

REMOULDING AFRICA'S NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM TOWARDS DEVELOPMENT RESULTS: Lessons From South Africa, Nigeria and Uganda

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SYNOPSIS

The importance of statistical data in tracking development plans, evaluating public accountability and increasing transparency in policy making has gained recognition among stakeholders in Africa's development. Consequently, Africa's National Statistical Systems have been encouraged to deliver better official statistics in terms of data coverage, relevance, periodicity, quality, appropriate disaggregation and dissemination within specific timelines.

Key findings: The majority of African countries are lagging behind in terms of establishing effective statistical systems that would support development planning and decision making process. The study adopts a comprehensive appraisal of statistical reforms in three top ranked African countries namely; Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda, and predicated their success on statistical legislations; autonomy of statistical bodies; increased advocacy; enhancement of human capital and a virile synergy between statistical systems and development plans.

Key Lesson: The key lesson that can be retained from this case study is that, with the appropriate leadership and capacities, African countries can significantly improve their statistical systems, make them user-centered and align them to national development plans.

Key recommendation: There is a need to build African countries capacities in upgrading their statistical systems both on institutional and human resource aspects to meet the data needs of their national development goals. In addition to direct support, it is highly recommended that capacity building coordinating organizations develop know-how guides that will help national statistical systems to initiate and implement outstanding data coordination and management strategies.

Introduction

The importance of reliable and accessible statistics in the development process of a nation cannot be overemphasized. Statistical data are necessary for tracking targets set in development plans, evaluating public accountability, and increasing transparency in policy making. The First International Roundtable on Managing for Development Results (MfDR) held at the World Bank in Washington (2002), re-echoed the need for better statistics to monitor and assess development programs. During the Second

Roundtable on MfDR at Marrakech in 2004, an action plan known as "Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics (MAPS)" was endorsed by all participating countries. The 2015 Africa Statistics Day also focuses on improving data quality and enhancing the capacity-building of National Statistical Systems (NSSs) in Africa. It is therefore a reality that the success of the Africa's Agenda Plans and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is premised on an effective statistical system. This is however lacking in most African countries.

According to the World Bank Statistical Capacity Indicator¹, few African countries have made significant progress in developing efficient NSSs since the MAPS on Managing for Development Results was endorsed in 2004. South Africa, Nigeria and Uganda are the leading countries that have recorded outstanding achievements. The statistical capacity indicator for 2010 – 2015 shows that South Africa has the highest score of 78 on average over the six-year period, Nigeria has an average score of 72, while Uganda has 70. Other African countries have performed either moderately or poorly as adjudged by the indicator.² Similarly, the African Statistical Development Index (ASDI)³ also rank South Africa first (0.703) in terms of statistical development in Africa, and Nigeria was ranked third with 0.645 and Uganda was ranked sixth with 0.587.⁴

The ASDI ranking and scores also indicate that many African countries have poor or underdeveloped statistical system. African countries need to upgrade their statistical systems to meet the data needs of their national development goals. It is against this background that this study appraises the reforms undertaken in South-Africa, Nigeria and Uganda which successfully developed statistical systems. Lessons from their experiences will also be drawn for other African countries with low statistical capacity indicators in order to improve the quality, frequency, and availability of relevant statistics for development results.

Case study

This section documents the case studies of Nigeria's, South Africa's and Uganda's statistical systems. The

appraisal covers both the pre-reform and reform periods in order to provide an evidence-based account of the countries' successes. The choice of these countries is premised on the outstanding performances recorded in their statistical systems as shown in Figure 1.1 in the Annexure.

NIGERIA

The National Statistical System (Pre-Reform Period)

The Nigeria's National Statistical System (NSS) has several phases; these include the Institutional phase, Organizational phase, Human Resource Management and Development phase, Data Production Phase, Data Management and Accessibility phase, Data Dissemination phase and Innovation and Sustainability phase. The pre-reform era of the Nigeria's NSS can be traced to the colonial period, specifically 1929. At the time, the statistical unit performed major function such as the collection and publication of basic statistics on trade and other commercial activities, for the colonial administration which is coordinated by the British with their home Government in London.

During this period, in the Institutional phase, the Statistical unit was transformed to a department. In 1957 the Statistical Act was legislated as a framework guiding the operation of the Department of Statistics in the country. Few years later, the name was changed to Federal Office of Statistics (FOS). There were several re-organizations between the 1970s and 1980s⁵ with FOS still being the institutional name of the office. The two major

¹ The Statistical Capacity Indicator is a composite score assessing the capacity of a country's statistical system. The assessment is based on the following areas: methodology; data sources; and periodicity and timeliness. Countries are scored against 25 criteria in these areas, using publicly available information and/or country input. The overall Statistical Capacity score is then calculated as a simple average of all the scores on a scale of 0-100.

² See World Bank, Bulletin Board on Statistical Capacity (<http://bbcs.worldbank.org>) for a detailed list of the countries' scores.

³ Available at:

http://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded_documents/Statistics/statcom2014/documents/stacomiii-0007trackingprogresstowardsstatisticalcapacitybuildingefforts.pdf

⁴ The ASDI is on a scale of 0 to 1. 0 represents poor performance of the statistical system, while 1 indicates excellent performance.

⁵ See Akinyosoye (2008), Repositioning the National Statistical System of African Countries within the Framework of International Best Practices: The Case of Nigeria.

challenges that confronted the operation of the FOS were poor funding and lack of Institutional Support. This resulted in poor delivery of mandates and overall, weak institution. This necessitated urgent attention and in 2007, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) was established under the Statistical Act of 2007.

