



# STRENGTH IN NUMBERS: AFRICA'S DATA REVOLUTION



Four out of five known births in Africa occur in a country without a complete birth registration system.

Kenya's revision of its economy allowed the country to be re-categorised from low-income to lower-middle income.

A third of all Africans live in a country which has conducted a population census since 2010.

Nigeria's rebasing revealed its economy had surpassed South Africa's and was the largest in Africa.

Almost half of Africans live in a country which has not conducted an agricultural census in the last ten years.

## Introduction

---

Data are crucial for effective policymaking. To ensure the successful and inclusive delivery of public goods and services, governments need reliable information. Data are the best steering wheel for policy; a tool with which to govern. Unfortunately, improving statistical capacity is less eye-catching than building a new hospital or school, despite the fact that data-driven policy would ensure these are delivered more effectively and efficiently.

The African data revolution is underway. There has been progress in the quantity of data being collected over the past ten years, especially in Household Surveys and population censuses. Initiatives focusing on enhancing statistical capacity have shown commitment to the production of accurate data. These gains should be celebrated as a solid base for the data revolution on the continent. However, challenges remain in the frequency and quality of the data produced. Working towards more timely and reliable data through clear measurable initiatives represents the next hurdle for Africa. Moreover, data deficits still exist in crucial areas such as civil registration. Focusing on getting the basics right should be a priority for the continent.

These challenges can be addressed by focusing on strengthening National Statistical Offices (NSOs). In order for NSOs to be empowered, three overarching issues must be addressed: independence, financing and capacity. There is a link between governance and statistical capacity; investing in strengthening NSOs supports institutions. Building independent and sustainably financed NSOs will improve a government's ability to create better policy. Stronger NSOs will also help the continent measure progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Open, easily accessible and understandable data are necessary in order for data to be a tool for all stakeholders to aid development. While there has been progress on this with many governments announcing open data initiatives, NSOs are not updating their websites with easily accessible information. In order for data to be widely used, NSOs must make this available in a user-friendly format.

This document teases out some of the core issues surrounding data on the African continent. Addressing statistical capacity, and seeing the strength in numbers will enhance governance, the delivery of public services and improve the lives of African citizens.

## The African data revolution: quantifying progress

### DEFINING THE DATA REVOLUTION IN AFRICA













- “An explosion in the volume of data, the speed with which data are produced, the number of producers of data, the dissemination of data, and the range of things on which there are data, coming from new technologies such as mobile phones and the internet of things, and from other sources, such as qualitative data, citizen-generated data and perceptions data.”  
**Independent Advisory Group on the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development**
- “The process of bringing together diverse data communities to embrace a diverse range of data sources, tools and innovative technologies, to provide disaggregated data for decision-making, service delivery and citizen engagement; and information for Africa to own its narrative.”  
**United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)**

### AN IMPROVEMENT IN QUANTITY

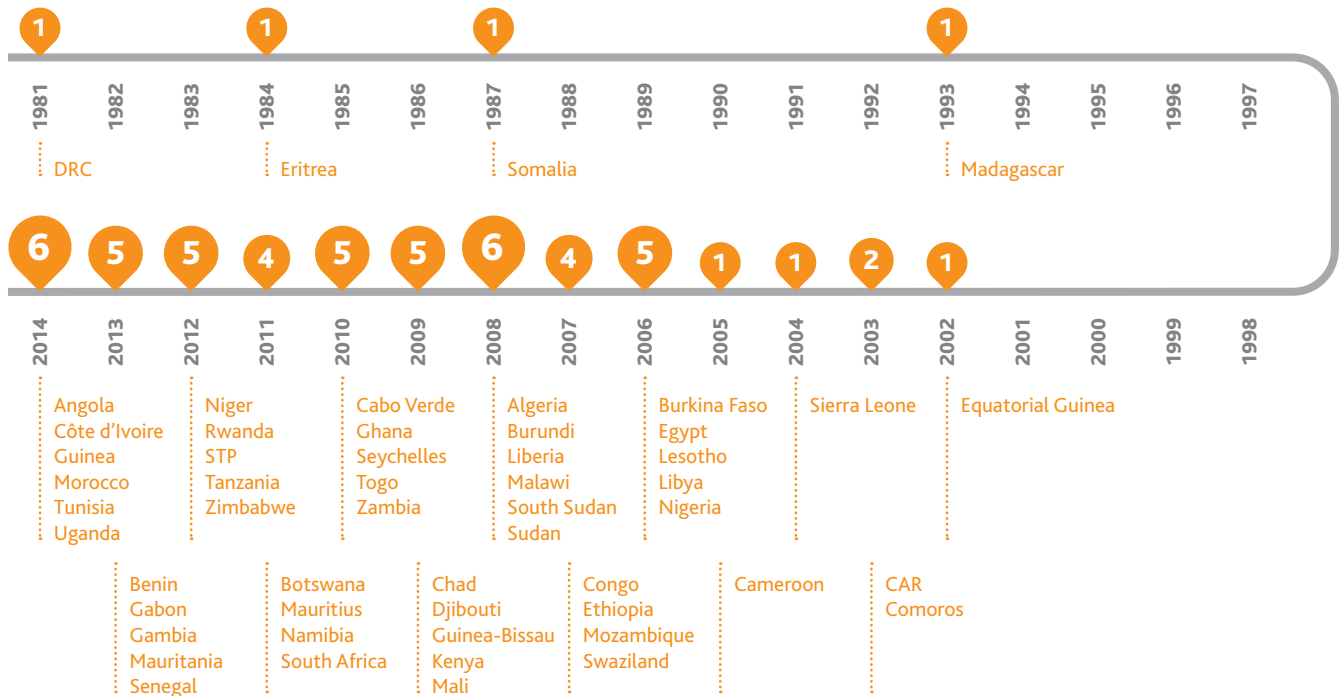
There has been progress on the African continent in the quantity of data being produced. Almost nine out of ten people live in a country which has conducted a population census in the past ten years.

Despite an increase in volume, frequency continues to be a challenge. While almost all Africans live in a country which has conducted a Household Survey in the past decade, only half of the continent lives in a country that has carried out more than two comparable surveys. This means that governments cannot access timely and comparable data on the changes in levels of poverty.

