



Training of African Statisticians

A wide consensus has formed on the importance of training statisticians, which has resulted in a proliferation of initiatives which in turn justifies the need for co-ordination.

One of the longest-standing of these initiatives is the PARIS21 task team on the subject. After an interruption of several years, this group was re-launched in 2007 at the suggestion of France, with a mandate to cover Africa only. The team met twice in 2007: in March in Kampala and in September in Yaoundé. The team was composed of representatives from a wide range of stakeholders: African statistical training institutions, Francophone Africa schools (Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Morocco, Senegal, Tunisia), the ISAE of Makerere University (Uganda), EASTC (Tanzania), AfDB, UNECA, EUROSTAT, INWENT, AFRISTAT, France and PARIS21, as well as representatives from African NSOs.

During these two meetings, the team issued recommendations aiming to better identify national statistical systems' demand for training, to adapt training to meet this demand, and to ensure sustainable funding for it.

Among recent initiatives, the Statistical Commission for Africa, which met in January 2008 in Addis Ababa, decided to establish a task team on statistical training under the aegis of the African Committee for Statistical Coordination, which brings together regional and sub-regional institutions as well as country representatives.

It seems natural that this team should be the one to centralise and co-ordinate the various African statistical training initiatives and develop an integrated programme of support from donors and financial and technical partners and therefore that the PARIS21 task team should merge with it.

Mr. Koffi N'Guessan — current chair of the Conference of Directors of Francophone Africa statistical schools (*conférence des directeurs des écoles de statistique d'Afrique francophone - CODESA*)¹, which is represented on the PARIS21 task team — invited, with the support of PARIS21 and France, representatives from other interested institutions and organisations, already members of the PARIS21 task team or the African Committee for Statistical Coordination, to participate in a CODESA meeting scheduled for 2 June 2008.

The objective of this meeting is to help define the task team and develop proposals to be submitted to the African Committee for Statistical Coordination concerning the team's composition, the modalities of its work, its governance, an agenda for its first meeting, and priority actions, in particular among the actions recommended by the PARIS21 task team, etc.

The members of the PARIS21 Steering Committee are invited to share their comments and suggestions on the above.

¹ The CODESA brings together the directors from the three statistical schools in Sub-Saharan Francophone Africa (ENSAE-Sénégal in Dakar, ENSEA in Abidjan, ISSEA in Yaoundé) and the *Institut de formation et de recherche démographiques* (IFORD) in Yaoundé, INSEE's group of schools, AFRISTAT, the AfDB, and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.