



African Union Restricted EMIS Technical Committee Meeting

7-9 April 2014 Accra, Ghana



Association for the
Development
of Education
in Africa

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Abbreviations

ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AfDB	African Development Bank
APHRC	Africa Population Health Research Centre
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
BMZ	Bundesministerium Für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development).
CIEFFA	Centre International pour l'éducation des Filles et des Femmes en Afrique
COMEDAF	Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union
DFID	Department for International Development
EAC	East African Community
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems
ESARO	Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, GmbH (German: German Society for International Cooperation, Ltd.)
HRST	Human Resources, Science and Technology
IPED	Pan African Institute for Education Development
LURITS	Learning Unit Record Information and Tracking System
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NSDS	National Strategy for Development of Statistics
NSOs	National Statistical Offices
PASEC	Programme d'Analyse des Systèmes Educatifs des Pays
RECS	Regional Economic Communities
RTC	Restricted Technical Committee
SACMEQ	Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SADC	Southern African Development Cooperation
SHaSA	Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa
STC	Specialized Technical Committee
TOR	Terms Of Reference
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
TVSD	Technical Vocational and Skills development
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States of Agency for International Development
WGEMPS	Working Group on Education Management and Policy Support

Communiqué of the AU Restricted EMIS Technical Committee

We, the technical EMIS experts from the AU Restricted EMIS Technical Committee, represented by the countries of Nigeria, Cameroon, Ghana, Namibia and South Africa, the regional economic community of ECCAS, and partners of APHRC, and SACMEQ, the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), UNICEF ESARO, CIEFFA, AU Education, Statistics and Youth Divisions all of whom participated at the above captioned Meeting in Accra, Ghana 7-9th April;

Acknowledging that the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa seeks to address a key challenge facing Africa's ability to report on its human resource development achievements and challenges by building national, regional and continental EMIS in general as well as on the key performance areas of the Plan;

Acknowledging that given the complexity of the tasks, the multiple role-players involved and the high level engagement of expertise in EMIS and statistics required, the AU HRST created the AU EMIS Restricted Technical Committee (RTC) that would make expert recommendations on the implementation of the AU's EMIS strategy and link regional and country strategies with the continental objectives;

Recognizing that AU RTC aims to meet every year where agreed outputs generated by various partners are reviewed and approved and strategies for the coming year are set.

Cognizant of the financial constraints facing the activities of the AU EMIS continental strategy and the continued work of this committee,

Noting that there has been no director of the AU Observatory (IPED) for more than two years and this has slowed the progress of monitoring of human resource development and challenges in the region,

Noting that the AU Plan of Action on Education is ending, and that discussions on a new agenda are imminent,

Noting the growing need to measure quality learning outcomes in early childhood education to tertiary (all levels) and the increased priorities given to this area in the post 2015 period,

Noting the emphasis placed on a data revolution implied by the post 2015 discourse,

Endorsing the next steps:

1. Modify the terms of reference of the committee;
2. Ensure the recommendations of the committee are placed on the agenda of COMEDAF or its Bureau;
3. Initiate dialogue among national, regional and international learning assessment processes to

- reach a common position on the most appropriate methods and measures in Africa;
4. Initiate dialogue on the testing of the AU Youth Division TVET monitoring tool;
 5. Undertake the AU Pilot on challenging indicators in four countries.
 6. Post the AU Outlook on Education Database with national statistics online.

Now recommend to the AU Education and Statistics Divisions to:

1. Allocate budgetary resources for the AU Restricted EMIS Technical Committee to ensure that it meets its annual commitments;
2. Extend the membership of the Committee to include partners such as Global Partnership for Education, APHRC and World Bank and strengthen relationships with existing partners and regional economic communities;
3. Advocate the importance of providing coordination and funding of EMIS activities in RECs by the Commissioner of the AU HRST. Propose a REC focal point for AU activities;
4. Assist in resource mobilization of the EMIS capacity building strategies for RECs.
5. Facilitate a policy dialogue forum on learning assessments.
6. Support and fund the AU Pilot of new and challenging indicators to extend this project to a total of five countries;
7. Facilitate with AU Youth Division a policy dialogue forum on measuring TVET.
8. Commit sufficient resources to ensure the posting of the AU Outlook on Education database on the AU statistics website;

Agreed on this 9th day of April, 2014 in Accra, Ghana

Background

The AU's Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology, under whose mandate the AU Observatory falls, appointed ADEA's Working Group on Education Management and Policy Support (WGEMPS) as the lead agency to support both the Observatory and lead the Plan of Action's EMIS priority.

