Final Version adopted by the High Level Conference on Data Revolution – A side event of the 8th AU-ECA Conference of Ministers

> ✓ **Data Community:** A data community refers to a group of people who share a social, economic or professional interest across the entire data value chain – spanning production, management, dissemination, archiving and use.
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> ✓ **African Data Revolution:** A profound shift in the way that data is harnessed to impact on development decision-making, with a particular emphasis on building a culture of usage. The process of embracing a wide range of data communities and diverse range of data sources, tools, and innovative technologies, to provide disaggregated data for decision-making, service delivery and citizen engagement; and information for Africa to own its narrative.
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> ✓ **Data Ecosystem:** Multiple data communities, all types of data (old and new), institutions, laws and policy frameworks, and innovative technologies and tools, interacting to achieve the data revolution.

Why an African data revolution?

At their 23rd Ordinary Session of the African Union held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea in June 2014, African Heads of State requested ECA, AUC, AfDB and UNDP to organize a High Level Conference to discuss the data revolution in Africa and its implications for African Union's Agenda 2063 and the post-2015 development agenda. The High Level Conference on Data Revolution was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 27 to 29 March 2015, culminating in this Africa Data Consensus.

A sustained data revolution is needed to drive social, economic and structural transformation in every African country. Such a revolution will also make it easier to track our countries' progress towards meeting national and globally agreed sustainable development goals, with a view to leave no one behind.

The building blocks for an African data revolution are already in place. National Statistical Offices have long been the backbone of data production and management, producing official statistics and supporting data activities to create accurate and timely data for decision-making.

However, today's development challenges and prospects call for a broad data ecosystem that spans the entire value chain driven by national priorities and underpinned by the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. This ecosystem must be inclusive of all forms of data – including official and other data – and involve all stakeholders.

Vision

A partnership of all data communities that upholds the principles of official statistics as well as openness across the data value chain, which creates a vibrant data ecosystem providing timely, user-driven and disaggregated data for public good and inclusive development

Challenges

Building this new African data ecosystem will involve addressing a number of challenges, including:

- Uneven coverage, lack of disaggregated data and data stored in sector-specific silos.
- Supply driven data subject to conditional financing and influences at odds with national priorities
- Lack of accessible usable information that is open to all communities
- A mismatch between available data and actual problems
- A lack of harmonisation of data collected by different sources in different formats
- Weak demand and capacity in the use of data at both national and local level
- A lack of timely, accurate, comparable and relevant data.
- Weak data governance and accountability
- Concerns over privacy, data protection and intellectual property
- Insufficient funding and dependence on external resources
- Lack of common standards allowing comparison of data across sectors and countries
- The lack of data on key issues such as governance, peace and security. environmental sustainability, gender and human rights

Principles

- Political will is pivotal to the implementation of the African data revolution. Countries must own the prioritisation, financing and leadership of this revolution.
- Data must be disaggregated to the lowest levels of administration by gender, age, income, disability, and other categories.

- People must be counted to make them count. Civil registration should be accessible and provided at no cost.
- Official data belong to the people and should be open to all. They should be open by default.
- The data community should embrace the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics as a starting point.
- There is a need for governance and coordination of the data ecosystem.
- African governments should acknowledge open data provided by credentialed data communities as acceptable sources of country statistical information.
- Technology, new forms of data and other innovations should be actively embraced.
- Data communities should promote a demand-driven data user culture spanning the entire ecosystem.
- Privacy and intellectual property rights should be respected.
- Data should be translated into information that is simple, understandable and relevant.
- Information must be timely, accurate, relevant and accessible.
- Data must be driven by needs rather than for its own sake.
- The data revolution in all its facets should be gender-sensitive.

Key Actions
- Create an inclusive data ecosystem involving government, private sector, academia, civil society, local communities and development partners that tackles the informational aspects of development decision-making in a coordinated way. Governments must play a pro-active role in engaging this community and other stakeholders should prioritise partnership with government.
- As a critical first step to strengthening the data ecosystem, review the capacity needs, legal and financial frameworks, participating institutions, data assets and gaps at national, sub-national and community level to recognize the roles of the various stakeholders and create a workable roadmap with clear milestones.
- Governments should take the lead in ensuring that the recurrent costs of production and dissemination of all required data is financed from sustainable domestic resources.
- Existing National Strategies for the Development of Statistics should be revised to become more inclusive of all data communities.
- Governments should identify a body authorised to provide credentials to data communities providing open data, based on established criteria for quality, reliability, timeliness and relevance to statistical information needs.

- The development of Civil Registration systems that produce credible vital statistics must be a cornerstone of the data revolution. Likewise population, economic, labour, health, education, land and agricultural management information systems should be supported to ensure timely and accurate data to drive decision-making at national and sub-national level.
- Public-private partnerships should be adopted, fostered and strengthened as a strategy for knowledge transfer and to promote sustainable collaborations
- All international norms and standards relating to official statistics should, where applicable, be extended to all data so as to improve their validity and credibility.
- Innovative, integrated methodologies and technologies, including geospatial referencing, should be promoted to improve data collection, analysis and usage.
- Integrate gender statistics and gender specific indicators in monitoring and evaluation.
- The Pan Africanist Institutions (AfDB, AUC and ECA) should take the lead in the realisation of the Data Consensus, in partnership with other development partners.