There were substandard organizational structure and framework prior to the establishment of NBS. The Statistical Act of 1957 although had some merits such as supporting the decentralization of statistical system and allowing a common statistical service for the central office. The Act contradicted the former impression with the collaboration between the central and regional statistical office as advocated in the Act. Data Production, Access, Management and Dissemination were old fashioned and did not remain strong during the period. There was no feasible organogram at this period, which resulted in poor human resources management.

Deficiencies in the NSS Phases (Pre-Reform Period)

Most of the phases in the statistical system were left in shamble prior to reform. The phases earned poor remarks with the manner of legal and operational frameworks and their workability. Box 2.1 presents the phases and their respective assessments⁶.

Box 2.1: Assessments of NSS Phases

1. Institution: The institution and institutional reforms were weak due to poor funding and lack of institutional support.
2. Organization: The organizational framework was not quite different from what is currently used. However, there was no specific strategy for its operation as there was no suitable organogram.
3. Data Production: The assessment of data production was poor and enshroud.
4. Data Dissemination: There were no reliable data dissemination framework and strategy prior to reform.

5. Data Management and Access: The data management system and accessibility remained feeble.
6. Innovation: There were very few innovations prior to the reform.

Source: Authors Compilation

The Nigerian Statistical System: What did the Country Get Right?

After the legislation of the Statistical Act of 2007 that saw the establishment of the National Bureau of Statistics, Several reforms were made and strongly implemented to improve the NSS phases. This subsection delineates those reforms considering the phases and identify the success achieved and alongside the areas of concerns for sustainability and efficient service delivery.

Institutional Reforms: The enactment of the Statistical Act into Law in 2007 paves way for feasible framework that guides the development of the Institution. The Act consists of the establishment of a Statistics Board that will guide and oversee the operations of NBS; provide power to NBS to enable the Bureau obtain information, maintain confidentiality and non-disclosure of sources and provision for offences and penalties. The Act also enabled the establishment of common statistics service so that the Agency’s staff will maintain presence in all MDA’s and maintain independent source of funding through sale of services, assets and investments, in addition to funding from the treasury (See the Statistical Master Plan for Nigerian National Statistical System 2008/09). The organizational structure was reduced from seven to six departments with realignment of responsibilities. It further developed new approaches to coordinate activities and wider orientation for improved outcomes. This has aided strict compliance to the existing legal framework (Statistical Act of 2007), promote effective coordination and monitoring of

⁶ The assessments are based on transformation, federal involvement, and operations of the phases.

activities and above all, improve the functioning of the NSS in the country.

Data Production, Access and Management: Several efforts have been directed towards improving the quality of data and foster smooth data accessibility. One of the developments is the compilation of a compendium of statistical terms, concepts and methodologies. The implementation of the compendium commenced in 2008 and its revision was conducted in 2015. The implementation of the compendium has guided the production and management of data across branches (at national level), agencies (at both national and state levels) and sub agencies (peculiar to lower tier of government). Data Accessibility has improved significantly in recent time with the harness of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). The establishment of the Research and Policy Analysis Unit (RPAU) that is responsible for the analysis of data, transforming the data garnered to meaningful use in order to support decision making through up-to-date research and policy interpretation of statistical outputs from the NBS. To improve the capacity of members of RPAU, an innovative interaction was instituted among the researchers from both domestic and international fronts, academicians and policy analysts within Government. To this end, the reform addressed the sub-indicators of the Statistical Infrastructure and thus earned the NSS a credible pass in the management of statistical infrastructure.

Data Dissemination: Dissemination of data has been based on the General Data Dissemination System (GDDS) which was proposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1997. Recently, in a mission to upgrade the data dissemination approach, the National Bureau of Statistics in collaboration with the IMF's Statistics Department implemented the Enhanced General Data Dissemination System (e-GDDS) in February, 2016. The e-GDDS operates through the National Summary Data Page (NSDP). The NSDP is posted on the website of the National Bureau of Statistics, utilizing the Open Data Platform. The page is to serve as a one-stop publication vehicle

for essential macroeconomic data. This makes the country part of the first wave of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa to implement the recommendations of the e-GDDS (NBS, 2016). This provides national policy makers, international stakeholders, investors and rating agencies easy access to data as the NSDP platform accommodates human and machine readable formats and is based on an Advance Release Calendar. This allows users to have simultaneous access to timely data and will enhance data transparency. In terms of data dissemination, Nigeria's reforms have circumvented the initial challenges and thus earned a strong performance.

Human Capital Development: Several reforms have been carried out to manage the human resources of NBS. The first action was the identification of the non-professional staff in the new NBS, who were regressed to their various parent offices. This was done to streamline the number of human capital available to the Bureau and was completed by the end of March 2007. After this exercise, the computerized Human Resources and Payroll System (CHRPS) was introduced. This software application circumvents the problem of delayed payment of salaries encountered by staff in State and Zonal Offices and this abolished the existing manual technology. In addition, part of the reform was the re-organization and re-posting of staff. Furthermore, balancing in the number of staff in the Headquarters and Zonal and State Offices was carried out. In this case, most of the professional staff of the Bureau are stationed in the headquarters where major surveys, and other major activities are done. This decentralization has tremendously improved field operations and fasten data processing. Furthermore, part of the reform was to increase the share of professional and sub-professional staff to 60 per cent within the next three (3) years. Staff training is another major activity in the reform era. Part of the efforts to achieve equal distribution of trainings among staff (Headquarters, States and Zonal Staff), is the development of a continuous training programme slated for every three (3) years and three training schools for the production of sub-professional statisticians.