This work began in 2008 with the conceptualization of the role of the observatory and the development and design of a regionally based EMIS strategy that would be rolled out to the continent. Key milestones in this strategy were initially endorsed by large groupings of member States.

The EMIS Restricted Technical Committee's primary role is to provide technical advice and quality assurance to the African Union's Observatory on methodological, logistical and feasibility issues related to the implementation of the EMIS priority area of the AU Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for African. The committee is limited to AU specialized institutions, key representatives of Regional Economic Communities (RECs), implementing national representatives sitting on the AU Bureau and development partners having expertise and knowledge in the area of education statistics. The Restricted Technical Committee has been meeting once a year since its formation, however financial constraints lead to the postponement of the 2013 meeting to early 2014.

Objectives of the meeting

The overall key objective of the meeting was to review the process and outcomes of EMIS development initiatives on the continent with a specific focus on COMEDAF reporting process and the post -2015 agenda and recommend the way forward.

The objectives of the AU EMIS Restricted Technical Committee meeting were to review issues related to:

- The reporting to the Committee of Ministers of Education of Africa (COMEDAF VI)
- The outcomes of recent developments of the AU strategy on harmonizing statistics across all sectors (SHaSA) and issues raised by national statistical offices
- Developments for launching the AU Education Outlook Database
- Findings of AU Pilot on New Indicators undertaken in Zimbabwe on indicators related to ECD, TVSD and Higher Education
- Findings from a report issued by the Centre for Global Development/APHRC on differences between administrative survey data and household survey data.
- UIS's African database and new indicator developments
- AU's Youth Division's new indicators for monitoring youth and TVSD

- German BACKUP Initiative – Education in Africa (BACKUP Education) available financial resources for planning, finance and M&E initiatives at the country and regional level
- CIEFFA 's monitoring of women and girls education and training
- SACMEQ's update on alignments in learner achievement initiatives across the continent
- The SADC Peer Reviews on EMIS Norms and Standards in Swaziland and Botswana
- The EMIS initiatives in member states present namely Cameroun , Ghana and Nigeria , South Africa and Namibia
- The EMIS initiatives for the Regional Economic Communities of SADC, EAC , ECOWAS and ECCAS
- Updates on the regional and continental ECD initiatives by UNICEF
- The implications of the Data Revolution of the post 2015 agenda for education.

The meeting was divided into four thematic sessions and various presentations were done which were followed by plenary discussions

Attendance

The meeting was organized by the Human Resource, Science and Technology Department (HRST) and the Economic Affairs Department of the African Union Commission (AU) with the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)'s Working Group on Education Management and Policy Support (WGEMPS) who acts as the Committee's secretariat.

Chaired by the AU representatives, including the AU's Youth Division and CIEFFA, the meeting was attended by key stakeholders drawn from various constituencies. EMIS representatives from member states of Ghana, South Africa, Namibia, Cameroun and Nigeria were present. Partners such as UIS, SACMEQ, UNICEF, SACMEQ and APHRC presented papers. Only ECCAS was present from the Regional Economic Communities, however despite the absence of SADC, EAC and ECOWAS, their EMIS progress reports were sent and presented to the Committee. SADC EMIS norms and standard peer review process was reported by South Africa and Namibia.

Apologies for non-participation were tendered by the African Development Bank (AfDB), ECOWAS, PASEC, SADC, EAC, ECOWAS and UNECA.

Funding for the meeting

This meeting was co-funded by the AUC's Economic Affairs' Statistic Division and the German BACKUP Initiative – Education in Africa, a programme implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The German BACKUP Initiative – Education in Africa (BACKUP Education) provided resources for the meeting following a request by ADEA WGEMPS and the AU

and attended as observer.

Proceedings

Introduction and opening.

Opening remarks made by Ms Angela Arnott, Coordinator of the ADEA WGEMPS, introduced the participants to the meeting objectives, expected outputs as well as the logistics.

Welcoming remarks were made by Mr Divine Ayidzoe, the Director of SHRIMPR, Ministry of Education, Ghana. In his welcoming remarks he said he noted that Ghana has developed EMIS systems to inform policy decisions, and he is collectively finding lasting solutions to challenges facing EMIS in Ghana.