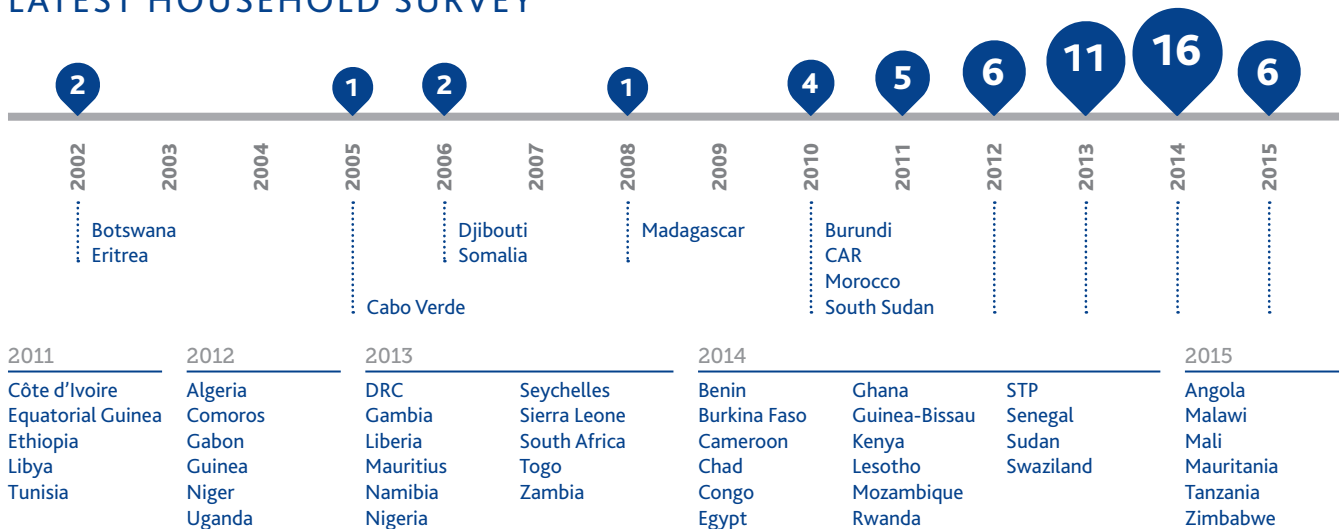
Data on civil registration needs urgent attention; less than one in five births occurs in a country with a complete birth registration system. Meanwhile, data on economic growth, agriculture and safety still warrant attention from national governments.

 Topic	 Tool	 Status in Africa
 Civil registration	Vital statistics, censuses, Household Surveys	Less than one in five known births occurs in a country with a complete birth registration system. In Africa, 87% of deaths occur in countries without a complete death registration system.
 Population	Censuses	Almost nine out of ten people live in a country which has conducted a population census in the last ten years. A third of all Africans live in a country where a census has been conducted since 2010.
 Poverty & inequality	Household Surveys	Almost all (99%) Africans live in a country which has conducted a Household Survey in the last ten years. Despite this, only half of the continent's population lives in a country that has carried out more than two comparable Household Surveys in the past ten years. For half the continent's population, changes in levels of poverty are unknown.
 Economic growth	National accounts, administrative data	Only seven countries in Africa use the 2008 UN System of National Accounts, the latest version of the international statistical standard for measuring macroeconomic indicators. Less than a third of countries in Africa have produced industrial data since 2006. However, 45 countries in Africa have produced trade statistics in the last ten years.
 Agriculture	Agricultural census	Just over half of Africans live in a country which has conducted an agricultural census in the last ten years. For almost half of the continent's population, information around structure of the agricultural sector and landholders is unknown.
 Safety	Administrative data	Only ten countries recorded the prevalence of drug usage in the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Homicide Statistics database in the last ten years.
 Health	Administrative data	Since 2005, 80% of countries published a Household Survey including a health component.
 Education	Administrative data	Only 29% of countries have published a Household Survey including an education component since 2005.
 Employment	Labour Force Surveys	Over half of African citizens live in a country which has not conducted a Labour Force Survey in the past ten years. This means key indicators around the labour market and employment are unknown in these countries.

