

# The power of data for governance

Closing data gaps  
to accelerate Africa's  
transformation



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# Chapter 01.

## The case for data (data demand)



### Key concepts

**Data** is raw information, including basic numbers or text. In the digital realm, it may include different files, such as images, graphics or videos. It covers all information gathered for analysis or reference.

**Public sector data** is information generated and collected by public sector bodies and organisations, such as government departments, local authorities, police forces, health services and schools.

**Statistical capacity** is the ability of a country's national statistical system, its organisations and individuals to collect, produce, analyse and disseminate high quality and reliable statistics and data to meet users' needs.

**Open data** is information or content made freely available to use and redistribute, subject only to the requirement to attribute it to the source.

**Open government data (OGD)** is a good practice – and increasingly a set of policies – that promotes transparency, accountability and value creation by making government data available to all.

### Why is data important to the public sector?

- Data plays a critical role in informing strategy and policymaking.
- Data enables baselines, benchmarks and goals to be set, allowing governments to monitor and evaluate policies and commitments.
- Data allows governments to improve public service design, delivery and effectiveness.
- Data is essential to ensure that government policies take into account the most vulnerable groups and individuals, leaving no one behind.

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), public value can be generated in the public sector by harnessing data in three phases:

- **Anticipating and planning:** understanding the role of data in designing policy, anticipating change, forecasting need and imagining future possibilities.
- **Design and delivery:** implementation of policies, the practical delivery of services and the immediate challenges of responding to change.
- **Evaluation and monitoring:** measuring impact, auditing decisions and monitoring performance.



Public sector employees use data on a daily basis to make complex policy decisions that affect citizens, such as improving service delivery, allocating budget and responding to crises



Without sound data, governments drive blind and there can be no real progress towards development.

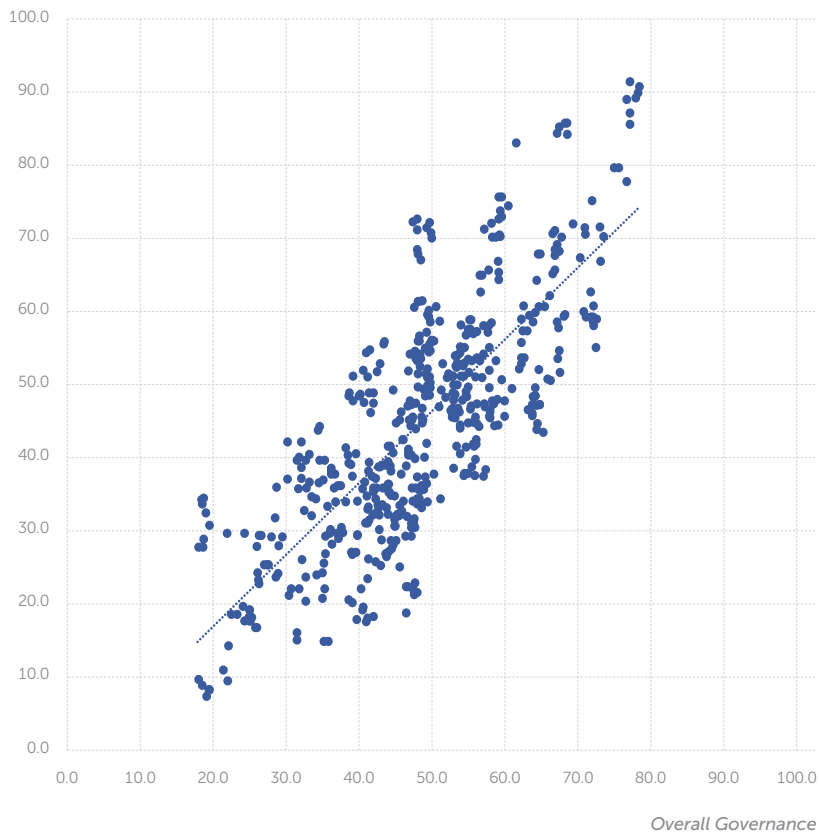
*Mo Ibrahim, Founder & Chair of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation (MIF)*



## There is a strong positive correlation between high-quality statistics and good governance

### African countries: IIAG Overall Governance & Capacity of the Statistical System (2012-2021)

Capacity of the Statistical System



Note: Correlation coefficient  $r$  for 2012-2021 scores for IIAG Overall Governance and Capacity of the Statistical System = +0.78