Mr Jose Awong Alene, from the African Union Commission, Economic Affairs Department in the Statistics Division made opening remarks on behalf of the AUC. He thanked the host country for support, the participants for coming and the GIZ for availing funds which contributed to the success of the meeting.

He said that the AUC understands the role played by statistics in policy formulation and decision making process. He reminded the participants that EMIS is the key priority area in the Second Decade of Education for Africa and that ADEA is the lead partner in the implementation of this priority area. He informed the participants that AU has developed a position paper on the Post-2015 agenda which also covers education.

Mr Nazar Eltahir, from the HRST Education Division of the AUC , informed the meeting that the forthcoming COMEDAF VI conference was going to be the last of its kind as it is likely to be replaced by a new framework of Specialized Technical Committees (STC) and whereby education will fall under the STC on Education, Science and Technology.

Ms Angela Arnott, Coordinator of the ADEA Working Group that acts as the secretariat to this Committee, initiated a discussion on the legitimacy of the Committee and the need for continued existence of the AU RT committee given that its existence was attached to monitoring the AU Plan of Action for Education in the Second Decade which ends in 2014 coupled with the fact that there is going to be a transition from the COMEDAF meetings to the STCs. Participants were asked on the future relevance of this committee within this context. It was noted that there will be another general AU education meeting held in 2015 to discuss the post 2015 agenda and how education prioritizes its objectives in the Africa Agenda 2063.

The technical committee meeting noted that it is premature to terminate the committee during this era when we are about to conclude the Second Decade of Education in 2015. The consensus of the meeting was that the AU EMIS Restricted Technical Committee should continue with a modified terms of reference so as to ensure a broader spread of partners and include partners such as the World Bank, GPE, UNECA, AfDB and APHRC. It was noted that although COMEDAF will change its

form into the STCs, the purpose of monitoring and evaluating continental and regional goals still remains. South Africa further informed the meeting that the life span of the committee cannot come to an end especially when the **AU is planning an information hub in Pretoria on Economic and Social Statistics**. This is the de facto rationale for the continued existence of this committee. The AUC said there will probably be an agreement to introduce the third decade of education for Africa which depends on all stakeholders. Further the AU EMIS restricted committee reports to Director Generals of National Statistical Offices as the continental education working group and ADEA, its secretariat are among the selected key role players in promoting SHaSA for the education sector.

1. Continental Initiatives

ADEA on COMEDAF

ADEA Working Group representatives briefed the meeting on the process of producing the monitoring and evaluation preparations it is making for the COMEDAF meeting soon to be held. However, the presenters did not hide the challenges experienced about data availability to develop the report. They also thanked UIS who provided the source data used for the five regional and a continental review report for the COMEDAF biannual meeting.

The meeting agreed that the COMEDAF reporting process is being bottlenecked by the data blanks in most of the indicators and if the situation does not improve the evaluation of the Second Decade will also be a challenge given that data for 2015 can only be comprehensively available in 2017. The UIS also responded saying that this situation is the same for the whole world taking into account the time required for the processing of the data, and suggested the use of data projections. It was further noted that learner achievement is going to be a priority in the post -2015 agenda. It was noted that while access was an important variable from ECD through to tertiary education programming the new paradigm shift is now on increasing access with quality as measured by learning outcomes.

AU Statistics Division

The AU Statistics Division presented an update on the role of SHaSA in coordinating national statistics. The meeting highlighted the essential link between SHaSA and AU EMIS Restricted Technical Committee in coordinating the national education statistics. The cooperation between the two is believed to be essential in organizing the statistical information at national level. The Committee noted the challenges that exist in the countries regarding the coordination of National Education Statistical information based on a separate study made in Zimbabwe and observations from other countries.

AU/ADEA Pilot Study

A pilot study conducted in Zimbabwe on new and challenging AU education indicators was presented by ADEA. The purpose of the study and the findings and challenging issues were shared. The dire need for coordination of statistical reports at national level was underscored. Clarity of definitions of terms and concepts were identified and it was indicated that it is necessary to open dialogue and reach an agreement and common understanding on how to use a term or concept. Moreover, it was accentuated that the report be presented to regional EMIS technical committees

not only to make them aware of what is being discussed at higher level but also to prepare them on time for inclusion of the selected indicators in the census instrument for collection. The meeting was also in agreement to continue the pilot study with an additional four sample countries as planned initially but curtailed because of lack of finance.