Figure 2.1 in the Annexure presents the flow of events at the post reform era of the Nigerian National Statistical System. The NSS is influenced by some prominent factors. These factors are the outermost layer of the NSS flow and they include among others; weak institutional support, lack of innovation, legal framework, weak operational capacity, poor strategy, and poor funding. This layer is followed by the performance indicators as depicted by ASDI approved by African countries, while the heart of the causal flow is the measure of the National Statistical System in Nigeria. The outer layer of the flow were coloured red to indicate that the variables/activity that falls under this layer have influence on the performance indicators. The positions of these variables were highlighted in each box for clarity and, likewise the overall performance of NSS. Among the factors identified, even after the reform, innovation and strategy still remain prominent issues hindering the development of the Nigerian National Statistical System. In addition, the issue of funding still lingers and thus, requires immediate attention before its attendance effects derogate the improved performance of the NSS

SOUTH AFRICA

The National Statistical System (Pre-Reform Period)

A strong link exists between the evolution of South Africa's statistical system and her political history. This characteristic distinguishes the country's statistical development from other Southern African countries. The pre-reform statistical period which can also be referred to as the apartheid period, spanned between 1970 and 1994, and was marred by fragmentation in the statistical system (Lehola, 2002). This resulted into incoherency in data collection and policy makers could not rely on such data. For instance, the Central Statistical Services (CSS), which was National Statistical body at the time only focused on the white segment of the population, representing about one-eighth of the population (Lehola, 2002). The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) had coverage of the black population. It became imperative therefore, for the

country to have a coordinated statistical system if development was to take place. The opportunity to unify the country's statistical system came in 1994 when the apartheid ceased and the country transitioned to a democracy.

South Africa's National Statistical System (Post-Reform and Strategies)

a) Statistics for Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)

The first indirect attempt at reviving the country's statistical system was made in 1994. With the transition to a democracy, the government mandated every ministry to draw up a plan of action to develop the economy. This however required the availability of credible data to support the RDP. The implementation of the programme was thus confronting challenges including lack of data to support the planning process, emphasis on electronic management of the process rather than on the data-needs of the government (Lehola, 2002). The absence of a national statistical system to coordinate national priorities was also a major challenge.

b) Statistics Act (1999)

The enactment of the Statistics Act marked the beginning of a coordinated statistical system in South Africa. Section 2(a) made provisions for the establishment of the office of the Statistician-General (SG) and a Council. Section 7(1a) gives the Statistician-General the power to administer the Act, while Section 7(2a) mandates him/her to conduct a national census every five years. The SG is to be the head of Statistics South Africa.

For the first time in the history of the country, the statistical framework was given a legitimate backing which unified the fragmented statistical organs in the country. Specifically, Section 13(c) mandates the South African Statistics Council to eliminate unnecessary overlapping or duplication with

regard to the collection or publication of statistics by organs of the state. The Council also provides advice to the Minister and Statistician-General. In addition, Section 2 (c) provides for coordination between Statistics South Africa and other organs of the state that provide official and other statistics. Furthermore, in the pursuit of a unified statistical system, the Act repealed existing fragmented statistical Acts such as Statistics Act 1976, Statistics Act 1978 of the former entity of Bophuthatswana and Statistics Act 1980 of the former entity of Transkei.

c) The National Statistical System

The major implementation strategy of the Statistics Act (1999) has been through the National Statistical System (NSS). This body serves as the coordinating unit for generating statistical indicators. It comprises statistical producers, primary users and other types of users of official statistics (Lehola, 2002). The primary purpose of this body is to ensure that the data produced is credible, reliable and consistent. The NSS in South Africa has evolved over the years. Generally, it has recorded high performance as ranked in the African Statistical Development Index, with a score of 0.703.⁷

However, the breakdown of the components of the ASDI shows an uneven performance across the statistical development indicators. For instance, while the country's statistical system scored high in infrastructural development (0.891) and human capital advancement (0.733), the organization and coordination of the NSS are still weak (0.567). Similarly, dissemination of statistical information (0.688) is still confronted with some challenges. It should however be noted that the country's NSS has been able to

produce data in line with international reporting standards (as emphasized in Section 7(2h) of the 1999 Statistics Act) and also release promptly to intended users. In the areas of coordination and monitoring of activities of statistical organs, much still needs to be done. It is also important that increased funding is provided for this priority body in order to increase the capacity of the statistical agency for development. Other efforts at coordinating the statistical production in the country include the development of a National Strategy for Development of Statistics (NSDS) and a National Spatial Framework. The latter was established to address the spatial geographic environment inherited from the apartheid which has made data collection difficult in these fragmented areas.

d) Strategic Plan (2015/2016 - 2019/2020) for Statistical Improvement

The 2015 to 2020 master plan presents the structure for improving South Africa's statistical system. It is expected that this plan will result into five strategic outcomes by 2020. The reform addresses the challenges confronting the country's statistical system, such as the observed average performance in the coordination and organization of the national statistical system. In this regard, amendment to the Statistics Act, 1999 is proposed. This legislative reform seeks to address areas in the Principal Act that fall short in the provisions for the effective coordination of official statistics (Statistics South Africa, 2015). The amendment to the Act would also expand the statistical base and increase the use of official statistics as provided for under Section 14 of the Statistics Act, 1999. This would give the statistical data produce a wider dissemination. Similarly, the strategic objective of having an informed nation through wider dissemination of data is to be

⁷ The index is from 0 to 1. One represents high performance, while zero indicates poor performance. <http://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded->

[documents/Statistics/statcom2014/documents/stacomiii-0007trackingprogresstowardsstatisticalcapacitybuildingefforts.pdf](http://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-documents/Statistics/statcom2014/documents/stacomiii-0007trackingprogresstowardsstatisticalcapacitybuildingefforts.pdf)

achieved through expansion of statistical products and services to meet different users' need.