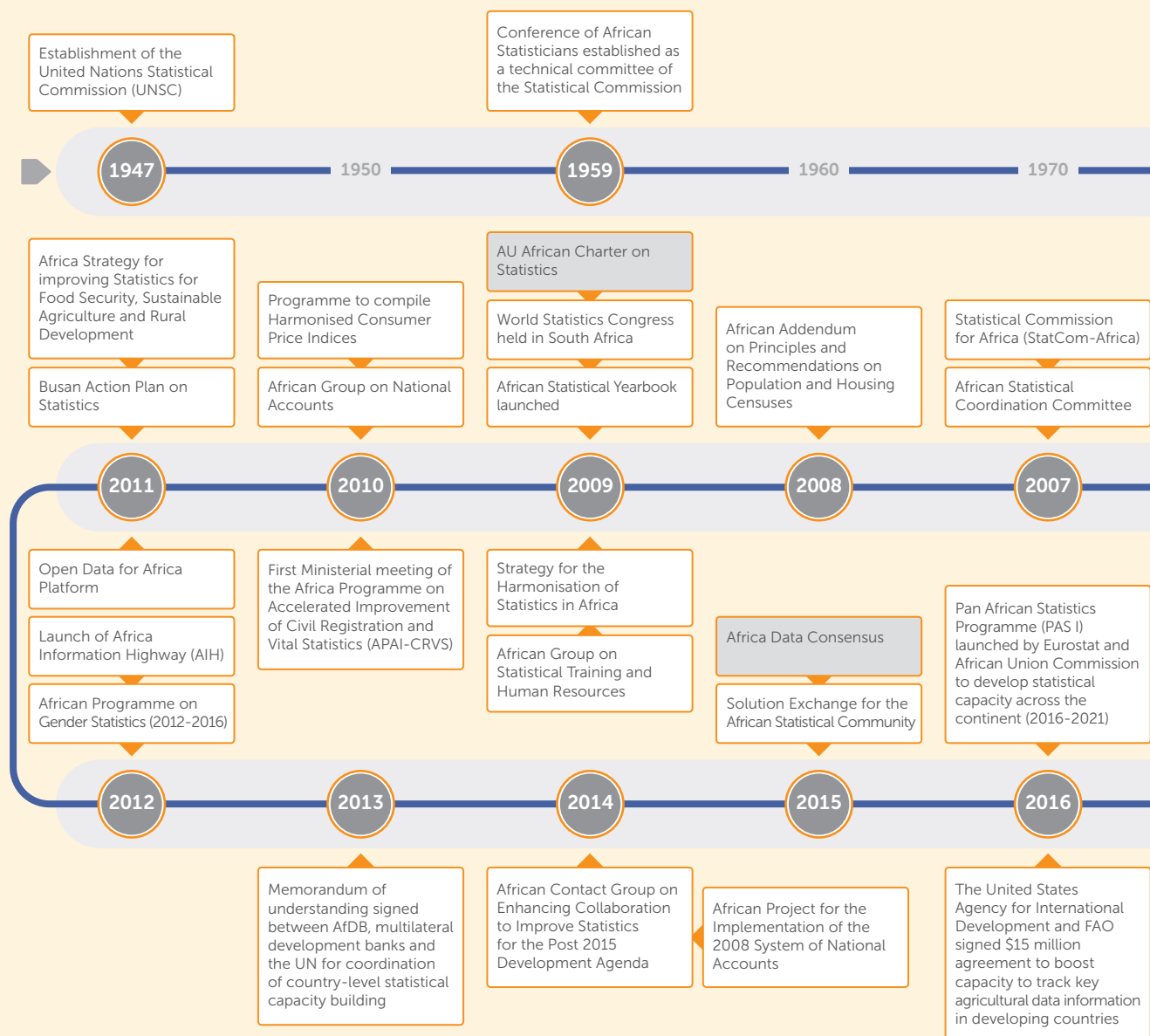
There is evidence that strong statistical capacity is a key enabler of good governance. Indeed, using the 2022 Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) dataset, the graph shows a strong positive correlation between levels of Overall Governance in African countries and scores for the indicator Capacity of the Statistical System across the full ten-year time series (2012-2021). This means that countries capable of producing high-quality statistics tend to perform better in delivering public goods and services to their citizens, which is the core objective of governance according to MIF.

#### Six-point roadmap for bridging the data-policy gap in Africa

While statistical capacity across the continent has improved in recent decades, it remains low compared to other world regions and is hindered by several challenges, such as insufficient capacity in African National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and low levels of data literacy. In April 2021, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation and the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21) published a working paper putting forward a six-point roadmap aimed at bridging the data-policy gap in Africa:

- Create a statistical capacity strategy to raise funds.
- Connect to knowledge banks to hire and retain talent.
- Build good narratives for better data use.
- Recognise the power of foundational data, such as censuses and Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS).
- Strengthen statistical laws to harness the data revolution.
- Encourage data use in policy design and implementation.