AU Outlook on Education database

ADEA presented on updates to the AU Outlook on Education database, which is a customized database for monitoring the African Union's Plan of Action for Education in the Second Decade. It has over 137 data variables covering all member States from 2006 to 2012. Member States and AUC have been separately trained on using the database as a basis for developing country, regional and continental reports for monitoring the Plan of Action. The data source has largely been that of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and UNICEF.

It was noted that last year Heads of States urged the African Union Commission to commit itself to collecting national data directly from member States to create African-based continental databases. This is a significant departure from previous practices where statistics were produced internationally by other agencies.

In the light of the above, the African Union Statistics Division and Human Resources, Science and Technology Department, in collaboration with ADEA, are pursuing a plan to launch the database online so that countries can upload their national statistics directly. ADEA is exploring hosting arrangements with the India based DevInfo Support Group after a successful testing of the database with its local area network in Harare the findings of which were presented to the AU Statistics and Education divisions during their working visit to Harare. Some key issues under consideration include protecting the African Union identity through a unique domain name, having real-time data entry, and the need for a multi-stage quality assurance process by AUC and ADEA WGEMPS. This initiative could be a major breakthrough in addressing the availability of timely education data in Africa.

AU Youth Division

The African Union Youth Division presented its new continental TVET monitoring tool as well as its programs and ambitions to create partnership among stakeholders for monitoring youth developments. ADEA indicated interests to work collaboratively with the AU Youth Division in developing and monitoring indicators in their field. It was noted that partnerships not only allow the sharing of experience but also the expertise to avoid duplication. TVSD represents a special challenge to organize and systematize the collection, compiling and processing, and dissemination of its source data as the sector is so fragmented and largely situated in the private sector. It was suggested that sample surveys were more appropriate for the collection of sector wide TVSD data than census surveys. The ADEA Working Group on Education Management and Policy Support informed the meeting that it had done some work in the area of TVSD which the AU Youth Charter can benefit from. It was suggested that the AU Youth Charter to use the age range which corresponds to the age bracket which is being used by the NSOs.

CIEFFA

CIEFFA, the AU organization monitoring women and girls education, made their presentation, noting the two monitoring and evaluation workshops undertaken as part of capacity building in EMIS in Ouagadougou and Nairobi as major activities undertaken. The presenter noted that CIEFFA has commissioned a data analysis on gender. The data source was organized through IPED office. He acknowledged the contribution made by ADEA's Working Group in the CIEFFA indicators.

2. Regional Initiatives

ECCAS

The ECCAS representative focused on two events that took place between 2010 and 2012 as the major EMIS activities undertaken in recent years. The first was a Regional Workshop in Yaounde (September 2010) where ADEA presented a report assessing the EMIS capacities of Member States. The second was the Ministerial Conference organized by ECCAS in Yaounde in 2011 on EMIS developments and recommendations. ECCAS also organized a meeting with AfDB to request for financial support on EMIS. The presenter noted that the low level of commitment in terms of contribution from member states has negatively impacted on EMIS activities in the region.

The discussions in this REC session were limited given that only one REC was present in this meeting and the presentations were read on behalf of the absent RECs. ECCAS indicated it plans to invite the AUC and ADEA to its upcoming education data validation workshop

EAC

The highlights for the EMIS initiative for EAC were given. EAC launched its AU's EMIS initiative in Kampala, Uganda in 2011. Since then a three-phased strategy has been developed: assessment of capacities of member countries (2012), development of capacity building (2013), and advocacy work and sharing of best practices (2014) and proposed implementation of a peer review of a country compliance on the regional EMIS Norms and Standards– which is planned for 2014.

It was noted that the 26th Council of Ministers approved the formation of EMIS Technical Committee to oversee the process of harmonization of EMIS systems within the region. The committee has developed a strategy to harmonize the EMIS system across all the levels of education: pre-primary, primary, secondary, technical and vocational education and training, special needs education, teacher education, and non-formal, adult and continuing education. There was no mention of higher education.

The EAC council of ministers directed the establishment of a regional Examination Board responsible for operational structure for examination. This includes the establishment of regional examiners database, guidelines for recruitment and monitoring the performance of teachers within member state. Review of financial policies and guidelines and strengthen quality and equity of the system for Teacher Education.

EAC has a plan to form centers of excellence in the following areas.