The five-year plan also makes provisions for the development of human capital. To achieve this aim, all organs of the state responsible for the production of statistics are expected to invest in statistical leadership and management, and also building statistical capability and competence. Also, the plan aims to develop a statistical value chain that is based on sound quality principles in alignment with international standards as provided for in Section 7(2h) of the 1999 Statistics Act.

Figure 2.2 in the Annexure represents the flow of South Africa with three different layers. With the exception of fragmentation in data sources, other factors identified as affecting the Nigerian NSS also prevail. For the South African NSS, issues of funding, data fragmentation and institutional support were insignificant to the success of the NSS after the reform exercise. However, poor strategy, enshroud operational capacity and weak legal framework still remain. These have tremendous influence on the second layer elements especially, data dissemination, statistical infrastructure and proper functioning of the system.

UGANDA

The National Statistical System (Pre-Reform Period)

During the 1970s, statistical activities in Uganda were bedevilled by myriads of political wrangling among the three East African Community (EAC) countries (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania). The political turmoil led to the disbandment of the East African Statistical Department (EASD) in 1976. Consequently, statistical activities were entrusted to the Customs and Exercise Department of the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MPED). The political upheaval debased statistical activities in Uganda and led to the exit of professionals due to poor salaries and working conditions. A Statistics Department was subsequently created in the Ministry of Finance,

Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) to salvage the situation (UBOS, 2014). However, the department's function was eventually taken by other agencies resulting to cross-purpose relationships and loss of credibility in disseminated data (Ibid). The situation was worsened in 1979 when the regime of Idi Amin was overthrown and the entire statistics department was looted of its property and archives, leading to the exit of the only remaining staff. Consequently, statistical production and National Statistical Systems (NSSs) collapsed, making provision of statistical data and services extremely difficult, while the production of some data series ceased (UBOS 2002).

After the dethronement of Idi Amin, efforts to revitalize statistical activities in Uganda were not successful due to subsequent turmoil and civil war in Uganda between 1980 and 1986. As the government of Yoweri Museveni came to power in 1986, Uganda embarked on renewed efforts towards resuscitating statistical functions and activities, recognizing that statistics were integral to the country's economic planning and recovery programme. The MPED prioritized the revitalization of her Statistics Department and the rehabilitation was largely funded by the World Bank and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The rehabilitation focused on infrastructure rehabilitation and development; staff development, and providing staff with logistical support. This support led to the regeneration of the department's capabilities in statistical production and coordination, and eventual resumption in 1988 of production of key macroeconomic indices such as the National Accounts, and activities such as Household Surveys (UBOS, 2014).

Box 2.2: Deficiencies during the Pre- Legislation Period

1. Political interference
2. Lack of Autonomy as statistical activities were totally dependent on government
3. Poor funding and largely donor driven
4. Poor quantity and quality of data
5. Cross-purpose relationship
6. Data gap between series produced and development indicators
7. Lack of credibility in disseminated data
8. Lack of close proximity between the producers of statistics and the main users of statistical products and services. The Department of Statistics was located in Entebbe, which is far away from Kampala, Uganda's capital city.
9. Lack of statistical awareness

Source: Authors Compilation

Uganda's National Statistical System (Post-Reforms and Strategies)

Statistical legislation is an essential legal framework used to support statistical reforms and regulate statistical activities and operations. Khawaja and Morrison (2002) provided a general framework for statistical legislation and presented a minimum list of items that a statistical legislation Act should contain. The Uganda Bureau of Statistics Act of 1998 provided the legal framework for the evolution of Uganda's statistical system. The Act transformed the Department of Statistics in MFPED to UBOS, a semi-autonomous national authority responsible for the collection and dissemination of official statistics, and for the coordination, monitoring and supervision of the National Statistical System.

The Bureau started operations in 1999 following the swearing in of the Board of Directors. The Board immediately approved a transitional structure, attractive and competitive terms and conditions of service and emphasised meritocracy and professionalism in employment of staff of the Bureau. The UBOS Board is a small and highly

professional. It is composed of a Chairperson who must have professional qualifications and experience in statistics and business-oriented management, the Executive Director of the Bureau, a representative of the MFPED, a representative of the Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics of Makerere University and not more than three members appointed from among the major producers and users of statistics (private sector and civil society). Hence, the Board comprises professionals, academicians and civil society. This has certainly boosted the independency and credibility of the agency. The Board is required by the provisions of the Act to present a quarterly progress report to the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. Furthermore, the bureau has a separate budget vote, which is approved by Parliament (Kiregyera 2009).

Since the transformation of the Statistics Department to an autonomous Bureau of Statistics in 1999, the impartiality, credibility and trustworthiness of official statistics have been enhanced (Kiregyera 2009). Also, coordination and responsiveness to user needs for statistics has improved, production and dissemination of official statistics have become more effective and efficient; and the staff development and welfare have significantly improved (Ibid). Furthermore, the reforms coupled with government and donor support improved the monitoring and evaluation of the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) and progress towards attainment of Developmental Goals (UBOS 2007).

