accordingly, it would be up to them, either to convey this information about the statistical projects of their sub-regional and/or national agencies or ask these agencies to send this information directly to a centralising body by country or group of countries.

B. Develop concerted statistical programmes adapted to national strategies

From a strategic point of view, the lack of information about the statistical programmes and projects of TFPs can lead to a lack of consultation implying the risk that these statistical projects may not be relevant with respect to the guidelines of the Regional Reference Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa, National Strategies for Statistical Development and the General Data Dissemination System.

Conference participants emphasised the need to press ahead with efforts to set up a mechanism as rapidly as possible to ensure consultation and coordination about the implementation of regional support provided by TFPs in the field of statistics in favour of the NSS of African countries.

Several partners highlighted the importance of the development of human resources as the crucial development factor. They emphasised the effort that had to be made to encourage governments in this field.

C. Enhance the efficiency of technical aid

From a technical point of view, the low level of resources of States requires working on adapting statistical projects, statistical systems and standards to country-specific realities in order to prevent overlaps and increasing the risks of failure.

Several projects and programmes currently implemented in Sub-Saharan Africa demonstrate the need for work to define an appropriate method to obtain reliable and timely results in countries or groups of countries by following a modular approach and a *country-based* typology.

D. Improve monitoring of achievements in statistical development in Africa

The Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa recommends a procedure to monitor progress achieved in the development of African statistics. This monitoring will have to be ensured at all levels and should promote the exchange of information about experiences in French-speaking and English-speaking zones, with their sometimes different statistical cultures, which can actually be complementary.

II. Partnership system

TFPs that intervene in French-speaking African countries ought to inform AFRISTAT, the representative panel of this group of countries, as a matter of case about regional and sub-regional projects in the field of statistics. If AFRISTAT has to access all the required information about statistical projects in the sub-region, it will be in a better position to:

- give its opinion about the relevance of various statistical projects and the programming of studies, according to the volume of projects and available resources;
- check that projects and programmes are suited to national strategies for statistical development.

Technical aid capacity in Africa is limited and spread between several cooperation agencies. Setting up a technical aid and training network in line with the objectives of the GDDS might solve the problems stemming from this dispersion of resources, making it possible:

- to have a dialogue about the experiences of TFPs and countries with respect to statistical projects (lessons to be drawn, difficulties encountered and methods used);
- to set up a review of the best practices in terms of compiling basic statistics and metadata;
- to aim for better dissemination of findings.

III. Recommendations

The participants at the Bamako conference, placing themselves in the perspective of the implementation of the Paris Declaration,

Taking into account the fact that the coordination of donors and technical and financial partners in the implementation of their projects and programmes at regional, sub-regional and national levels is a prerequisite to meet information requirements of growth and poverty reduction strategies,

Taking into account the fact that national strategies for statistical development provide the appropriate framework to strike a balance between the needs of States and partners, the ability to absorb aid by national statistics systems and the human and financial resources required by the implementation of these strategies,

Taking into account the role played by PARIS21 in the coordination of aid, in particular with respect to collecting, from technical and financial partners, information about the support provided to States,

Taking into account the need to monitor the implementation of national strategies for statistical development and regularly exchange information about these important issues and the quality of studies,

Recommend:

1. that AFRISTAT:
 - i. should implement, in cooperation with PARIS21, a mechanism to monitor the utilisation of the aid provided by partners in the implementation of national strategies for statistical development based on the collection of information from partners and national statistics systems of beneficiary States;
 - ii. ensure the dissemination of information collected from partners and, in particular, from their representatives in States;
2. that the national statistics systems of beneficiary States: ought to work with AFRISTAT to build the mechanism that is to be set up by providing information about aid received from partners;
3. that technical and financial partners should instruct their representatives in States to take this information into account and, more generally speaking, take into account the procedures and constraints of beneficiary countries in the management of their support to national strategies for statistical development, to ensure concrete implementation of the Paris Declaration;
4. that under the aegis of AFRISTAT, a similar conference be carried out annually to review progress in the implementation of national strategies for statistical development in each beneficiary country and study problems encountered in terms of coordinating support provided to the statistical systems of African countries and ensuring it fits their needs.

Appendix: List of participating countries, organisations and institutions

Participating countries

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| 1. Benin | 11. Guinea-Bissau |
| 2. Burkina Faso | 12. Equatorial Guinea |
| 3. Burundi | 13. Mali |
| 4. Cameroun | 14. Mauritania |
| 5. Central African Republic | 15. Niger |
| 6. Comoros | 16. Sao Tome & Principe |
| 7. Congo | 17. Senegal |
| 8. France | 18. Sweden |
| 9. Gabon | 19. Chad |
| 10. Guinea | 20. Togo |

Participating organisations and/or institutions

1. African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF)
2. Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
3. French Development Agency (AFD)
4. French Association for the Development of Exchanges of Economic and Financial Technologies (ADETEF)
5. African Development Bank (ADB)
6. The Central Bank of Burundi
7. The Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO)
8. The Bank of Central African States (BEAC)
9. World Bank
10. Centre of Support to African Statistical Training Institutes (CAPESA)
11. European Training Centre for Economists-Statisticians from Developing Countries (CESD)
12. IMF's Regional Technical Assistance Centres in Western Africa (West AFRITAC)
13. United Nations' Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)
14. European Commission
15. Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS)
16. Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC)
17. United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)
18. National Higher Institute of Applied Statistics and Economics of Dakar (ENSAE/ANSD)
19. National Higher Institute of Applied Statistics and Economics of Abidjan (ENSEA)
20. International Monetary Fund (IMF)
21. French National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE)
22. Sub-regional Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics of Yaoundé (ISSEA)
23. UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS UNESCO)
24. Economic and statistical Observatory of Sub-Saharan Africa (AFRISTAT)
25. PARTnership In Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21)
26. Statistics Sweden
27. West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA)
28. University of Lund, Sweden