- * Tertiary and University
- * Culture, Language, Sports and Arts institution
- * Curriculum Development/Assessment
- * Special Needs Education
- * Science, Technology and Innovations

The purpose of centers of excellence is to improve delivery of services and enhance existing training and service provision and develop innovative approaches. It is hoped that the officers responsible for The AU EMIS Committee will take note of this plan and prepare to formulate statistical information necessary for planning and monitoring purposes. Note that EAC did not manage to attend the meeting but sent a report which is incorporated here.

ECOWAS

The brief on the EMIS sensitization workshop in 2010 at Lome was mentioned as one of the achievements in the ECOWAS region. Common challenges were identified and recommendations were made at the workshop. Moreover, EMIS assessment survey in 2010 has identified strengths and weaknesses of Research and Planning directorates of MoEs in member states one of which is lack of coordination among stakeholders in charge of education and training. The formation of EMIS Technical Committee and the engagement in EMIS Norms and Standards review exercise was also mentioned. Note that ECOWAS did not manage to attend the meeting but sent a report which is incorporated here.

SADC

SADC peer review report on EMIS Norms and Standards in the two countries (Swaziland and Botswana) were presented. It was noted by the presenters that it was a highly successful process which not only educated the national teams on best practices but informed the reviewers on how to deal with certain issues they had not previously encountered. The reviewers were drawn from other SADC countries (Namibia, Zambia, Mozambique and South Africa), ADEA Working Group on Education Management and Policy Support. Member of the reviewers from South Africa and Namibia highlighted the findings which were reported to their respective ministries and will be forwarded to the next SADC Ministers of Education meeting. Country mutual support was also mentioned as an important step towards country to country support for sustainability. Mozambique is the next country to be reviewed for EMIS compliance with the regional norms and standards.

3. National initiatives

South Africa

South Africa presented a LURITS system (learner unit record information and tracking system) for planning, resourcing and monitoring of education system from early childhood to grade 12. The system is based on unit records of pupils and teachers. A unit record system marks a significant change in the way in which the National EMIS (Education Management Information System) collects

data to support planning, monitoring and decision-making in the system.

The new unit record method of data collection houses the individual data records of each learner and is regularly updated with changes and movements. By housing unit record data, the EMIS is capable of providing accurate enrolment figures for provisioning purposes, be able to answer complex questions on relationships between different data variables and provide accurate demographic profiles of the trends and patterns within the education system. The EMIS is also capable of examining and describing both nationwide trends happening across provinces and institutions, as well as developments within provinces and within institutions.

In addition, the new system is able to integrate the entire EMIS from school level right up to national level as the single true data source will be embedded in the school record keeping system. The system was developed by State Information Technology Agency (SITA) in 2008 and moved to the production environment in 2011.

It is important to note that any system (including LURITS) requires proper continuous training of users and training of regular maintenance staff. The pre-requisite for the LURITS to work efficiently is the roll out of the school administration systems in all schools. South Africa is supplying schools with the school administration system free of charge is called South African School Administration and Management System (SA-SAMS). This school management system is maintained and supported by SITA. About 93% of the Public Ordinary schools uploaded their learners to LURITS system to date by December 2013 Higher education institutions use their own system.

Nigeria

The Nigerian presenter explained the history of EMIS development in Nigeria which was assisted by DFID among other partners. Nigeria had an EMIS backlog of several years despite the support it got from partners. However, some years later Nigeria managed to publish the backlog statistics in 2010. The previous publication was in 2005 which makes a gap of five years. In 2014 there was a presidential directive that was issued to the Federal Ministry of Education to carry out a holistic head count of all primary and secondary schools in Nigeria, public, private, registered or not registered. UNICEF assisted in the development and refinement of the instrument for data collection. EMIS desks were established in all 36 states. Nigeria conducted Education Sector Mapping in collaboration with Research Triangle Institute of USAID.

The Federal Government held data harmonization exercises with EMIS officers of all the states and other stakeholders including development partners. Nigeria has a decentralized data collection and processing system in place. However, because of lack of funds a comprehensive data compilation could not be realized. The presenter did not hide the fact that data is highly politicized in Nigeria. Essentially this means schools/institutions and states inflate data in order to secure higher budgets. The budget allocation is based on the data (population size, enrolment size etc). Currently Nigeria is

preparing for head count of all children in primary, secondary schools-public and private including registered and non-registered schools.

EMIS Nigeria is also coordinating other levels of Education – Tertiary, Nomadic, Non-Formal, Examination Bodies into the National EMIS framework for National and international reporting. The presenter noted that the high politicization of education data led to the loss of trust among users of statistical information which damages the quality of statistical information.