According to UBOS (2007), the key success factors in Uganda's statistical transformation can be attributed to:

- ❖ Production of reliable, consistent, accurate and timely data for policy formulation and planning,
- ❖ Effective leadership – highly qualified Board coupled with a professional and dedicated management,

- ❖ The establishment of structures that promote vertical and horizontal coordination in the NSS e.g. producer-producer, producer-user and user committees,
- ❖ Recruitment of highly skilled and motivated staff - with opportunities for training , skills development and the innovative working environment,
- ❖ Statistical and physical infrastructure investments, e.g. establishment of IT networks and management information systems and adequate working environment for the NS agency.

Box 2.3 summarizes the key successes achieved from the reform phase of the Uganda’s statistical system.

Box 2.3: Key Achievements of the Uganda’s Statistical Reform Era

1. Institution: The availability of a legal framework for the statistical system.
2. Organization and Structural reform: The Bureau developed an organogram and built a state-of-the-art complex for the statistic edifice known as the Statistics House.
3. Statistical Coordination: Intra and inter-institutional coordination and collaboration in the NSS improved significantly.
4. Increased Funding: Provision of more resources to enhance statistical capacity and the Bureau has a separate budget vote which is approved by Parliament.
5. Building Statistical Component in Development Programmes: Use of

- statistics in macroeconomic management, monitoring of poverty reduction programmes and in the overall development framework (Vision 2040)
6. Data Production and Management: The quantity and quality of data produced improved significantly, and the management system has been enhanced using management information system (MIS).
7. Increased Demand for Statistical Data: Data dissemination and statistical advocacy has been strengthened.
8. Independent and Confidence in Official Statistics: The NSS is independent of political interference and confidence in official statistical has improved significantly.
9. Use of GDDS, SDDS and GIS⁸: Data coverage, periodicity and timeliness, quality of the disseminated data has been enhanced with the use of GDDS and SDDS. UBOS started using GIS in 2004 to digitize geographical information.
10. Staff Development and Innovation: The professionalism and training of staff has been prioritized and creativity has tremendously improved.

Source: Authors Compilation

Figure 2.3 in the Annexure presents the post-reform activities of the Uganda’s National Statistical System. The post reform activities shows that the issues in the outer layer are still prominent. Poor strategic thinking has hindered the performance of the Uganda’s NSS after reform. Other critical issues include: weak Institutional support, lack of

⁸ GDDS stands for General Data Dissemination System. It is a framework for development of the Statistical systems in producing economic, financial and socio-demographic data. SDDS stands for Special Data Dissemination Standard. It is a data dissemination standard which identifies best practices in

the dissemination of economic and financial data, to aid sound macroeconomic policies. GIS stands for Geographical Information System. The use of GIS in UBOS has led to reduction in paper work, ease of working with larger amounts of data, coping easily with frequent map changes, hence saving time and energy.

innovation, weak legal framework, and enshroud operational capacity. The weakest inadequacy of the statistical reforms in Uganda is the lack of inclusion of the users and statistical training institutes as part of the NSS. In fact, the Uganda's current statistical Act is termed "Uganda Bureau of Statistics Act", hence, it is UBOS-centric. Notwithstanding, the country's NSS is receiving adequate financial support from the national government. In figure 2.3, the performance indicators in the inner layer depict that data dissemination, statistical infrastructure and functioning of the NSS are still critical issues that need to be addressed for the successful and prompt delivery of outputs and efficient outcomes on policies and decisions of governments.

Assessment of National Statistical Systems in the Post-reform Era

Table 1 in the Annexure shows the performances of the National Statistical Systems in South Africa, Nigeria and Uganda as scored by ASDI. Over the years, South Africa has been able to significantly improve upon her statistical infrastructure. This manifests in the high score of 0.891 recorded by the country as presented in Table 1. The NSS has also gained some grounds in the areas of data dissemination and human capital development. The latter has been achieved through skill-enhancement of staff. Funding of the sector has also been moderate. The co-ordination of the NSS however remains weak. It is believed that the Statistical Master Plan (2015-2020) will address this challenge through the amendment of the Statistics Act, 1999. Nigeria has also recorded some achievements in the areas of NSS co-ordination, statistical infrastructure and dissemination of data. The human capital potentials of the staff of National Statistical body has not been fully exploited. Uganda outperformed South Africa and Nigeria in the funding component. Increased funding for the NSS in Uganda is attributed to the autonomous budget vote of the Statistical Bureau. The NSS of Uganda has not performed

satisfactorily in the development of statistical staff's capacity.

Comparison of Pre-Reform and Post-Reform Era: Drawing Lessons for Other African Countries

The differences in the statistical systems in the pre-reform and post-reform periods of the case studies are presented in Table 2 in the Annexure. The table clearly indicates that Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda have made some achievements in their NSS. Consequently, the experiences of Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda in strengthening their statistical system has brought to the fore some key success factors for other African countries. Most important among them are the following:

- I. **Statistical Legislation Reforms:** The national statistical systems of these countries are underpinned by legal framework. In addition, the Statistical Act are under consideration to be amended (South Africa and Uganda) to address current challenges in the national statistical system. Therefore, the enactment of a Statistical Act is not a sufficient condition that guarantees statistical development, it is also essential that the Act appropriately accommodates novelty in statistical development.
- II. **Statistical Independence:** These countries have been able to improve credibility in data production due largely to the autonomy of their national statistical bodies as provided for in their statistical legislation.
- III. **Enhanced Statistical Advocacy:** These countries have strengthened statistical awareness among the users of statistics. For instance, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda have complied with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) declaration⁹, mandating African countries to celebrate the "African Statistics Day" on November 18 every year. Uganda and South Africa have extended the duration of the

⁹<http://ecastats.uneca.org/acswweb/Home/AfricanStatisticsDay.aspx>

celebration to one week for greater impact. Consequently, the demand for statistical data has increased tremendously in these countries.