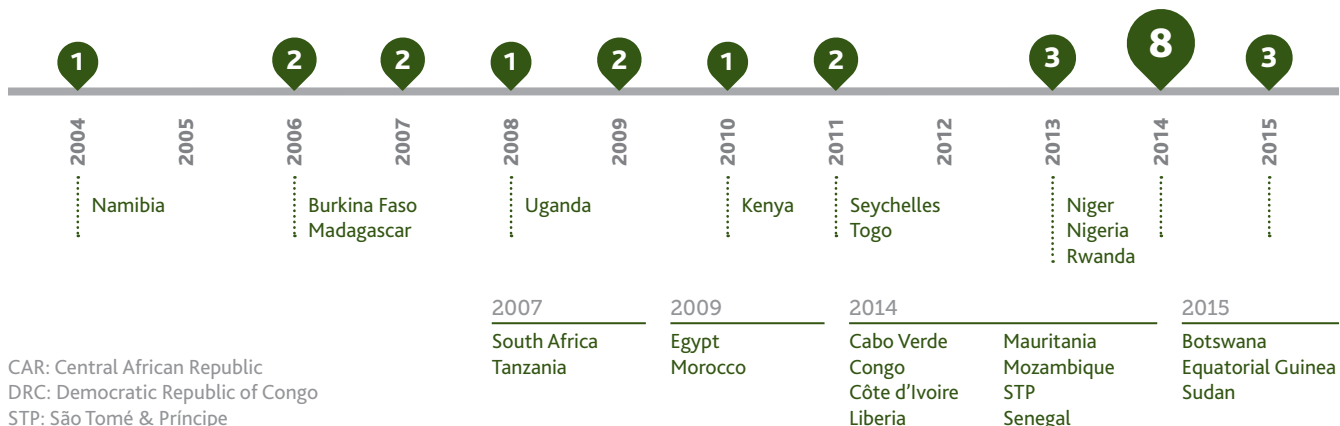
## LATEST POPULATION CENSUS



## LATEST HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

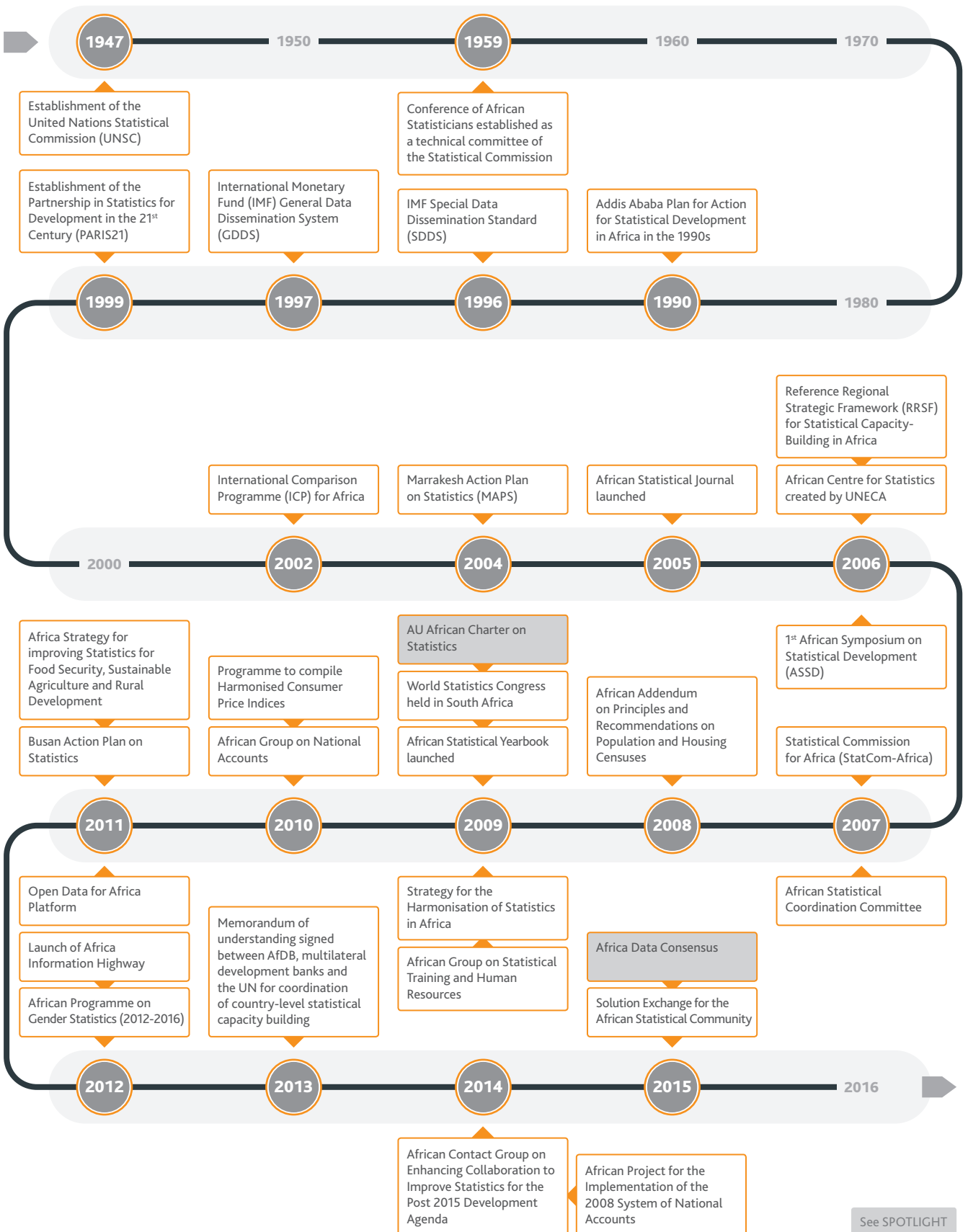


## LATEST AGRICULTURAL CENSUS



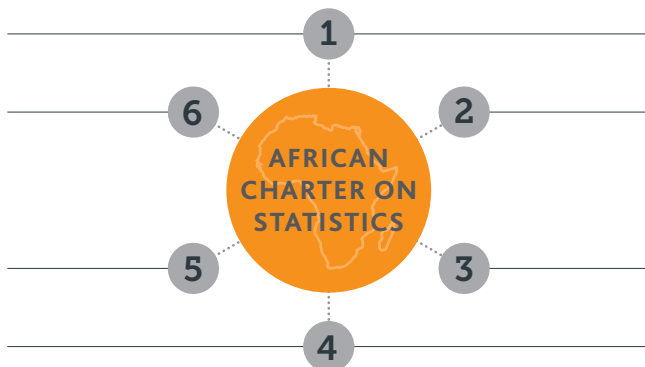
CAR: Central African Republic  
 DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo  
 STP: São Tomé & Príncipe

## Timeline of initiatives to improve statistical capacity in Africa



## African Charter on Statistics (2009)

- The African Charter on Statistics is a code of professional ethics centred around six major principles to be enforced by members of the African Statistical System, African statisticians and all professionals working in the area of statistics in Africa:



1. Scientific independence	5. Protection of individual data, information sources & respondents
2. Quality	6. Coordination & cooperation
3. Mandate for data collection & resources	
4. Dissemination	

- Adopted in February 2009 by African Heads of State and Government, in response to calls for the creation of a new, efficient, regulatory framework for the development of statistics in Africa.
- The core ideas:
  - To serve as a policy framework and advocacy tool for statistical development in Africa.
  - To ensure improved quality and comparability of statistics.
  - To strengthen the coordination of statistical activities and harmonise the implementation of statistical programmes.
  - To promote adherence to the fundamental principles of public statistics in Africa, and a culture of evidence-based policymaking.
  - To build the institutional capacity of statistical authorities, ensure their operational autonomy and pay attention to the adequacy of human, material and financial resources.

Of the 32 African countries that have signed the African Charter on Statistics, **only half have ratified**<sup>1</sup>.

## Africa Data Consensus (2015)

- The Africa Data Consensus is a strategy for implementing the data revolution in Africa that aims to create a new statistical landscape, opening up the field of data production and dissemination to state and non-state actors.
- Adopted in March 2015 at the High Level Conference on the Data Revolution, in response to calls for a framework on the data revolution in Africa and its implications for the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The plan of action will be guided by UNECA, the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Development Bank (AfDB), with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and implemented in collaboration with partner institutions from the public and private sectors as well as civil society organisations.
- The core ideas:
  - To create 'data communities' – bringing together people from non-governmental organisations, the private sector and NSOs who produce or use data on sectors such as trade or energy.
  - Data created by these communities should be accepted as sources of official statistics as long as they are sanctioned by the NSO.
  - Only the most relevant, reliable, accurate, accessible and timely data is acceptable, irrespective of its source.
  - Data should be driven by needs rather than for its own sake.
  - Recognition of the role of governments in engaging the data community, financing the production and dissemination of data and developing civil registration systems to produce credible vital statistics.

### Initiatives do not imply implementation

While there have been plenty of initiatives to improve statistical capacity in Africa, the focus must now shift to the implementation and measurement of progress. Getting the appropriate data to monitor gains will be important.

<sup>1</sup> Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Lesotho, Mali, Malawi, Mozambique, Mauritius, Niger, Togo, Tunisia and Zambia

## Political economy of data: obstacles beyond the numbers

There are a number of challenges national statistics systems face. Four central political economy issues are:

### 1 \_

#### Politicisation of data for resource allocation



#### POPULATION

The basic starting point for most statistics (income, trends in growth, education enrolment ratios) is a count of the population. Population censuses are often heavily politicised for a host of reasons: population size may be used for budget allocations, or the allocation of parliamentary seats, or there may be political sensitivity around the number of ethnic or national minorities in the population.



#### EDUCATION ENROLMENT

There are often discrepancies between the enrolment rates shown in administrative and survey data, with the education enrolment rates stated in administrative data larger than those found in survey data. These divergences coincide with shifts toward top-down financing to education through per pupil central government grants.



#### AGRICULTURE

There is controversy surrounding the production of crop statistics. Agricultural censuses may be politically sensitive for reasons around national subsidies for agricultural input, or contain contradictory information around yield due to different statistical methods chosen to inflate these for political reasons.



#### HEALTH

Many countries' Health Management Information Systems (HMIS) rely on self-reporting from clinic and hospital staff designed to produce high-frequency administrative data. Health clinics may misreport data in order to meet benchmarks set by funders for renewed funding.

**RECOMMENDATION: Autonomous statistical offices that are able to produce reliable statistics free from political interference are necessary to ensure reliable data.**

### 2 \_

#### Issues with NSOs

NSOs are often constrained by a lack of autonomy and limited financial capacity. Even where autonomy is anchored in legislation,

the main producers of statistics do not manage their own workloads or budgets, putting pressure on their capacity to coordinate, undertake and support the production and analysis of official statistics.

NSOs are often underfunded and have unpredictable annual budgets. As a result of this, many NSOs turn to donors for day-to-day funding. In some African countries, donors provide more than 80% of their total budget. In addition, nearly all core data collection activities are funded primarily by external sources.

**RECOMMENDATION: Functional autonomy and predictable funding of NSOs is fundamental to ensuring their sustainability.**

### 3 \_

#### Donor priorities dominate national priorities

An over-reliance on donor funding may lead to a misalignment of priorities, whereby national policy makers prefer funding large-scale disaggregated data projects and donors prefer nationally representative sample surveys. Nationally representative household surveys have sample sizes which are too small for disaggregation at the local, city or even regional level. In Africa, there is a lack of local and regional data which urgently needs to be addressed. While UNECA are promoting regional level statistics, a drive for data disaggregated at the local level is necessary.

