

# **The statistics, tools of regional integration and development in Africa**

***Keynote speech of Kako NUBUKPO at PARIS21RSDS Forum 5 et 6  
October 2015 in Paris***

## **Introduction**

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Participants,

"The statistics take us from the ignorant certainty to thoughtful uncertainty". This quote from the famous statistics book, the "Wonnacot" summarizes the issue of what brings us together today and tomorrow, as part of the seminar, namely the practical modalities for the statistical service of the structural transformation Africa.

Indeed, every day there are media announcement of economic growth, population, birth rates, mortality, various indicators and various concerning the African continent. One is almost tempted to say that Africa is awash in statistics. The paradox lies in the fact that the same figures allow some oracles to announce the imminent emergence, if not already in Africa, and Cassandras bury the African continent under the burden immeasurable challenges.

There, we seem, a third way, that of the dispassionate and rigorous assessment of the contributions and statistical challenges in the African development process. Such an exercise, even if it loses the benefit of extensive media coverage because refusing to ambient sensationalism can enable African policy based on sound theoretical and empirical bases. In this respect, our common problem can be illustrated in two areas, among others, which constitute the two parts of my argument, namely on the one hand, the process of building and strengthening sub-regional integration in West Africa (Part I) and on the other hand, the public policy evaluation and long term strategy (second part).

## **I. The role of statistics in the construction and strengthening of sub-regional integration in West Africa**

Upgrading and adaptation of statistics and different nomenclatures seem to be up, given the nature of the current issues and challenges of sub-regional integration process, particularly in West Africa.

Indeed, the crisis in Mali has revealed the vulnerability of the West Africa Economic Monetary Union (WAEMU) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to a set of external and internal threats that should be analysed from a regional perspective for optimal use, shared and understood by all actors, human, natural, and financial resources of the Union. The same is true of Ivorian and Burkinabe crises, knowing that we are still not completely out of it.

Three main threats continue to weigh on the West African region and the entire African continent, namely: physical insecurity, food insecurity and massive and endemic youth unemployment.

In the interest of efficient use of all resources of the Union, federalism, bold approaches, innovative seem essential for statistical cooperation, in order to inform decisions to be taken. The time seems ripe to consider, in fact, to consolidate the common currency, the creation of a genuine common economic space (macroeconomic management) lined with a sharing of sovereign functions (peace and security, supreme justice, foreign affairs, customs and Foreign Trade) and the essential functions of human development (technical education and vocational training, higher education and research) by applying the principle of subsidiarity everywhere. To do this, the many statistics that exist in each of our countries must be mobilized, supplemented as necessary, disseminated and should allow for example to assess rigorously the nominal convergence effort, real and structural in our sub region.

**Regarding the new areas, in particular peace and security**, new statistical classifications and deep contextualization of the significance of the data appear to be first-class challenges in African states. Meeting these challenges should enable the Heads of State and Government to assume adequately systemic decisions facing the real threats to the security, development and democracy.

For example, apart from conflicts between States that will always be the responsibility of public international law, the idea is to strengthen the legal powers of the WAEMU for everything related to the stability and control of the territories. And thus, making relevant WAEMU bodies. The fight against all illegal trafficking (arms, drugs in particular) would require probably a shared runtime mode (moving towards a confederal) because of the resources it requires and that these trades are the main means of funding of destabilizing actions.

These additional elements of competence could cover the whole field of public order and peace in the territories, and lead to significant administrative reforms:

- Coordination of police stations at the level of response units;
- Coordination of police services in specialized sections (intelligence, against terrorism, arms trafficking, the fight against drugs);
- Coordination with ECOWAS;
- Unified Customs and community;
- Supreme Body of justice in the Union.

### **Regarding the second threat, namely food insecurity**

The food security objective has not been achieved, structural and globally over the last decade. The situation of rural areas inhabited by 70% of the population is therefore a priority in the struggle for development.

The Agricultural Policy of the Union (PAU) could be enhanced through the inclusion of productivity issues (technological choices), processing, a search for coherence ECOWAS / UEMOA, including the involvement of the CILSS and FAO, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity which allowed for

bold policies to improve agricultural production. Agricultural statistics already exist and are used to inform public policy dialogue. However, it should complement those relating to products called "orphans", those who are not the subject of international trade.