- IV. **Statistical Infrastructure:** These countries have a state-of-the-art edifice which houses their statistical agencies. This has facilitated inter-linkages in the production of official statistics, and enhance organizational effectiveness. In addition, the adoption of GDDS, SDDS, GIS and e-GDDS have enhanced data coverage, periodicity, timeliness, quality and dissemination. By doing so, they have been able to upgrade the use of ICTs in their national statistical system to meet international standards.
- V. **Professionalism and Skill Enhancement:** The number statisticians in the employee composition of their statistical agencies have increased over the years. In addition, they have been able to bridge the statistics skill gap through innovation such as internship programmes and other Universities research programmes. Furthermore, there have been significant interventions to enhance the skills of their professional employees.
- VI. **Strong Synergy between National Statistical Agencies and Developmental Plans:** In this regard, the data produce are relevant to policy making.
- VII. **Need to Improve Data Management Strategy:** Most of the top African countries, especially the three case studies cited still lag behind in terms of initiating outstanding data coordination and management strategy. Hence, need for a document that will address this issue.

Conclusions

The increasing demand for quality disaggregated data for sub-national decision-making and efficient service delivery in Africa is an emerging trend. Not only do many African countries lack modern and relevant statistical legislations, there is lack of linkages between statistical systems and policy making and the resultant statistical information does not drive development. Howbeit, some countries such as South Africa, Nigeria and Uganda have made significant progress in their statistical systems due to national commitments to managing for development results (MfDR) and various statistical reforms. Essentially, other African countries can revitalize their statistical systems and mainstream statistics into national and international development goals.

Statistical systems should be geared towards delivering better statistics in data coverage, periodicity, timeliness, quality, relevance, disaggregation and wider dissemination. It is critical for other African countries to imbibe strategies for improving statistical systems by directing efforts at conducting effective statistical legislative reforms; making statistical bodies autonomous; increasing awareness of the impact of statistics on development; enhancing human capital and sustaining a dynamic synergy between statistical systems and development plans.

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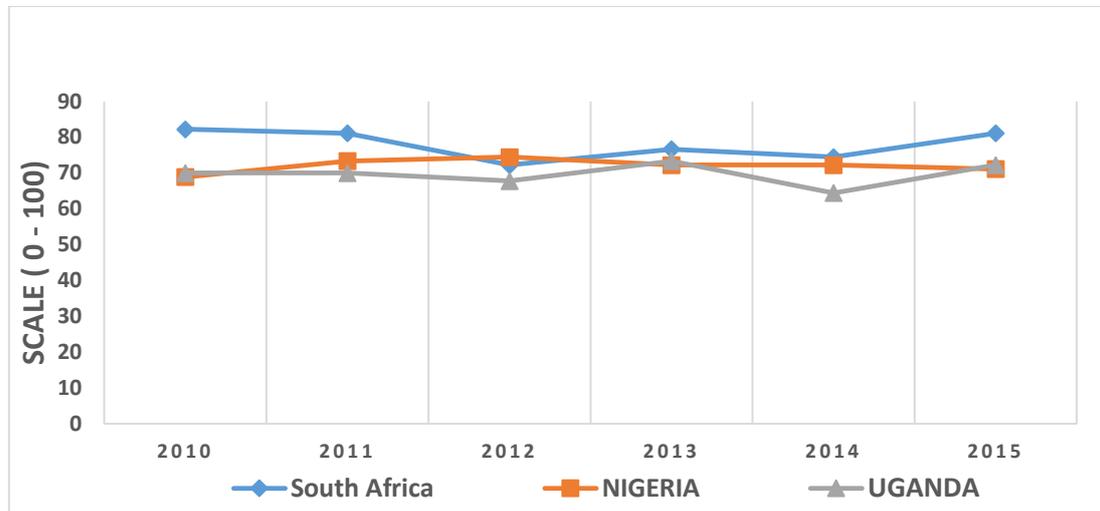
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Annexure

Figure 1.1: Overall Statistical Capacity Indicator of selected African Countries



Data Source: World Bank, Bulletin Board on Statistical Capacity (<http://bbsc.worldbank.org>).