## Timeline of initiatives to improve statistical capacity in Africa

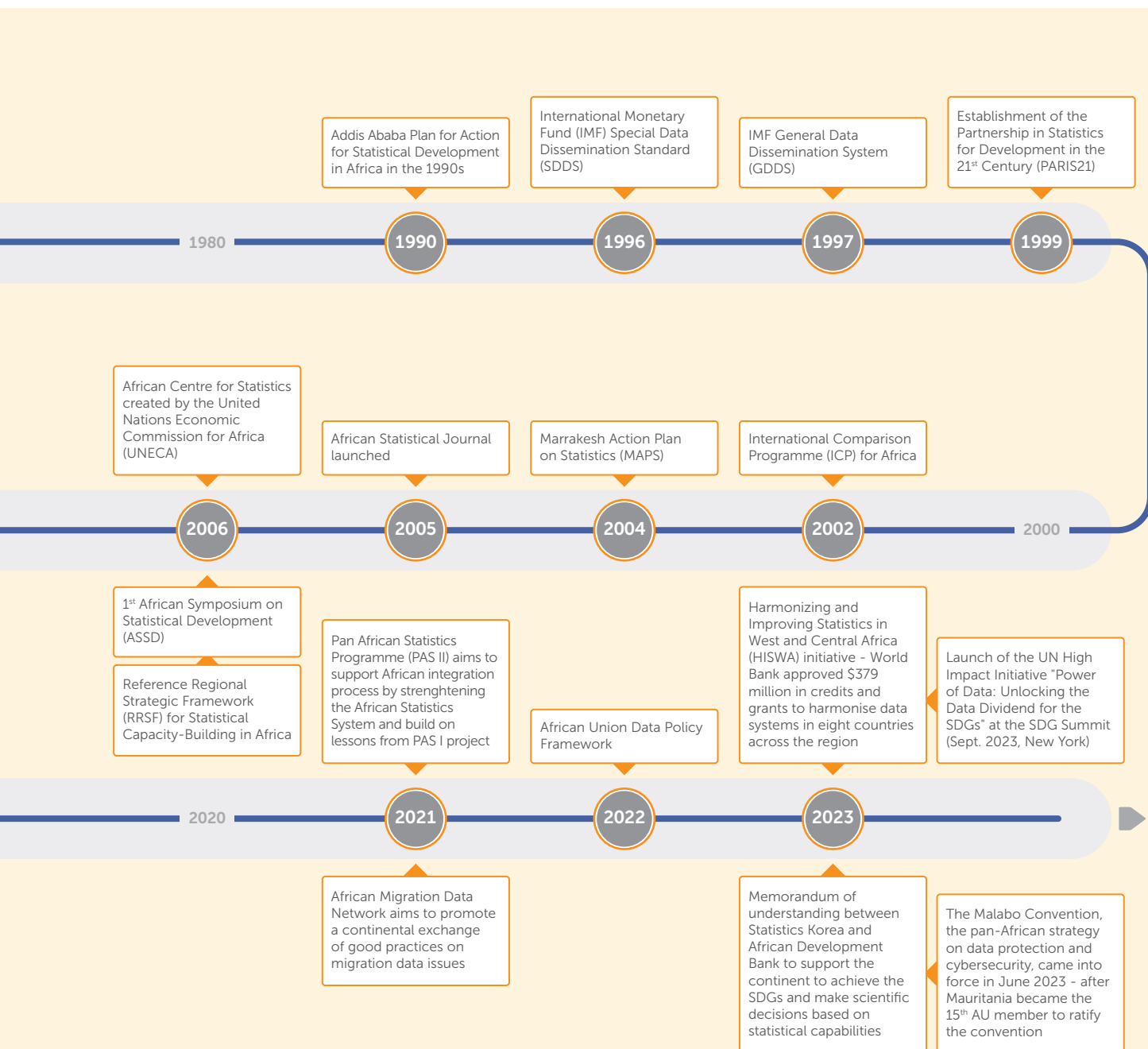


## Open data in Africa

Open data can lead to gains in economic growth, increased transparency and accountability, improved public services and efficiency in government. The potential of open data in Africa is particularly great in areas such as the agriculture sector, public procurement, as well as geospatial data. According to the African Development Bank (AfDB), for Africa to reap the benefits of open data, it needs:

- Greater knowledge sharing.
- Focus on creating and releasing key datasets.
- Strategic investments in “African Information Infrastructure” alongside physical infrastructures.
- Removing government barriers when it comes to implementing open data initiatives.
- Facilitating innovation and data-driven services in line with the needs of the continent.

According to the Open Data Inventory (ODIN) 2022/23 by Open Data Watch, significant data gaps in both the coverage and openness of government data exist in most African countries. The average coverage score across all African countries was 39 (out of 100) compared to a global coverage score of 47. The average African data openness score was 41 compared to a global openness score of 53.



### The Africa Information Highway (AIH) initiative

The AfDB is a leader in promoting and facilitating open data in Africa, especially through its AIH initiative. The AIH is a mega network of live open data platforms (ODPs) electronically linking all African countries and 16 regional organisations. The overall aim is to significantly increase public access to official and other statistics across Africa, while simultaneously improving data quality, management and dissemination across African countries. In 2015, the AIH was selected by PARIS21 as one of the most innovative initiatives globally to enable and inform the data revolution.