Donor funding does not tend to cover salaries, instead paying for per diems, computers and fieldwork for specific surveys. Donor-funded surveys can drag resources away from NSOs as these projects have significant resources. Government statisticians generally earn in a month what external consultants earn in a day.

**RECOMMENDATION: Direct donor funding to NSOs to prioritise core statistical products and support building capacity is key to improving data.**

### 4 \_

#### Difficulties in accessing data limits use and hinders evidence-based policymaking

Data cannot be used as a tool with which to govern effectively if they are not available or understood. Many NSOs are hesitant to publish their data, lack the capacity to or do not understand how to communicate the data to a wider audience.

The Open Data Barometer classifies the majority of African countries surveyed as 'capacity constrained'. These countries face challenges in establishing sustainable open data initiatives as a result of: limited government, civil society or private sector capacity; limits on affordable widespread internet access; and weaknesses in digital data collection and management.

**RECOMMENDATION: Open, easily accessible and understandable data are necessary in order for data to be a tool with which to govern.**



## National Statistical Offices: creating stronger institutions

A NSO exists to provide robust, timely and independent statistical information and promote its use for policy formulation and decision-making. In order for NSOs to be empowered and well-functioning there are three overarching issues that must be addressed: their independence, financing and capacity.

### A. INDEPENDENCE

- Full integration of statistics into policy and decision-making processes with national decision-makers acutely aware of the power of data and statistics.
- NSOs formed and positioned to have a strong, independent voice in supporting national, regional and global development agendas.
- Clear and enforced rules ensuring independence of NSOs.
- Data are not hidden, but rather completely accessible to support evidence-based policymaking.

"Establishing a statistical office is less eye-catching than building a hospital or school but data-driven policy will ensure that more hospital and schools are delivered more effectively and efficiently."

Mo Ibrahim

Political and commercial agendas are clearly delinked from NSO autonomy, with stakeholder (donors, private sector) priorities not able or allowed to dominate national priorities.

NSOs are delinked from the government civil service and vested interests, with heads of NSOs given the power to hire and fire staff based on competency.

### B. FINANCING

- Accurate and unbiased data are produced even when incentives between funders and producers are misaligned.
- Financing for national statistical efforts is planned long-term, with stable budgets.
- Sufficient resources are provided by the government, but also through other interested parties – including the private sector or foundations.

Investment is continually made in people, with funds used to support staff training.

### C. CAPACITY

- Accuracy, timeliness and credibility of data are prioritised and capacity built to achieve this central aim.
- Mobile and automation technologies are embraced with upgrading of local communications, digital storage and processing infrastructures.
- Statistics-oriented topics are included in school curricula, to raise awareness of, and encourage youth to consider, statistics as a career.

According to the Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa (2010), of the 54 member countries of the AU, only 12 are considered to have an autonomous NSO. These are: Angola, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda.

## Harmonisation: strength in unity

---

Countries have been working towards harmonising the methodology, collection, production and quality of statistics across countries according to standardised norms. The AUC and UNECA have set up a common minimum framework for harmonised and comparable statistics in Africa.

### Benefits of harmonisation:

- Allows for comparisons between the collection, production and quality of statistics in different countries and across time.
- Allows for greater regional integration of statistics. This may facilitate statisticians from different countries working together to build institutional capacity, improve international methodologies and make them more applicable in the given context.
- Allows African countries to benchmark their regional progress on policy integration. This will enable the Regional Economic Communities, the pillars of African integration, to reach their objectives and better measure achievements.
- Allows for the coordination of the production and quality of statistics in Africa. This may lead to higher quality statistics being produced at the regional, national and local level.

### Outstanding issues:

#### Better definitions and more appropriate measurement methodologies are required.

- **Example 1: Agricultural production.**
- Agricultural census sampling methods are developed with modern, specialised, capital-intensive agriculture in mind. This means 'agricultural productivity per crop' and figures derived from it are often misleading in an African context. A particular example relates to roots and tubers, which are grown together on tiny plots and not harvested until they are needed. Although the Food and Agriculture Organization provides statistics on these crops, a degree of uncertainty surrounds these estimates in Africa.
- **Example 2: Labour market/employment data.**
- Labour Force Surveys have inappropriate definitions of labour ('wage employment' and 'self-employment') for measuring the heterogeneity of employment relations found in some African countries, notably those with large informal economies. These modules are designed to measure industrialised labour markets as the tools used for surveys on employment stem from Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. Definitions of paid employment rooted in the conventional conceptualisation of formal wage employment that can be observed in OECD countries are inadequate for capturing informal and precarious forms of wage labour in developing countries.

#### No duplication of data collection efforts.

- **Example: Poverty data.**
- Major donor-funded household survey projects do not have standardised definitions. Strengthening the standardisation, coordination and harmonisation of development partners' intervention, in order to avoid duplications in the implementation of statistical programmes and to ensure surveys are comparable, should be prioritised.

#### More appropriate survey design to accurately capture concepts.

- **Example: Migration data.**
- The Demographic Health Survey (DHS) is the most frequent and prevalent national survey in West and Central African countries. However, they are only conducted every five years, severely limiting their potential to measure migration on a timely basis. The seasonal nature of migration presents problems as household compositions will look different depending on when these surveys are conducted.

"When you try to read the economy from a conventional view, you totally misread it. There is so much that's unrecorded. It's like trying to use a tape measure to figure out how much Coke is in this glass."

Patrick Zhuwao, Youth and Empowerment Minister, Zimbabwe

## Revised data: better measurements of the economy

In recent years, many African countries have revisited the methods and base year data used to calculate Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This has provided more accurate information around the size and structure of the countries' economies. As a result, governments can better evaluate their fiscal positions and potential revenue bases.

Revised GDPs take into account formerly omitted economic activities performed by informal businesses, as well as recent booms in service sectors – information and communications technologies, telecommunications and banking – and real estate. The updated figures therefore provide a better assessment of the economy's size, composition and sectorial contributions to GDP.

"The idea [of the rebasing] is not to be the biggest; the main objective is to measure the economy properly."

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, former Finance Minister of Nigeria

Nigeria's rebasing, which lifted its GDP **from \$270 billion to \$510 billion**, revealed its economy had surpassed South Africa's and was the largest in Africa.

Kenya's 2013 revision of \$55 billion augmented its per capita income from \$994 to \$1,269 allowing the country to be re-categorised **from low-income to lower-middle-income** according to the World Bank's income classifications.

The East African Community (EAC) increased its regional economy by **nearly a fifth** following the rebasing of three of its five member countries in 2014 (Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda).

Zambia's GDP rebasing revealed its economy was **25% larger than previously expected** following the change in base year from 1994 to 2010.

	Kenya (2013)	Nigeria (2013)	Tanzania (2013)	Uganda (2013/14)	Zambia (2010)*
Change in base year	From 2001 to 2009	From 1990 to 2010	From 2001 to 2007	From 2002 to 2009/10	From 1994 to 2010
GDP (Old series)	\$44 billion	\$270 billion	\$33 billion	\$22 billion	Not available
GDP (New series)	\$55 billion	\$510 billion	\$44 billion	\$25 billion	\$17 billion
Percent change	25.3	89.2	27.8	13.1	25.2

\* For Zambia, comparisons between the old and new GDP series are only available for the benchmark year 2010.

