Organised at the initiative of PARIS21, the Abidjan regional workshop brought together policy makers and Directors-general of National Statistical Offices to explore ways of collaborating to improve development strategies and national statistical systems as part of the country poverty reduction policy. Over the two days in September, participants:

- discussed the challenges related to statistical development in Africa;
- outlined the progress achieved in countries through NSDSs;
- proposed concrete activities to improve the dialogue between statisticians and policy makers.
With over 50 high-level representatives from 18 French-speaking African countries and regional and international institutions present, participants also discussed how to involve statisticians in the post-2015 Agenda and to better respond to the needs of all the different categories of statistics users.

The seminar concluded with recommendations and an action plan to be implemented with the support of PARIS21 and its regional partners (see below). Follow up activities, such as regional and national seminars on NSDS and poverty reduction, are already planned to implement these recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTIONS

- Align NSDSs with the Strategy Paper on Poverty Reduction.
- Secure further political and financial commitment to statistics.
- Give priority to strengthening the legal framework governing statistical activities.
- Pay more attention to statistical methods and instruments.
- Place more importance on the role of statisticians in the post-2015 MDG debate.
PARIS21 is helping fragile states with NSDS
Addressing statistical needs on the ground

BURUNDI
Stronger visibility given to the production and dissemination of data was a key observation made at the joint mid-term review of Burundi’s National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) in October 2012. Burundi is making strong progress with:

- a wider spectrum of partners mobilised around statistical issues;
- better co-ordination between line ministries and the central statistical institution;
- the establishment of a monitoring process of the strategy.

However, the review also underlined that the mobilisation of adequate resources by the government remains a major constraint. The results of this evaluation, and its recommendations, have been presented to the National Statistical Council and will be used as a powerful advocacy tool.
PARIS21 is promoting a south-south approach in the Central African Republic (CAR) by using the experience of the Cote d’Ivoire to support NSDS design. Thanks to this support, the NSDS should be finalised and officially launched in 2013. PARIS21 will continue its support to the CAR in the future, especially on funding facilitation and donor co-ordination on statistics.

SIERRA LEONE

In Sierra Leone, on the request of the authorities, PARIS21, the African Development Bank and the UNECA undertook an Assessment of the NSDS, 2008-12. This joint exercise focused on outputs achieved during the NSDS period and made concrete recommendations for the preparation of the next strategy. This exercise will help Statistics Sierra Leone to build on its past experience and will contribute to the dialogues with all the stakeholders involved in statistical development.

HAITI

In January 2012, PARIS21 helped the Statistical Institute of Haiti (IHSI) on the design of their NSDS Roadmap. On the suggestion of PARIS21, an NSDS co-ordinator was appointed within the IHSI. Good co-ordination was ensured with partners, in particular with the EU, in the framework of the Minimum Statistical Program. PARIS21 will continue to support Haiti and NSDS training workshops are planned.
Benin is “setting the pace” regarding long-term statistical development by ratifying the African Charter for Statistics in 2012. This led to new statistical legislation that helps the National Statistical System (NSS) to meet the growing demand for quality statistics.
PARIS21 helped initiate and design this law which brings statistics closer to the development of public policy and decision making by economic and social actors. This endeavour produced another important step forward with the National Fund for the Development of Statistics (NFDS). It aims to secure funding of statistical development in Benin and is an important element of the funding strategy for the second generation of Benin’s National Strategy on the Development of Statistics (NSDS), for which planning begun in 2012. During a workshop held in Cotonou in October 2012, users and producers of statistics gathered together to review and assess NSDS progress from 2008-11 and formulate the next round. Benin is also one of two pilot countries currently testing the new questionnaire and methodology of the Country Report on Support to Statistics (CRESS) with results expected in mid-2013.

“The process of integrating the continent that African States started some years ago recommends the use of harmonised and reliable statistical data in all areas of political, social, economic and cultural life, both for monitoring progress towards objectives and measuring results.”

Jean Ping, President of the African Union Commission
The IHSN Central Survey Catalog provides a searchable list of more than 2,000 surveys and censuses conducted in low- and middle-income countries. This catalog is maintained in collaboration with the World Bank and a large number of national and international agencies. This catalog provides rich metadata including, when available:

- the survey questionnaire(s);
- manuals and report(s);
- list of related citations.

It does not provide access to microdata, but when available, provides a link to external catalogs where the data can be obtained.
The IHSN Central Survey Catalog allows users to search and browse surveys. When available, a list of citations related to each survey is provided in the survey page. The IHSN also provides a Citation Catalog, which allows users to search and browse citations (including articles published in journals, working papers, books or chapters in books and dissertations. The citation description page will provide a list of the surveys quoted in the citation.

The IHSN Central Survey Catalog benefits from the various Survey Catalogs which are maintained by National Statistical Agencies – some of them established with the technical and financial support of the Accelerated Data Program (ADP).
The Accelerated Data Program (ADP, www.adp.ihsn.org) continued its close collaboration with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC, www.spc.int) to promote microdata documentation and archiving in the Pacific. The ADP and SPC conducted three back-to-back one-week training workshops for three sub-regions: Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia. Through these workshops, staff from National Statistical Offices were exposed to and trained on the relevant international standards and tools for microdata documentation, archiving and dissemination. In addition, the current documentation of the most recent censuses and surveys was initiated by each participating country.
Over the course of the three weeks, training was provided to 30 participants and over 25 surveys were documented and successfully uploaded to SPC’s regional NADA. The ADP and SPC are continuing their collaboration to further promote improved microdata management in the Pacific region, in accordance with the agreed plans for a strategic development of statistical capacity in the region.

“Improving survey data management is crucial in improving the quality and the transparency of what we do.”

- Dr. Gerald Haberkorn, Manager, Statistics and Demography Programme, SPC
In collaboration with the Philippine National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB), PARIS21 organised a national workshop on Statistics and Inclusive Growth in Manila in December 2012. The workshop was the first of its kind where data users as well as official and non-official data producers were brought together to discuss the new data environment required by "inclusive growth" policies.
Considered one of the hottest issues in the Philippines, the achievement of inclusive growth requires a broad range of disaggregated data that would allow decision-makers to identify, implement and monitor adequate and appropriate policies to sustain inclusive prosperity in the country. Participants issued a number of recommendations on how to improve existing mechanisms in the Philippines for enhancing the production of statistics required for inclusive growth policies. These recommendations include actions at the sub-national level (where priorities often differ from the ones set at the national level), and call for an increased partnership between official and non-official data producers.

“Inclusive Growth is one of the hottest issues in the Philippines.”

- Dr. Jose Ramon G. Albert, Secretary General of NSCB