According to the AfDB, the economic potential of open data to Africa could equate to roughly 1-2% of the region's Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

Development agendas

The **United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** were the eight goals set by the 189 UN member states in September 2000 and agreed to be achieved by the year 2015.

In 2015, the 193 UN member states adopted the **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** to replace the MDGs. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development sets out a 15-year plan to achieve the 17 SDGs.

The **African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063** is the continent's strategic framework for transforming Africa within a 50 year period from 2013 to 2063. It is organised around 7 aspirations, each with its own set of goals.

- The **First Ten Year Implementation Plan (FTYIP)** of Agenda 2063 (2013-2023) is the first in a series of five ten-year plans. The FTYIP has set out 20 goals to progress towards the 7 aspirations.

The data required for African countries to measure progress towards the SDGs and Agenda 2063 is unprecedented both in their scope and granularity



The Paris Climate Agreement's Global Stocktake (GST)

The GST is a central component of the Paris Agreement's ambition mechanism. It is a process for parties to assess every five years their collective progress towards meeting the long-term goals of the Agreement.

At COP24 in Katowice, parties agreed that the GST would be conducted in three phases: information collection and preparation, technical assessment of information, as well as consideration of final outputs. The first GST was concluded at COP28 in Dubai and will inform the 2025 round of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), aiming to increase their level of ambition.

High-quality data lies at the centre of the GST process, increasing country monitoring and reporting requirements.



“Without data, we are driving blind - policies are misdirected and progress on the road to development is stunted. We must act urgently to close the data gap in Africa if we genuinely want to leave no one behind.

Data is key to achieving both the AU's Agenda 2063 and the UN SDGs. I have long been thinking that what the UN Agenda 2030 should have begun with is an SDG 0 - Sound Data for Governance.”

Mo Ibrahim, Founder and Chair of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation (MIF)

# Chapter 02.

The status of  
data in Africa  
(data supply)



### Africa still has the lowest availability of vital statistics of all the world regions

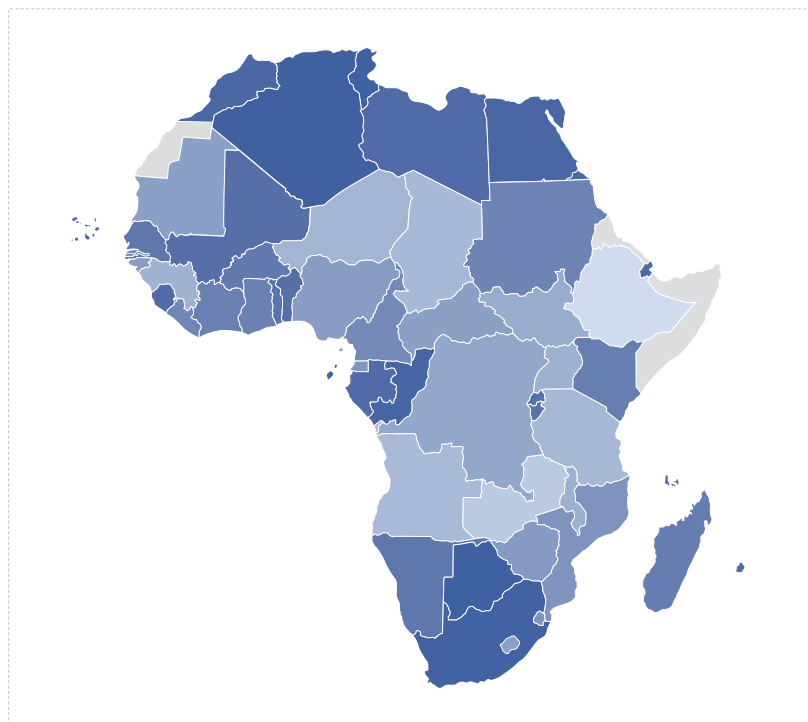
Even though CRVS are the building blocks that provide governments with critical information to develop policies and provide services, Africa is still the world region with the lowest availability of reliable, up-to-date, and continuous vital statistics.

As of April 2023,

#### Birth registration:

- Only 10 African countries, accounting for 19.6% of the continent's population, have a birth registration system that registers at least 90% of births occurred: Algeria, Botswana, Congo Republic, Djibouti, Egypt, Morocco, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Tunisia.
- In six African countries, accounting for 20.4% of the continent's population, less than 30% of births are registered: Angola, Chad, Ethiopia, Niger, Tanzania and Zambia.