## SPOTLIGHT

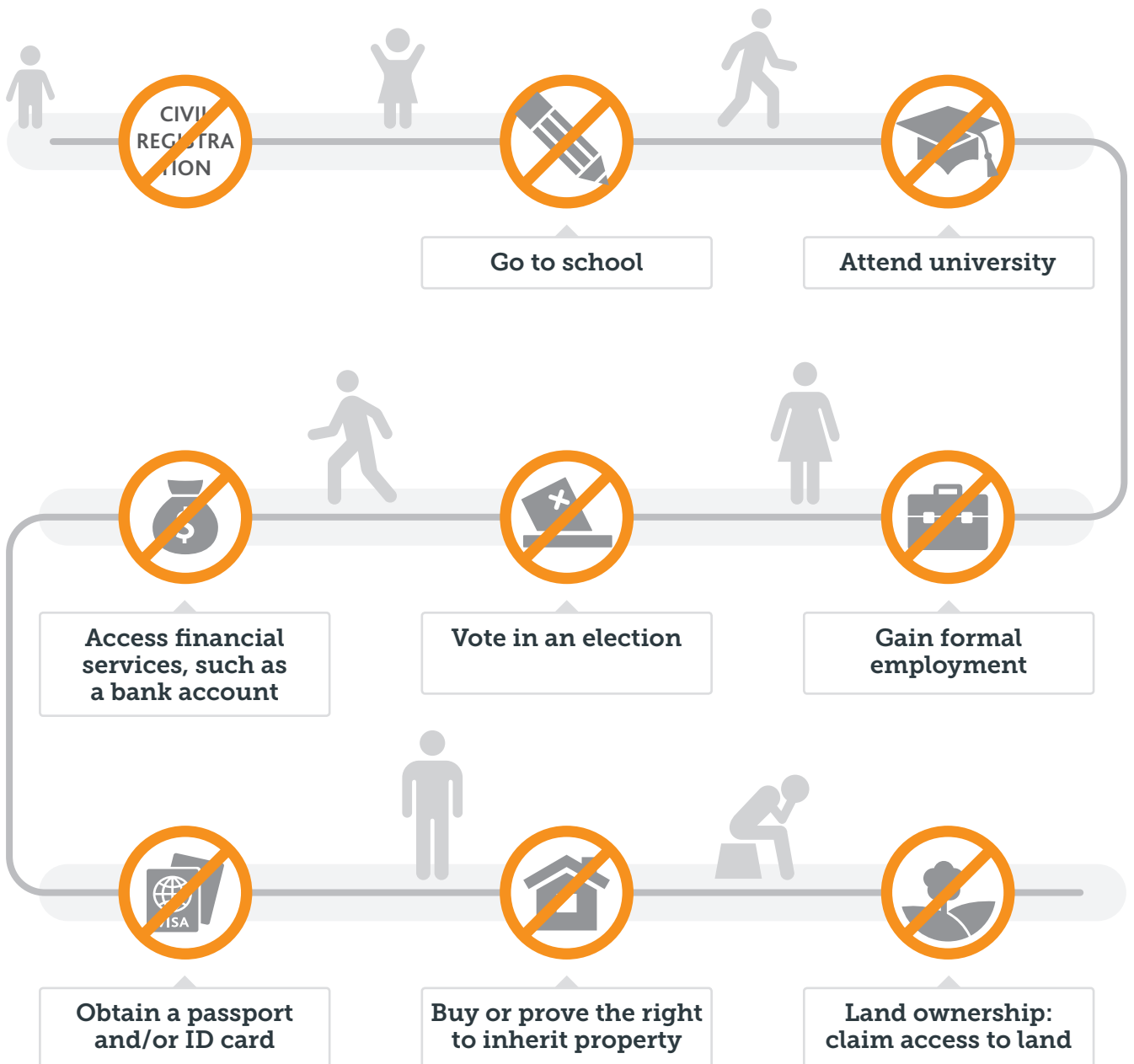
### Civil registration: data that opens doors

Civil registration is the way by which countries keep a continuous and complete record of births and deaths of their population. A well-functioning Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) system registers all births and deaths, issues birth and death certificates, and compiles and disseminates vital statistics.

In Africa, 46 countries do not have a complete civil registration system to register births. This means that 83% of people on the continent live in a country without a complete and well-functioning birth registration, or less than one in five births occur in a country with a complete birth registration system.

Civil registration is required in order for an individual to:

- Go to school
- Attend university
- Gain formal employment
- Vote in an election
- Access financial services, such as a bank account
- Obtain a passport and/or ID card
- Buy or prove the right to inherit property
- Land ownership, ability to claim access to land



## A magnitude challenge? The SDGs & the growth of global monitoring requirements

### NEW YARDSTICKS: A GREATER NUMBER OF INDICATORS

- The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set a benchmark for global development from 2000 onwards and have recently been replaced with the SDGs.
- Critics identified many 'missing dimensions' of the MDGs, such as climate change, economic growth, infrastructure and governance, elements which are now in the SDGs.
- The result of the inclusion of these topics, and others, is that the indicator collection requirement for the SDGs is at least eight times that of the MDGs.
- Data collection for the 21 MDG targets remains incomplete, raising questions around the capacity of NSOs to collect data for the 169 SDG targets. It has been estimated that carrying out this collection for all 169 would cost at least \$254 billion – almost twice the entire annual global development budget.

#### MDGs

Created: 2000  
Deadline: 2015

#### Number of Goals

8

#### Number of Targets

21

#### SDGs

Created: 2015  
Deadline: 2030

#### Number of Goals

17

#### Number of Targets

169

"In Africa, the need to monitor, evaluate and track progress toward attaining the goals put considerable pressure on already weak and vulnerable National Statistical Systems (NSSs), but it also gave these systems an opportunity to develop their capacity to deliver the necessary information."

Dimitri Sanga, Director of the African Centre for Statistics (ACS) of UNECA

### MORE DATA: CAPTURING INEQUALITIES THROUGH DISAGGREGATED DATA

- The use of averages and aggregate data in both global and country-level MDG reporting tended to make inequalities invisible.
- To tackle this critique, the inclusion of a greater number of indicators in the SDGs has been combined with a comprehensive commitment to the collection of disaggregated data by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and geographic location, placing even greater pressure on African NSOs.

The SDGs have acknowledged governance as a fundamental element of long-term development. Goal 16 of the SDGs aims to "promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels". It is the goal with the highest number of targets at 12.

#### Targets

- Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere.
- End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.
- Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all.
- By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organised crime.
- Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms.
- Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.
- Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.
- Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance.
- By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration.
- Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.
- Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime.
- Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development.

## Data for all: openness & accessibility of data

### OPEN DATA FOR AFRICA

According to the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, "official statistics that meet the test of practical utility are to be compiled and made available on an impartial basis by official statistical agencies to honour citizens' entitlement to public information".

In the last five years, many national governments have announced open data initiatives.

Open data are defined as free, available to all, accessible, licensed for use and reuse, and well documented.