Ghana

Ghana presented the collection and processing of education statistics based on its yearly EMIS cycle which included the methodology used and what it covers. The presenter mentioned the major users, achievements, challenges and the way forward.

Data entry is done at district level and then sent to the center. The center analyses and produces reports. Feedback is given to regions, districts and the schools. The collection covers all public schools and all known private schools Ghana has a time line for instrument review, census date, data entry and merging/cleaning and reporting.

Addressing the data quality assurance by preparing guidelines for completion of instrument, holding workshops for discussion and learning from each other, incorporation of validation rules in data capturing systems, close supervision of officers and directors and clarifying through telephones and emails.

The unit computes some indicators for use such as enrolment ratios and percentages including available seating and writing places. It also takes part in capacity building rendering technical support to metro, municipal and district offices. The unit produces an annual statistical digest and is attending to international requests.

The challenges include the limitation of the software used, lack of computer maintenance, and high staff turn-over, financial constraint, challenges relating to internet and telephone accessibility, lack of cooperation from some institutions including private schools, creating of new districts. The presenter did not hide the challenges relating to population figures.

Cameroon

Cameroon presented the life cycle of annual statistics from collection to analysis including challenges encountered. The data collection instruments for pre-primary, primary and secondary levels. The collection system does not include day care children it was pointed out that the process of collection, distribution and cross checking of data at various levels has led to the production and publication of statistical yearbook. The collection process lasts for a month.

The coverage includes government schools, lay private, community schools, government teacher training colleges, nursing schools and pre-school centers. The three instruments for pre-primary, primary, and secondary are implemented for the data collection.

The challenges, in addition to common challenges like financial constraint, and manpower requirement in quantity and quality, distance problem, geographical localization of French schools and difficulty in categorization of inclusive education (education for refugees, handicrafts, minorities etc.)

4. Partner initiatives

African Population and Health Research Center

The Center for African Population and Health Research (APHRC) is involved in improving the quality, availability, timeliness, and use of basic economic and demographic data to inform policy. The presenter highlighted the vision and mission of the center. He pointed out that the challenges facing Africa is, limitation in technical know-how, qualified human resources, and barriers created by misaligned political and institutional incentives within governments.

APHRC has teamed up with the Centre for Global Development and hopes to address data challenges in Africa. It has formed a working group under it called “Data for African Development” which is working to identify the underlying political and economic issues related to data collection, analysis and use of data for policy-making. APHRC is currently engaged in the following three main areas:

1. Partnerships with universities /initiatives to improve graduate training in sub-Saharan Africa
2. Support to African and non-African researchers working on African issues
3. Training workshops to enhance generation and utilization of scientific evidence.

The section on Education focused on access and exclusion zones, early grade learning, transition to secondary school, and improving Learning Outcomes.

The data for Africa working group explores the root causes of slow data progress in Africa –focusing on political economy to identify challenges and strategies to address limitations and provide specific, actionable recommendations. The current challenges as the center has identified:

- National Statistics Offices have limited independence and unstable budgets
- Misaligned incentives and limited data quality checks and balances
- Donor priorities dominate national priorities
- Limited data access and use

The presenter noted “misaligned incentives” currently affecting data production in Africa:

- Incentives between financial allocations and the production of data from various line ministries
- Incentives to suppress or misreport certain national level data
- Relationships between donors and country governments
- Systems that reward certain activities more than others

Further it was noted that donor priorities dominate national priorities.

- Donor priorities and restrictions on how money is spent don't always help with the production of “good data”.
- Micro-oriented survey fieldwork and one-off impact evaluations
- Reluctance paying for salaries, instead paying for per diems, computers and field work for specific surveys
- In 2011, just over half of all donor programs were said to be aligned with National Statistical Development Strategies (NSDS)

APRC did not hide the fact that many NSOs and other government departments are hesitant to publish data or lack the capacity to publish. The presenter suggested the following solutions:

- Build institutions that can produce accurate, unbiased data
- Improve data access and accuracy and coordination
- Leverage regional/multilaterals to build NSO capacity

There was intense debate on the issue which APHRC raised on the misaligned and perverse incentives to over-report enrolment data by as much as 20%. The consensus was that it cannot be confidently concluded that survey data is more accurate than census data in all countries. Further it was noted that the difference between attendance ratio and enrolment rates are expected since by definition the two terms are also different.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics

UIS presented its new developments on indicators and shared the African database module designed specifically for the needs of the AU. The presenter addressed the issue of UIS using UNPD population data and noted that UIS does not have the mandate to collect population data nationally and further that vital registration covers only 7 percent of the population.