#### African countries: birth registration completeness (April 2023)



While Algeria, Botswana and Tunisia have the highest birth registration completeness on the continent (100%), Ethiopia has the lowest (3%)

Eritrea and Somalia do not have data on birth registration completeness as of April 2023

Completeness (%)



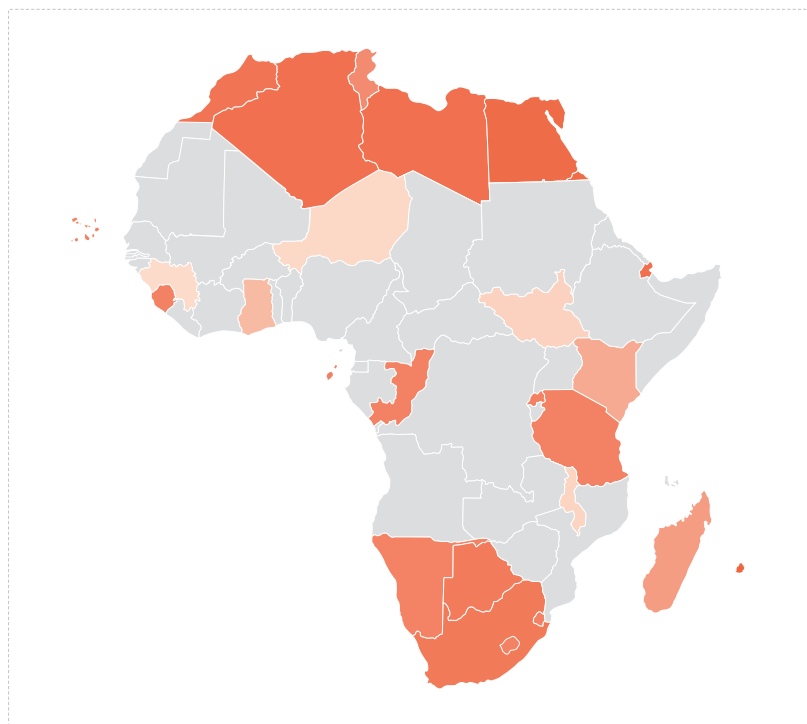
Source: MIF based on United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD)



#### Death registration:

- Only three African countries, accounting for 7.8% of the continent's population, have a death registration system that registers at least 90% of deaths occurred: Egypt, Mauritius and Seychelles.
- Four African countries, accounting for 5.0% of the continent's population, have a death registration system that registers less than 10% of deaths occurred: Guinea, Malawi, Niger and South Sudan.

#### African countries: death registration completeness (April 2023)



Less than half of African countries (26) have data on death registration completeness as of April 2023

Mauritius has the highest death registration completeness on the continent (100%), and Guinea the lowest (2%)

Completeness (%)



● No data

Source: MIF based on UNSD

#### Mortality data

- In order to have mortality data that can be utilised to monitor targets and inform policy, countries need access to high quality local data.
- A civil registration system is the "gold standard" for births and deaths data, especially in small areas (as opposed to survey data).
- During the pandemic, a variety of excess mortality models claimed that the continent's low mortality figures, lower than in any other world region, dramatically under-represented the true impact of COVID-19.

At the African average level, while the 2022 IIAG sub-indicator *Birth Registration* has improved by +4.1 between 2012 and 2021, the score for the sub-indicator *Death Registration* has remained the same over the same period

## What is a CRVS system?

An efficient, routine CRVS system is the best source of national vital statistics, and the foundation for proof of identity.



### Civil Registration system

- Continuous, permanent, compulsory and universal recording of the occurrence and characteristics of vital events: births, deaths, adoptions/legitimations, marriages, divorces, etc.
- Maintained by the government.
- Goal: record all vital events occurring in the country to produce representative vital statistics.

### Vital Statistics system

- The process of collecting, compiling and analysing information on vital events.
- Several uses, including: socioeconomic planning and informed decision-making; setting targets and monitoring social and economic plans, such as public health interventions; measuring standards of living or quality of life.

#### Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS)

- APAI-CRVS is a regional programme, whose secretariat is in the African Center for Statistics at UNECA, developed following the political commitment and policy directives of the African ministers in charge of civil registration to reform and strengthen CRVS systems on the continent.
- At the regional level, the programme is guided by a Regional CRVS Core Group led by UNECA in partnership with the American University in Cairo (AUC), AfDB, Secretariat of African Symposium on Statistical Development, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), INDEPTH Network, Plan International and PARIS21.
- The 6<sup>th</sup> Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration was held from 24-28 October 2022 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The theme was: *A Decade into APAI-CRVS: Reflecting on progress and accelerating efforts towards 2030 through transformed systems.*

### The World Bank's Identification for Development (ID4D) Initiative

By harnessing global and cross-sectoral knowledge, World Bank financing instruments, and partnerships, the ID4D Initiative aims to help countries tap into the transformational potential of identification (ID) systems, including civil registration.

Inclusive and trusted ID systems are key to enable all people to exercise their rights, safeguard their privacy and access better services and economic opportunities in line with the SDGs – this is especially important as countries make their transition to digital economies, digital governments and digital societies.