"Open data is about opening government, making data accessible to everybody... Open Data is good for Tanzania as we are moving towards the Sustainable Development Goals. If we don't have quality statistics to respond to we won't reach where we want to go." Dr. Albina Chuwa, Director General of the Tanzanian National Bureau of Statistics

### How data are open or closed



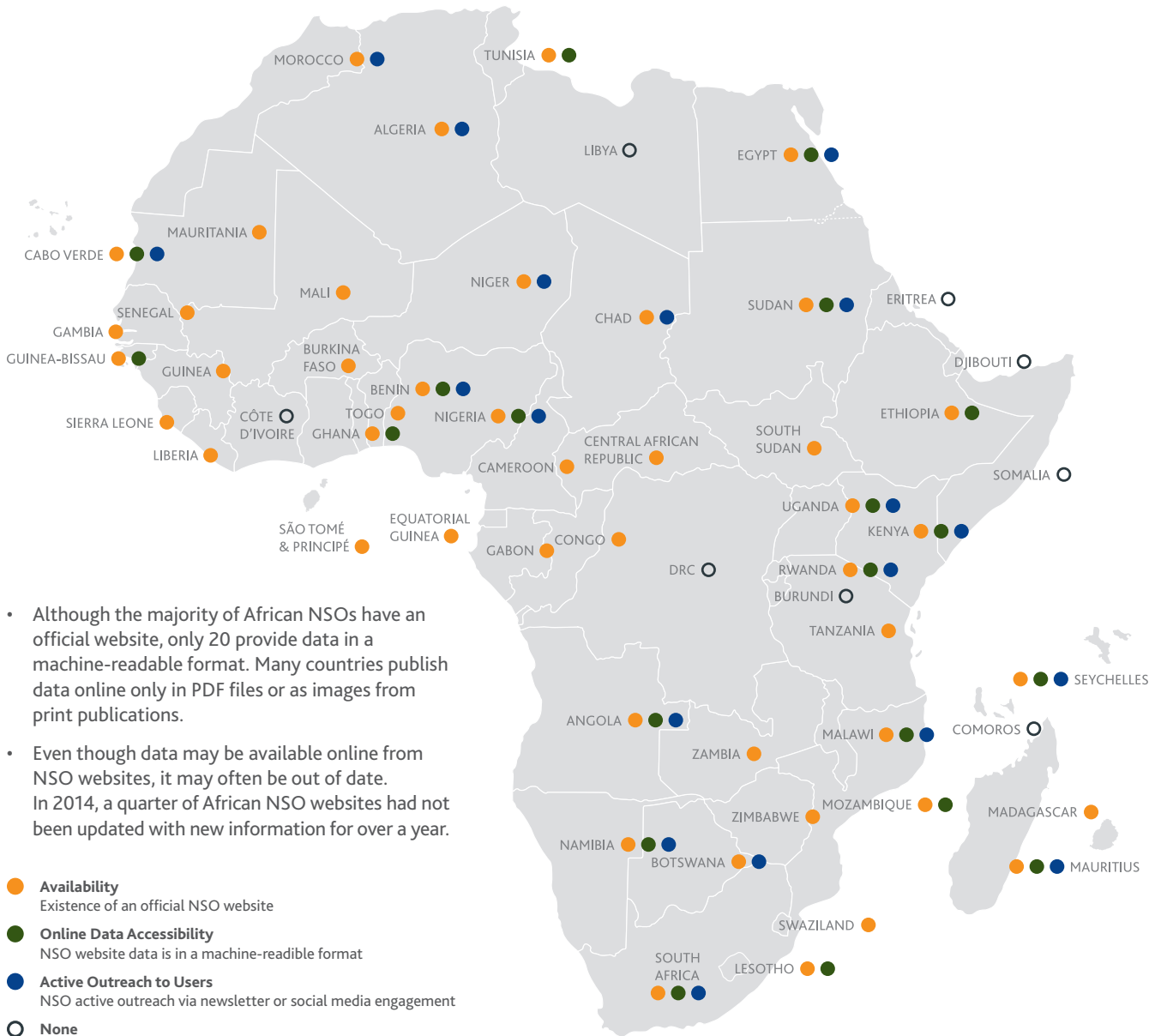
Degree of access	Everyone has access	Access to data is to a subset of individuals or organisations
Machine readability	Available in formats that can be easily retrieved and processed by computers	Data in formats not easily retrieved and processed by computers
Cost	No cost to obtain	Offered only at a significant fee
Rights	Unlimited rights to reuse and redistribute data	Re-use, republishing or distribution of data is forbidden

The benefits of opening up access to data are:

- Citizens perceive greater transparency and accountability when they can measure results.
- Entrepreneurs create value-added applications from open data sets.
- Data quality improves when data are well documented and open to public review.
- Open data initiatives promote the modernisation of statistical systems, upgraded IT infrastructure and responsive user services.

The Open Government Partnership is a prominent advocate for open data. However, only ten of the 69 participating countries are African.

## THE STATUS OF COUNTRY EFFORTS



- Although the majority of African NSOs have an official website, only 20 provide data in a machine-readable format. Many countries publish data online only in PDF files or as images from print publications.
- Even though data may be available online from NSO websites, it may often be out of date. In 2014, a quarter of African NSO websites had not been updated with new information for over a year.

	●	●	●
Angola	x	x	x
Benin	x	x	x
Cabo Verde	x	x	x
Egypt	x	x	x
Kenya	x	x	x
Malawi	x	x	x
Mauritius	x	x	x
Namibia	x	x	x
Nigeria	x	x	x
Rwanda	x	x	x
Seychelles	x	x	x
South Africa	x	x	x
Sudan	x	x	x
Uganda	x	x	x
Algeria	x	x	
Botswana	x	x	
Chad	x	x	
Ethiopia	x	x	
Ghana	x	x	
Guinea-Bissau	x	x	
Lesotho	x	x	
Morocco	x		x
Mozambique	x	x	
Niger	x		x
Tunisia	x	x	
Burkina Faso	x		
Cameroon	x		
CAR	x		
Congo	x		
Equatorial Guinea	x		
Gabon	x		
Gambia	x		
Guinea	x		
Liberia	x		
Madagascar	x		
Mali	x		
Mauritania	x		
São Tomé and Príncipe	x		
Senegal	x		
Sierra Leone	x		
South Sudan	x		
Swaziland	x		
Tanzania	x		
Togo	x		
Zambia	x		
Zimbabwe	x		
Burundi			
Comoros			
Côte d'Ivoire			
Djibouti			
DRC			
Eritrea			
Libya			
Somalia			

# SPOTLIGHT

## Public service delivery & statistical capacity: a link?

At the national level, collecting better data is important for social, economic and political reasons:

- Plan accurately
- Allocate budget more efficiently
- Informed policy decisions
- Improve government accountability

There is a relationship between governance, which is defined in the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) as the delivery of political, social and economic goods by a government, and the statistical capacity of a country.

- There is a slight positive correlation between overall governance and the indicator *Statistical Capacity* (0.63).
- Out of the four categories in the IIAG, *Sustainable Economic Opportunity* has the strongest correlation with *Statistical Capacity* (0.71). This suggests countries with a stronger state capacity to deliver economic policies and provide a sustainable economic environment may have better statistical capacity systems. It could also be argued that having a stronger statistical system may lead to better economic policies, in terms of allocating resources more effectively.