Fig. 2.1: Post-Reform Achievements of Nigeria’s NSS

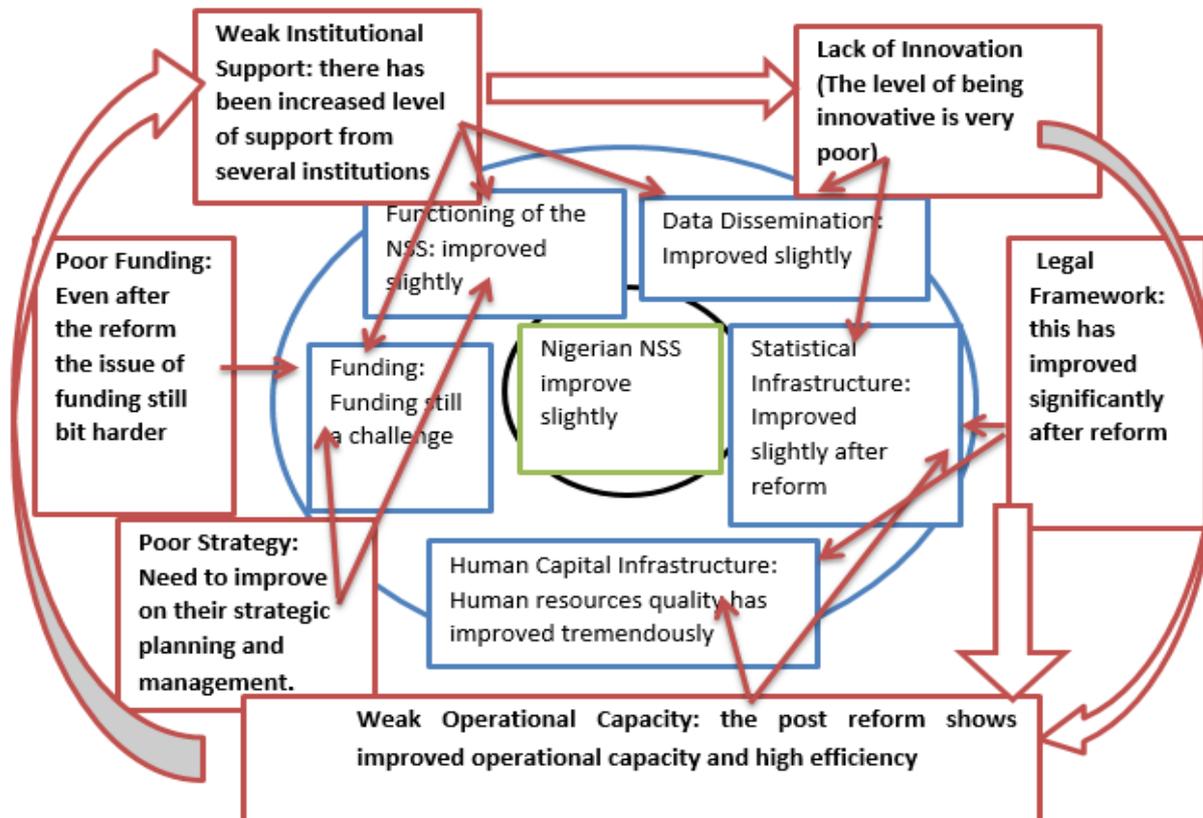


Fig. 2.2: Post-Reform Achievements of South Africa's NSS

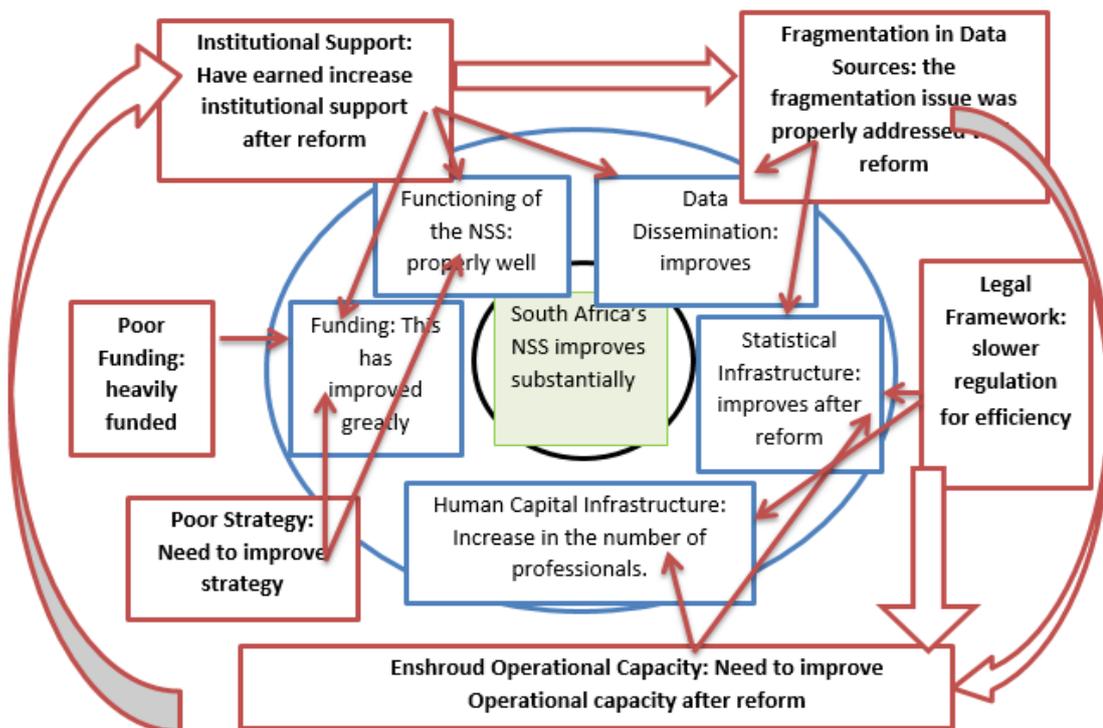


Fig. 2.3: Post-Reform Achievements of Uganda's NSS

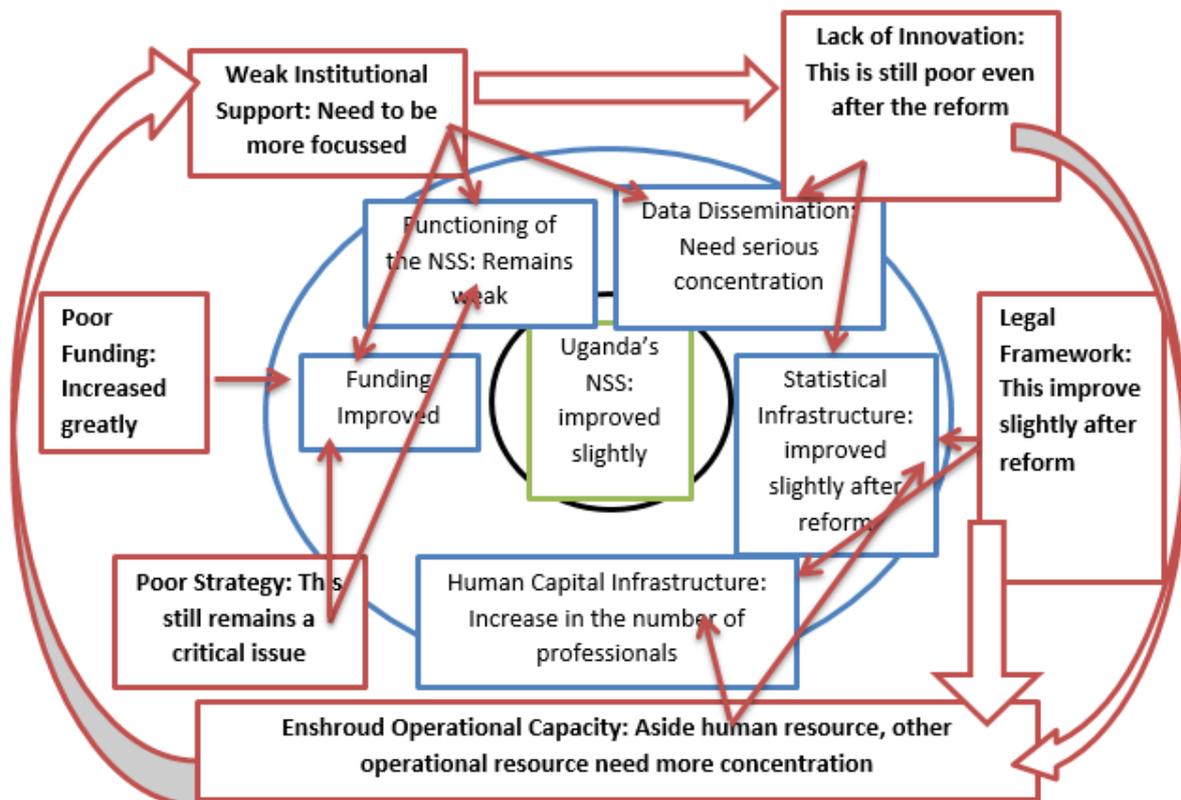


Table 1: Assessing the Statistical Reforms in South Africa, Nigeria and Uganda based on the African Statistical Development Index (ASDI)

Reforms	ASDI Components				
	Organization and coordination of the national statistical system	Statistical infrastructure	Data dissemination	Human capital development	Funding
South Africa	0.567	0.891	0.688	0.733	0.639
Nigeria	0.665	0.661	0.688	0.562	0.650
Uganda	0.648	0.540	0.590	0.322	0.833

Source: Authors' compilation.

Note: The ASDI is based on the components agreed upon by the Reference Regional Strategic Framework (RRSF) for statistical capacity building in Africa. The RRSF is an African regional implementation version of the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics. The index is on a scale of 0 to 1. 0 indicates poor performance and 1 represents good performance.

Table 2: Presentation of the Pre-reform and Post-reform Era

Nigeria	
Pre-Statistical Reform Era	Post-Statistical Reform Era
Lack of institutional support	Increased institutional support
No suitable organogram	Availability of a well-defined organogram
Poor data production	Improvement in data production
No reliable data dissemination framework	Dissemination is now based on GDDS and e-GDDS framework
Weak data accessibility and management system	The use of ICTs has significantly improved data accessibility and management
The human resource capacity was skewed towards non-professionals	Human resources capacity has improved tremendously
Poor Funding	The problem persists
Lack of Innovation	The level of innovation is still poor
Poor statistical advocacy. The Statistics Day was not observed during this era.	Improved statistical advocacy. Observation of African Day of Statistics
South Africa	
Pre-Statistical Reform Era	Post-Statistical Reform Era