**Regarding the third threat, namely the massive youth unemployment,** statistical effort must focus on long term strategy to get trends, the seeds of change, opportunities for bifurcation, the shadows to serve as leverage to active policies, especially in terms of balance between training and employment.

The urgency to make rapid progress requires rationalization in the WAEMU, investment in technical and vocational education, higher education and research. It remains to massively strengthen the PACER (support program for regional centres of excellence) based on the experience of Eastern and Southern Africa. It is also time to rethink education to facilitate the emergence of middle sections (technicians) by integrating cultural aspect, teacher training, and the use of ICT.

**Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Participants,**

As you can see, the sub-regional and even regional challenge is at the heart of our vision of development and the emergence of the African continent. To meet this challenge, the national level should certainly not be overlooked, because it is our ability to put the statistics for development of our respective countries, as appropriate to estimate the potential of emergence of Africa, an estimation based on reliable indicators. This is why the statistics are at the heart of public policy evaluation and long term strategy that we are calling for.

In this respect, let me recall that the African continent was not able to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), despite the significant efforts that have been made. As you know, the eight MDGs goals were broken down into 21 targets themselves reflected in 51 indicators. With the transition to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we truly change of scale in terms of the challenges related to the collection, processing and data availability.

Indeed, we are now in the presence of 17 goals declined in 169 targets and the monitoring should require the development of indicators by countries, in accordance with the national policies. These indicators should be, for some, be consolidated by regions, and globally. The objective 17 on the strengthening of the means and the revival of the global partnership for sustainable development includes a target on support to developing countries for the production of "good quality, timely, reliable and disaggregated by income, gender, age, ethnicity, immigration status, disability, location and other relevant characteristics within national contexts." It also includes a target on promoting initiatives to measure sustainable development beyond GDP. The monitoring of SDGs needs a revolution in data and in this regard, you are in the front line, and we will not be too much for this new challenge in 2030.

## **I. The statistics at the heart of public policy evaluation and long term strategy**

### **Macroeconomics in the heart of the evaluation effort of public policies**

West African states, particularly those of the WAEMU, have made significant efforts to streamline the management of their public finances and consolidation of the macroeconomic framework in general. As part of this ongoing process, the role of technical assistance, notably in statistics was decisive. This is the place to thank the OECD, through this wonderful initiative that is "PARIS21" which brings us together today, the various development partners, bilateral and multilateral, for their invaluable support in contributing to strengthen statistical capacity of national and sub-regional economic and financial administrations.

It should however be recognized that these joint efforts are not always crowned efforts, as evidenced by the postponement of the convergence of the economies of the WAEMU convergence which was originally scheduled to be effective 31 December 2013. This report, which follows other already intervened in the past, shows the difficulty of WAEMU states to respect the

convergence criteria they have set themselves with the support of development partners. I fear that the change last January in Cotonou of convergence criteria does not alter the case.

Two major lessons seem to me to be learned from this situation:

-The macroeconomic management in West Africa is struggling to juggle the need for the consolidation of public accounts and the need to obtain a sufficiently high growth rate in order to achieve sustainable poverty reduction. For example, the twin deficits (budget deficit and current account deficit of the balance of payments) appear repeatedly in states that engage in major investment programs, particularly in infrastructure, programs that are often presented as a Prior to the structural transformation of Africa. We would like to show in the case of Senegal and Togo among others;

- The multiplicity of shocks, external and internal, which WAEMU economies are subject to, random makes the impact of technical assistance efforts in the sub-region. For example, recurring climatic hazards, the world food crisis of 2008, the subprime crisis and its avatars, conflicts in Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Mali and currently the uncertainties prevailing in Burkina Faso, have had and continue to have a negative impact on the economic performance of these states and throughout the Union, despite the efforts made in improving macroeconomic governance.

In particular concerning statistical governance, regionalization terms of technical assistance seems to be the main challenge of partners involved in technical assistance to the financial administrations of the WAEMU zone. Indeed, the difficult transposition of WAEMU directives in the national legal systems of states -members of the Union reflects the imperative to have supranational legal instruments for greater enforceability, like regulations. However, such a policy can only succeed if development partners, notably through AFRITAC, AFRISTAT and other relevant institutional arrangements, and reach directly support massive scale, specialized bodies of the Union, like the Central Bank (BCEAO), the WAEMU Commission and the West African Development Bank (BOAD).