### Indicator: *Statistical Capacity*

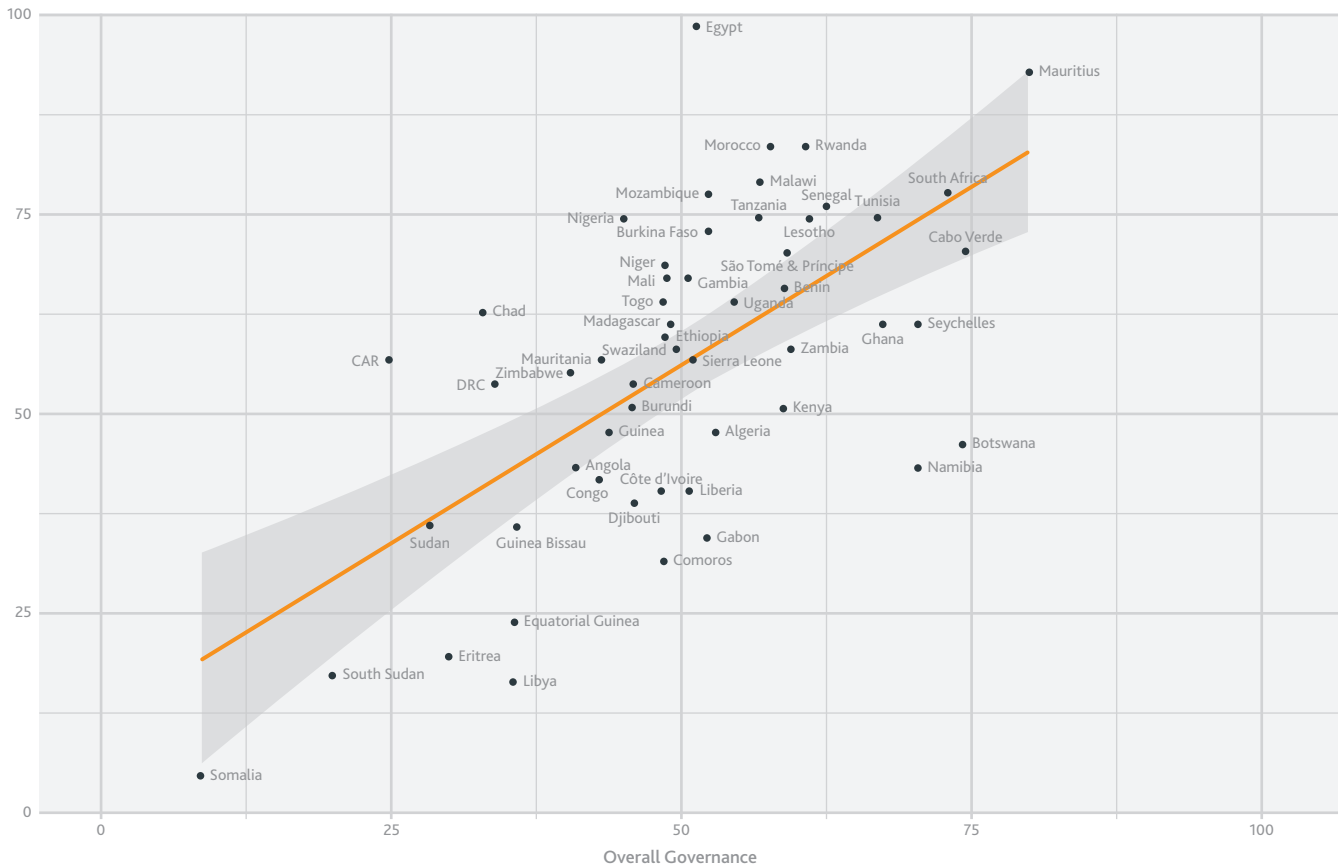
**Definition:** This indicator assesses the capacity of statistical systems using a diagnostic framework which consists of three assessment areas: statistical methodology; source data; and periodicity and timeliness.

**Data Source:** Bulletin Board on Statistical Capacity, World Bank

- The continental average score in this indicator is 56.3 (out of 100.0) in 2014.
- Egypt is the best performing country on the continent, with a score of 98.5, and Somalia is the worst performing country with a score of 4.5.
- Democratic Republic of Congo has improved the most over the past four years (+17.9 points), and Côte d'Ivoire has shown the most deterioration over this time period (-28.4 points).

### Relationship between overall governance and *Statistical Capacity*, 2015 IIAG, with 95% confidence intervals

Statistical Capacity





# SPOTLIGHT

## Resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 29 January 2014: Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

### Principle 1

Official statistics provide an indispensable element in the information system of a democratic society, serving the Government, the economy and the public with data about the economic, demographic, social and environmental situation. To this end, official statistics that meet the test of practical utility are to be compiled and made available on an impartial basis by official statistical agencies to honour citizens' entitlement to public information.

### Principle 2

To retain trust in official statistics, the statistical agencies need to decide according to strictly professional considerations, including scientific principles and professional ethics, on the methods and procedures for the collection, processing, storage and presentation of statistical data.

### Principle 3

To facilitate a correct interpretation of the data, the statistical agencies are to present information according to scientific standards on the sources, methods and procedures of the statistics.

### Principle 4

The statistical agencies are entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics.

### Principle 5

Data for statistical purposes may be drawn from all types of sources, be they statistical surveys or administrative records. Statistical agencies are to choose the source with regard to quality, timeliness, costs and the burden on respondents.

### Principle 6

Individual data collected by statistical agencies for statistical compilation, whether they refer to natural or legal persons, are to be strictly confidential and used exclusively for statistical purposes.

### Principle 7

The laws, regulations and measures under which the statistical systems operate are to be made public.

### Principle 8

Coordination among statistical agencies within countries is essential to achieve consistency and efficiency in the statistical system.

### Principle 9

The use by statistical agencies in each country of international concepts, classifications and methods promotes the consistency and efficiency of statistical systems at all official levels.

### Principle 10

Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in statistics contributes to the improvement of systems of official statistics in all countries.

# References

## The African data revolution: quantifying progress

- Center for Global Development and The African Population and Health Research Center (2014). Delivery on the Data Revolution in Sub-Saharan Africa: Final Report for African Development Working Group
- Development Initiatives (2015). Quantifying Data Revolution Challenges in Africa <http://devinit.org/#!/post/quantifying-the-challenges-facing-the-data-revolution-in-africa-a-first-attempt> Accessed: 04.05.2015
- Food & Agriculture Organization (2015). Countries conducting an agricultural census during WCA 2010 round (2006-2015). <http://www.fao.org/economic/ess/ess-wca/en/> Accessed: 04.05.2016
- Independent Expert Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development (2014). A World That Counts: Mobilising the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development. United Nations Secretary-General
- International Labour Organization (2016). ILOSTAT Database, <http://www.ilo.org/ilostat/faces/home/statisticaldata> Accessed: 05.05.2016
- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (2015). The Africa Data Consensus. Adopted by the High Level Conference on Data Revolution at the Eight Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union and the Economic Commission for Africa Joint Conference of Ministers
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Homicide Statistics (2016). People Who Inject Drugs. <https://data.unodc.org/?lf=1&lng=en> Accessed: 04.05.2016
- United Nations Statistics Division (2014). Coverage of civil registration system [http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/CRVS/CR\\_coverage.htm](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/CRVS/CR_coverage.htm) Accessed: 04.05.2016
- World Bank (2016). World Development Indicators Metadata <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=world-development-indicators> Accessed 04.05.2016