Instituted in 2014, ID4D operates across the World Bank Group with global practices and units focused on topics such as digital development, social protection, health, financial inclusion, governance, gender and data protection.

The Initiative is guided by the 10 Principles on Identification for Sustainable Development, developed by the World Bank in collaboration with over 30 global and regional organisations:

#### Pillar 1: Inclusion

1. Ensure universal access for individuals, free from discrimination.
2. Remove barriers to access and use.

#### Pillar 2: Design

3. Establish a trusted - unique, secure and accurate - identity.
4. Create a responsive and inter-operable platform.
5. Use open standards and prevent vendor and technology lock-in.
6. Protect privacy and agency through system design.
7. Plan for financial and operational sustainability.


#### Pillar 3: Governance

8. Protect personal data, maintain cyber security and safeguard people's rights through a comprehensive legal and regulatory framework.
9. Establish clear institutional mandates and accountability.
10. Enforce legal and trust frameworks through independent oversight and adjudication of grievances.


The work of ID4D receives key support from the Gates Foundation, the UK and French governments, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), and the Omidyar Network.



Globally around 1 in 3 adults without an ID reported difficulties in using financial services, receiving financial support from the government, applying for a job or voting in elections



850 million people around the world do not have an official ID – most of them are in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia



Since ID4D's establishment in 2014, Mo Ibrahim, Founder & Chair of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, has been a member of its Advisory Council and strong advocate

#### Key findings from 2021-2022 update of the ID4D Dataset

- About 850 million people around the world do not have an official ID. This gap primarily affects people in low- and lower middle-income countries in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.
- Among adults living in low-income countries (LICs), 46% say they do not have an ID because of documentary requirements, 44% because of the distance to registration points and 40% because of the prohibitive costs involved in obtaining one.
- Globally around 1 in 3 adults without an ID reported difficulties in using financial services, receiving financial support from the government, applying for a job or voting in elections.

# The Status of Data in Africa: Civil Registration based on the Africa Integrity Indicators

*African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP)*

Civil registration and vital statistics are key in measuring development outcomes. They provide the key information needed for measuring most of the Sustainable Development Goals, the required information for development policymaking and implementation, and ensuring efficiency in public service provisions and social protection services. Thus, there have been various initiatives in Africa to collect more information on vital events and other civil status events. The Africa Integrity Indicators, which AFIDEP releases annually, measure accessibility and affordability to birth and death registration in the 54 African countries.

While the birth and death registration indicators are among the top indicators where African countries perform relatively well, out of 54 African countries, Algeria, Cabo Verde and Namibia are the countries performing very well in the indicators measuring accessibility and affordability of birth and death registration while Equatorial Guinea, Somalia, Eritrea and Gabon are among the countries not performing well on the same indicators<sup>1</sup>. In the Round 11 (2023 indicators), it was observed that for the death registration indicator (indicator 114), 50 percent of the countries had scores above 75 (Strong), while seven countries (Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gabon, Mali, Somalia, Uganda) had scores below 25 (Weak)<sup>2</sup>. For the indicator measuring birth registration, only 48.1 per cent of the countries had scores above 75 (Strong) and 6 countries (Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia) had scores below 25 (Weak).

The status of civil registration in Africa shows that there is a need for more initiatives to include more citizens in the civil registration and vital statics systems. Such initiatives could include more awareness campaigns towards educating citizens on the importance and relevance of death and birth registration, reducing the costs of death and birth registration, digitalising the registration process for efficiency and introducing more registration centres within public hospitals to ensure that more people are registered within the various registration systems available at the national level.

<sup>1</sup> From the indicators, a 100 score is earned if citizens can obtain birth or death certification upon request and both of the following conditions are met: Certification is provided within 30 days or less, and Certification is provided for no charge. A 50 score is earned if one of the following conditions are met: Certification takes between 2 and 3 months, or Certification costs more than the equivalent of US\$1 but less than the equivalent of US\$5. A 0 score is earned if one of the following conditions are met: Certification takes longer than 4 months, or Certification costs more than the equivalent of US\$10. A 0 score is also earned if the certification cannot be obtained.

<sup>2</sup> A 100 translates into 'Very Strong', a 75 into 'Strong', a 50 into 'Moderate', a 25 into 'Weak' and a 0 into 'Very Weak'

## Population, household and agricultural data: acceleration of progress over the last decade

### Latest population census



Notes: Population census data was collected from UNSD and only goes back to 1985, thus excluding DR Congo's 1984 population census from timeline. Furthermore, Eritrea does not appear in timeline because it has never conducted a population census.

Source: MIF based on UNSD

### Latest household survey



Source: MIF based on Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS)

## Latest agricultural census



Source: MIF based on FAO

**Population census:** the total process of collecting, compiling, evaluating, analysing and publishing or otherwise disseminating demographic, economic and social data pertaining, at a specified time, to all persons in a country or in a well-delimited part of a country. It should be conducted at least every ten years, and it is considered among the most complex and massive peacetime exercises a nation can undertake.