The national census versus UN population data debate ensued. The committee was not comfortable with the UIS calculating education indicators using population data sourced from UNPD which is very

different from that which they source from their national statistical offices. It was noted that countries should ensure that they harmonize census data collection and projection methodologies so that they use their own national population data. Moreover the census process in many countries is technically assisted by the UNFPA which is itself a UN organization and the same UN mandates the UIS to use UNPD population for calculation of indicators.

It was noted that the UIS held a meeting with SACMEQ, PASEC and other international bodies to work on developing working measures of reading. The learning assessments are very expensive to undertake but it is something that all education statisticians are becoming more and more interested in. Each assessment agency has a different methodology. SACMEQ focuses on the curriculum taught. PISA focuses on what are the likely competencies for certain age groups. There is a need to recalibrate the assessments against each other. They could take a set of standard questions across all assessment surveys – common links. Some countries that do more than one assessment at the same time then can make some judgments on comparability.

UNICEF

The UNICEF presenter, representing Early Childhood Development, explained the domains of child development in stages and the important role of the family in early child development. These domains included physical, socio-emotional, cognitive, language and communications skills development. He noted that the current paradigm shift in ECD discourse is from quantity or access to quality education for ECD – with a focus on the quality of teachers.

The current research topics, he noted, are summarized under the following bullets.

- Is Nazar ready for school?
- Is the school ready for Nazar?
- Are Nazar's parents and his community ready to get Nazar ready for school?

Is the child ready for school? The presenter listed currently used indicators and explained one core indicator for ECD and to be added to the list of AU selected indicators. The recommended indicators are given below:

1. Percentage of grade 1 learners who are “ready to learn” as nationally defined.
2. Percentage of classroom/homes that meet “quality learning environment”
3. Percentage of schools/communities friendly to young children
4. Number of innovative integrated, and coordinated programs for young children

It is obvious that the source information for the recommended indicators have to be sought through research undertakings. Moreover, the definitions of terms like integrated, coordinated etc need to be discussed and common understanding established.

German BACKUP Initiative – Education in Africa (BACKUP Education)

The German BACKUP Initiative – Education in Africa (BACKUP Education) is designed to address funding gaps in planning, finance and M&E particularly with respect to countries receiving Global Partnership for Education (GPE) funding. BACKUP stands for **B**uilding **A**lliance, **C**reating **K**nowledge, and **U**dating **P**artners in the education sector in countries in Africa.

The BACKUP Education representative highlighted the different options and requirements when applying for funding. The presenter noted that the BACKUP Education is demand driven and aims to offer flexible and timely responses to short-term, medium-term and long-term technical and financial support needs. Eligible partners are ministries of education, regional networks and national civil society organisations that request support in the context of applying for or implementing and monitoring grants from the GPE Fund. The presenter encouraged the participants to look into the BACKUP Education’s website: <http://www.giz.de/expertise/html/2427.html> and contact the BACKUP Education in case of funding needs.

SACMEQ

The global shift of paradigm from access to quality and attainment of cognitive skills has highlighted the importance of monitoring learner achievements in Africa. Consequently the growing need to measure quality learning outcomes in all education levels and the increased priorities given to this area in the post -2015 period becomes constantly indispensable. SACMEQ informed the meeting that their main objectives are to be able to offer capacity development in research, to conduct research and to disseminate the research findings within the broader scope of learner assessments in Africa.

The presenter noted that the ultimate goals of the projects undertaken by SACMEQ is for countries to make informed policy-making decisions; the reform of educational systems and capacity development on the basis of their learner assessments. He gave an outline of the projects they have undertaken which are given below;

Project	Year conducted
SACMEQ I	1995 – 1999
SACMEQ II	2000 – 2004
SACMEQ III	2006 – 2011
SACMEQ IV	2012 – 2014

SACMEQ noted that the future goals of SACMEQ are to improve cooperation in learning assessment by lobbying for a continental policy document on cooperation with organizations outside Africa; inviting new members; increasing funding of learning assessment; using results of learning assessment; and having more partnerships in data utilization.