## Timeline of initiatives to improve statistical capacity in Africa

- African Development Bank (2014). New and Ongoing Statistical Initiatives of the African Development Bank and its Partners. Sixth Meeting of the Forum on Africa Statistical Development (FASDEV)
- African Union, African Development Bank and United Nations Commission for Africa (2014). Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa
- Center for Global Development (2015). Fueling the Data Revolution: an African Data Consensus. <http://www.cgdev.org/blog/fueling-data-revolution-africa-data-consensus> Accessed: 04.05.2015
- Kiregyera, B. (2015). The Emerging Data Revolution in Africa. Sun Press: Johannesburg
- PARIS21 (2011). Statistics for Transparency, Accountability and Results: A Busan Action Plan for Statistics
- PARIS21 (2007). A Brief History of Contributory Events Leading Up to the System-Wide Approach to Statistical Capacity Building
- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (2006). The Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa
- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (2014). African Group on Statistical Training and Human Resources. First Joint Session of the Committee of Directors General of National Statistics Offices and the Statistical Commission for Africa

## Africa Data Consensus

- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (2015). The Africa Data Consensus

## African Charter on Statistics

- African Union (2009). African Charter on Statistics

## Political economy of data: obstacles beyond the numbers

- Center for Global Development & The African Population and Health Research Center (2014). Delivery on the Data Revolution in Sub-Saharan Africa: Final Report for African Development Working Group
- Krätke, F. and Byiers, B. (2014). The Political Economy of Official Statistics: Implications for the Data. PARIS21
- Sandefur, J. and Glassman, A. (2014). The Political Economy of Bad Data: Evidence from African Survey & Administrative Statistics. Center for Global Development: Working Paper 373

## National Statistical Offices: creating stronger institutions

- Akinyosoye, V. (2008). Repositioning the National Statistical Systems of African Countries within the Framework of International Best Practices: The Case of Nigeria, The African Statistical Journal Volume 6
- Anderson, B. (2015). Quantifying the challenges facing the Data Revolution in Africa: A first attempt <http://devinit.org/people/#!/post/quantifying-the-challenges-facing-the-data-revolution-in-africa-a-first-attempt> Accessed 04.05.2016
- Center for Global Development & The African Population and Health Research Center (2014). Delivery on the Data Revolution in Sub-Saharan Africa: Final Report for African Development Working Group
- Glassman, A. and Ottenhoff, J. (2014). Delivering on the data revolution in sub-Saharan Africa <https://www.statslife.org.uk/opinion/1685-delivering-on-the-data-revolution-in-sub-saharan-africa> Accessed 04.05.2016
- Krätke, F. and Byiers, B. (2014). The Political Economy of Official Statistics: Implications for the Data. PARIS21
- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (2016). Implementing the African Data Revolution E-Discussion Summary [http://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/images/discussion\\_summary\\_-\\_implementing\\_the\\_african\\_data\\_revolution.docx](http://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/images/discussion_summary_-_implementing_the_african_data_revolution.docx) Accessed 04.05.2016

## Harmonisation: strength in unity

- African Union (2011). The African Charter on Statistics in Seven Questions. Department of Economic Affairs: Statistics Division
- African Union, African Development Bank and United Nations Commission for Africa (2014). Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa
- Financial Times (2016). In Africa, the numbers game matters <https://next.ft.com/content/68b6253a-df0b-11e5-b072-006d8d362ba3> Accessed: 04.05.2016
- Jerven, M. (2013). Poor Numbers: How We Are Misled by African Development Statistics and What to Do about It. Cornell University Press
- Poulain, M. and Herm, A. (2011). Guide to Enhancing Migration Data in West and Central Africa. International Organisation for Migration
- Rizzo, M., Kilima, B. and Wuyts, M. (2014). The Invisibility of Wage Employment in Statistics on the Informal Economy in Africa: Causes and Consequences. The Journal of Development Studies 51 (2)

## Revised data: better measurements of the economy

- Financial Times (2016). Nigeria almost doubles GDP in recalculation: Economy overtakes South Africa as continent's largest <https://next.ft.com/content/70b594fe-bd94-11e3-a5ba-00144feabdc0> Accessed: 04.05.2016
- Sy, A. (2015). Are African countries rebasing GDP in 2014 finding evidence of structural transformation? <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/africa-in-focus/posts/2015/03/04-african-gdp-structural-transformation-sy-copley> Accessed: 04.05.2016

### **Civil registration: data that opens doors**

- United Nations Statistics Division (2014). Coverage of civil registration system [http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/CRVS/CR\\_coverage.htm](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/CRVS/CR_coverage.htm) Accessed: 04.05.2016
- World Bank (2014). Global Civil Registration and Vital Statistics: Scaling up Investment Plan 2015-2024

### **A magnitude challenge? The SDGs & the growth of global monitoring requirements**

- Measure What Matters (2015). The true difficulties posed by SDG measurement <http://netgreen-project.eu/blog/2015/01/07/true-difficulties-posed-sdg-measurement> Accessed: 06.05.2016
- Sanga, D. (2011). The Challenges of Monitoring and Reporting on the Millennium Development Goals in Africa by 2015 and Beyond. *Journal of African Statistics* (12)
- United Nations Millennium Development Goals (2016). <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/> Accessed: 04.05.2016
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (2016). <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/> Accessed: 04.05.2016

### **Data for all: openness & accessibility of data**

- Open Data Watch (2016). <http://opendatawatch.com/knowledge-partnership/overcoming-open-data-worries/> Accessed: 04.05.2016
- Open Government Partnership (2016). <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/countries> Accessed: 04.05.2016
- PARIS21 (2016). Metabase <http://datarevolution.paris21.org/metabase> Accessed: 04.05.2016
- United Nations Economic and Social Council (2013). Resolution 21: Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics
- World Bank (2016). Open Data Gaining Momentum in Africa <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2015/09/29/open-data-gaining-momentum-in-africa> Accessed: 04.05.2016

### **Public service delivery & statistical capacity: a link?**

- Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2015). 2015 Ibrahim Index of African Governance <http://mo.ibrahim.foundation/iiag/> Accessed: 04.05.2016

### **Back cover:**

- Financial Times (2015). The extreme poverty of data. April 16 2015 <http://blogs.ft.com/beyond-brics/2015/04/16/the-extreme-poverty-of-data/> Accessed: 25.04.2016

### **Mo Ibrahim Foundation Research Team**

Nathalie Delapalme, Executive Director - Research and Policy

Chloé Bailey, Programme Officer

Sif Heide-Ottosen, Analyst

Elizabeth McGrath, Director of the IIAG

Richard Murray, Senior Programme Manager

Maria Tsirodimitri, Graphic Designer

Zainab Umar, Operations Officer

Yannick Vuylsteke, Programme Manager

“ Our friends in the development sector and our African leaders would not dream of driving their cars or flying without instruments. But somehow they pretend they can manage and develop countries without reliable data.

”

Mo Ibrahim, 2015

[mo.ibrahim.foundation](http://mo.ibrahim.foundation)

[f /MoIbrahimFoundation](https://www.facebook.com/MoIbrahimFoundation) [t @Mo\\_IbrahimFdn](https://twitter.com/Mo_IbrahimFdn)