**Household surveys:** questionnaires that are given to a sample of households in a population. They are currently the most important data source for a range of key demographic and socioeconomic statistics for developing countries where comprehensive vital registration and administrative systems are non-existent. This will remain the case until better sources of data, such as population censuses, are available.

**Agricultural census:** a statistical operation for collecting, processing and disseminating data on the structure of agriculture, covering the whole or a significant part of the country. In an agricultural census, data are collected directly from agricultural holdings, but some community-level data may also be collected.

Only in 2022, 12 African countries have completed their latest population census

However, some African countries have not conducted a population census, household survey or agricultural census for more than a decade

Even though the 2022 Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) shows that the availability of governance data\* for African countries has improved greatly over the last ten years (2012-2021), data gaps, that is, the lack of data measuring certain governance topics, remain a key challenge for Africa. Even if proxy variables for specific topics exist, they often cover a limited number of African countries, or are outdated.

The following are some key governance data gaps organised around the four IIAG categories:

### Security & Rule of Law

- Criminal events besides homicides (e.g. robberies)
- Child labour
- Tenure security under property rights
- State capture
- Illicit financial flows



In the last five years (2019-2023), the International Labour Organization (ILO) only has data for two countries for Proportion of children engaged in economic activity (%): Guinea-Bissau and Zimbabwe.

### Participation, Rights & Inclusion

- Prevalence of discrimination
- Prevalence of hate crimes
- Equality regardless of sexual orientation
- Equality regardless of age
- Equality for and inclusion of people with disabilities
- Prevalence of violence against women
- Women in leadership positions in business and civil society
- Women's share in informal employment
- Women's access to and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)



Since 2014, the SDG Global Database from UNSD only has data for 11 African countries for Proportion of population reporting having felt discriminated against, by grounds of discrimination, sex and disability (%).

### Foundations for Economic Opportunity

- Trade environment
- Informal economy
- Energy affordability
- Accessibility of transport
- Gender equality in agriculture
- Research and development (R&D) in agriculture
- Agricultural resilience



Since 2016, the Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centres (CGIAR) does not have any new data for African countries for R&D spending in agriculture.

In the last three years (2021-2023), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) only has data for 15 African countries for Proportion of secondary schools with access to Internet for pedagogical purposes (%).

\* Gaps in publicly available comparable data to measure governance progress.



### Human Development

- Health structures/capacity
- Mental health
- Human resources in secondary and tertiary education
- Rural-urban access divide in education
- Children's nutrition
- Environment/climate



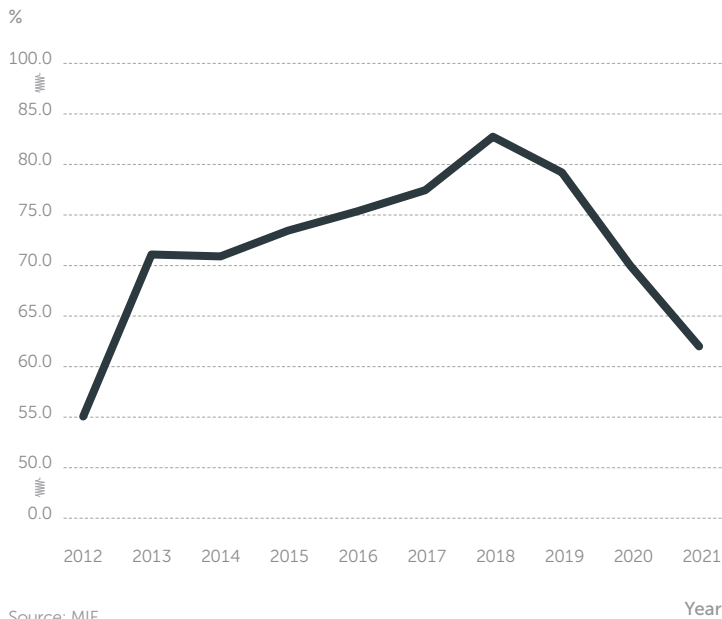
No African country has data available on WHO Global Health Observatory (GHO) for any mental health indicator beyond 2017.

### Data availability for IIAG variables has improved greatly over the past decade

The 2022 IIAG shows that data availability has improved since 2012.

- While only about half (55.2%) of data points at variable level are available at source for the year 2012, data availability peaked at 82.6% for the year 2018.
- Despite this progress, between 2019 and 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic led data availability for IIAG variables to go down by nearly 20 percentage points.