Absence of statistical legislation	Enactment of a Statistics Act
Fragmented statistical organs	Unified statistical organs
Incoherency in data collection	Improved coordination in data collection
Lack of synergy between statistical system and development plans	A virile synergy between statistical system and development goals
Lack of strategic plan for statistical improvement	Availability of a strategic plan for statistical improvement.
Poor statistical advocacy. The Statistics Day was not observed during this era.	Improved statistical advocacy. Observation of African Day of Statistics

Uganda	
Pre-Statistical Reform Era	Post-Statistical Reform Era
Lack of statistical legislation	Enactment of a Statistics Act in 1998
Lack of statistical autonomy	Existence of semi-autonomous statistical system
Incessant political interference in the statistical system	Statistical system is independent of political interference
Poor funding and was largely Donor driven	Funding has improved greatly. A paradigm shift from Donor driven to government funding
Lack of credibility in statistical data	Improved credibility in statistical data
Lack of close proximity between the producers of statistics and the main users of statistics	Close proximity between the producers of statistics and the main users of statistics
Gap between statistics produced and development indicators	A strong synergy between statistical information and development plans
The Statistics department was dominated by non-professionals in statistics	Professionalism has been prioritized and creativity has tremendously improved
Poor statistical awareness	Statistical awareness has improved
Poor data dissemination	Data dissemination has been strengthened



Acknowledgement

This knowledge series intends to summarize good practices and key policy findings on managing for development results (MfDR). African Community of Practice (AfCoP) knowledge products are widely disseminated and are available on the website of the Africa for Results initiative, at: www.afrik4r.org/page/resources.

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