Meanwhile, an offensive communication campaign should be implemented in the Member States, the National Statistical Offices on their efforts to contribute to the effectiveness of a modern manager essential to effective economic emergence.

The challenge of the coming years will be to make sense of things, so that an objective evaluation of the results of both technical assistance and performance of statistical States can lead to adequate systems of "bonus-malus " so that model states can be justly rewarded and that those who show an obvious will to not progress cannot indefinitely play " free rider" of development aid.

### **Evaluate public policies to improve public action**

As we can see, we are in the heart of the issue of evaluation. Indeed, the evaluation of public policies in developing countries is a major challenge for economies and companies exposed to a multiplicity of shocks, often inducing a biased perception of the determinants of economic and social performance. Indeed, in the context of what is now called the "aid fatigue", a term used to characterize the structural weakness of performance against the immensity of the needs, the development partner community passed surreptitiously from measuring development to the measurement of the will of development. It is therefore necessary, dear friends statisticians in this room, to develop indicators to measure the will of development of your respective States!

You understand easily why more attention should be paid to evaluating the impact of public policies, in order either to clear the mixed results of the sectors of their intervention or to influence them in case of proven responsibility in poor economic and social performance, or to continue and amplify in case of success in the sectors under review.

Let us not forget that the assessment of public policies aimed at generating knowledge on public actions, including in their effects, with the dual purpose of allowing citizens to appreciate its value and help policymakers improve relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and impact. It thus

contributes to rationalizing public decision making to modernize the management of the administration and public services, and to make more efficient public spending. It simultaneously helps develop responsibility and internal and external accountability practices, as well as organizational learning. Finally, it participates in the parallel advancement of good governance and democratic debate at all levels of government. Compared to these major challenges, agree with me that the provision of information and quality of statistical data is of utmost importance.

In my country, Togo, the surveys of populations revealed four main expectations of the past in relation to the evaluation of public policies, expectations are challenges for the National Institute of Statistics and Economic and Demographic Studies (INSEED) newly created:

1. Taking into account all socio-professional categories in the evaluation process, in order to give this process a high participatory;
2. The need for accountability and transparency in public policy evaluation process;
3. Practical application of the requirement of the results and recommendations of evaluations conducted;
4. good practice of evaluators and quality control of evaluations conducted, if possible, the establishment of an institutional assessment of the evaluators.

**Finally, ladies and gentlemen, dear participants,** I see a final statistical challenge in Africa, not least, it is their ability to inform us about Africa's future, and consequently help us define Africa we want. In other words, statistics must be at the heart of long term strategy exercises are being conducted in most African states, organizations sub-regional, regional and international.

As for Togo, as outgoing Minister of Public Policy Evaluation and Long term Strategy I did so in my office that statistics can help us in the context of the prospective study "Vision Togo 2030" in two directions:

- Produce and / or enhance knowledge about the past, present and future of the country;

- Provide strategic management of the transformation that is deemed necessary and desirable.

To summarize, what is expected of forward thinking is, ultimately, a stronger mobilization of all of our states around a number of shared objectives that have been determined based on a vision a future to build. And in this regard, statistics can be a justice of the various readings of the past, present and especially the future of the continent

**In conclusion**, I simply say that is ultimately meet three requirements in terms of production, the availability and effective use of statistical data in Africa.

### **Act fast**

- The area is unstable and the threats are real.
- Time is counted.

### **Funding priorities**

- Develop a comprehensive view of funding requirements
- Prioritize programs and funding sources
- Establish monitoring / evaluation tools for rigorous management at all levels

### **Dare to change the institutional organization**

- To get to institutions that can enable full effect to the principles of subsidiarity and sharing by specifying the respective responsibilities at different levels (federal, national, and sub-national, if any trans-border)
- To change the statistics of a supervisory role to a role of stimulation, decision and management in specific areas of competence to define such as peace and security on the mainland, food security, macroeconomic domain and finally training and youth employment.

Thank you.