Post 2015 Agenda

Delivering a data revolution in Africa

The presenter on this topic, from UNECA was not able to attend so ADEA facilitated the discussion. The deadlines for the conclusion of the Millennium Development Goals, the Education for All goals and the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa are fast approaching, hence it is important to review the

response of EMIS to the post-2015 agenda in education. The Muscat Agreement¹ on new proposed post 2015 global education goals and targets ensuring equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning by 2030. There are seven new global education targets which all need indicators to be defined and developed.

The post-2015 agenda in general is calling for a data revolution across all sectors. It was noted that it is up to the African statistical community in partnership with other critical development partners to ensure that Africa is not left behind, but instead a critical partner in defining and leading the revolution across the continent. A Data Revolution in Africa should embrace a diverse range of data sources, tools, and new technologies and engage diverse data communities to provide disaggregated data for innovation. In addition it would provide a wide range of evidence for decision-making; and provide information for Africa to own its narrative. This would be an inclusive way of looking at the use of data and users of data.

Member of the committee highlighted that a collaborative approach to a data revolution in Africa must include national, regional and continental- level engagement with the implication that all African EMIS experts should be consistently engaged. The African data revolution agenda should include the issues below:

- (a) New deal for data between donors and countries;
- (b) More accurate, timely and accessible data (open data, transparency, metadata);
- (c) Need for fixing the basics, as a solid foundation for new and exciting technologies.

ADEA noted that the initiatives of the AU EMIS RTC in promoting the benchmarking of EMIS quality through the regional assessment frameworks of the EMIS Norms and Standards will go a long way to addressing the policy frameworks, the resourcing levels, the appropriate methodologies and dissemination practices needed to support a data revolution in education statistics. Additionally, an online AU Outlook on Education database should support increasing availability and transparency of national education statistics continent wide.

Summary

Despite efforts made to strengthen EMIS development in countries, challenges remain which include a lack of financial, human, equipment resources and a lack of coordination among different stakeholders at national level. The latter problem of coordination at national level was highlighted by a number of countries.

Moreover, a low response rate from non-government education institutions is coming up repeatedly as a challenge. Besides politicization of statistical information is due to use of the same for budget allocation which resulted in inflating figures to get more money allocation. These issues are problems that need to be taken up at higher level.

Best practices noted

A number of good practices have been observed during this meeting. Some of them are listed below.

¹ June 2014 EFA Report

1. Most countries are updating their master list or directory of individual schools and education institutions annually – this is key to calculate comprehensive coverage by the annual school census survey
2. Some countries are using a unique number to identify individual students and teachers to track the movement of them within the system right through to tertiary levels.
3. Some countries have realized the importance of linking with other departments especially Human resources department to get information on teachers and other staff.
4. Countries have realized an essential step in information dissemination is to send statistical feedback to provinces, districts and schools/institutions – this will improving the quality of information.
5. Some countries are producing school report cards which contains basic information profiling the school against other schools by district and nationally.

Communiqué

At the end of the meeting a communiqué was drawn and read and approved.

Appendix I: Evaluation of Meeting

There were 19 participants who completed the meeting evaluation form. The summary results indicate that the logistical arrangements, on the whole, were satisfactory. Seven of the participants have indicated it was effective. However a few participants raised the issue of time management. One person has indicated a different venue would be preferable.

The content of the meeting was judged as satisfactory (13), while 6 participants rated the content as being excellent. Most participants noted that hearing country challenges and experience sharing, and issuing of communiqué were the most useful sessions. A few noted that the most useful sessions to them were the LURTIS and the COMEDAF presentations. Two of the 19 who responded did not appreciate the presentation on the AU pilot indicators. On the whole participants liked the content and indicated how it can be improved in the future. The facilitation was also considered satisfactory.

The participants were asked if there is a continued reason for this committee to exist. All have responded positively that the committee should continue with a modified terms of reference. The committee can play the role of advisory body to the AUC overlooking the development of EMIS and the AU observatory on the continent. Some have suggested the committee should look into the post 2015 education agenda, more EMIS capacity building, playing an active role in AU observatory, assisting in fund mobilization and accordingly advise the AUC.

Appendix II: List of Participants

	No	Name	Organization	DESIGNATION	Contact number	E-Mail
Member States	2	Mr Bheki MPANZA	Department of Basic Education, Pretoria, South Africa	Chief Director of Financial Planning, Information and Management Systems	+27828882501	Mpanza.B@dbe.gov.za
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	E	a				
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