#### 2022 IIAG: data points available from source (2012-2021)



### Data gap: economic informality

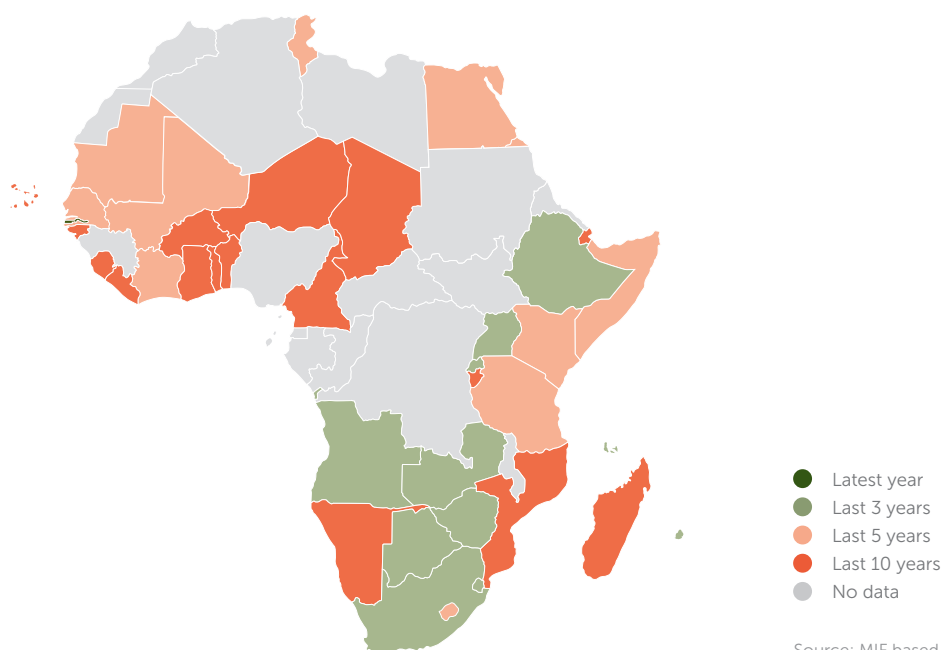
The informal economy is the diversified set of economic activities, enterprises, jobs and workers that are not regulated or protected by the state. Informal workers often lack any form of social protection or employment-related benefits and are twice as likely to be poor compared to formal workers.

Minimising informal employment is a key component of SDG 8 – Decent Work & Economic Growth, and measuring informal employment is an official indicator of Target 8.3 – Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalisation and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.

However, by nature, data related to informal employment is hard to collect. An analysis of SDG indicator 8.3.1 – Proportion of informal employment in total employment – shows data on informal employment in Africa is sparse.

- Only Gambia has data for the latest year (2023) and only five African countries have data for 2022: Botswana, Mauritius, Rwanda, South Africa and Zambia.
- Only six other African countries have data on informal employment within the last three years: Angola, Comoros, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Uganda and Zimbabwe.
- South Africa is the African country with the most data across the last 10 years, with all data available up to 2022, while Mauritius has eight data points across this period.
- Over the last ten years, 19 countries only have one data point while 15 have no data at all.
- Beyond the sparseness of the data, there are also discrepancies across sources, with data collected from ILO and from the SDG data portal varying in coverage for the same data point.

### Africa: data on informal economy (2014-2023)



Source: MIF based on ILO

### Data gap: rural economy

Despite its vital importance for agriculture, food security and climate change adaptation, there is currently poor data availability on rural sector topics in Africa.

There is only one dataset, the Rural Sector Performance Assessment (RSPA), produced by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), that provides data for the IIAG's *Rural Economy* sub-category.

However, as of now, there are only two data years available from source for this dataset (2018 and 2021), which impacts accuracy.

Also, in terms of country coverage, nine African countries are not part of this dataset: Algeria, Botswana, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Libya, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles and South Africa.

### Data gap: health capacities

The role of the health workforce is critical in the attainment of health goals such as Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and catalysing economic recovery, particularly as the continent bears 25% of the global burden of disease with only 3% of the world's health workforce.

The African average score for the SDG indicator 3.8.1 - Coverage of essential health services increased from 26.4 to 47.4 (out of 100) from 2000 to 2017 and from 47.4 to 48.3 from 2017 to 2021. However, there are large disparities in 2021 with scores ranging from 29 in Chad to 75 in Seychelles. Additionally, while all African countries have available data for this indicator, it is in fact a composite estimate based on limited primary data.

- For the component Health worker density, by type of occupation (per 10,000 population), 48 countries had data in 2018 but only ten countries have data for 2021.

The WHO GHO and World Bank (WB) health capacity indicators paint a similar picture, although at a much more severe scale.

- For the number of nurses per 1,000 over the last ten years, 2018 was the only year for which there was data available for more than 60% of countries, but in 2020, the latest year available, there was data available for only 13 countries.
- For hospital bed density, 2015 was the year with data available for the highest number of countries, however that was still for only 10 countries. There is no data available for any country for the last five years.

### Data gap: education

When it comes to education-related data, there is still a lack of proxies measuring how countries are performing in providing their citizens with tertiary education. This is very clearly highlighted in the way the targets for SDG4 (Quality Education) are formulated: while the main proxies to measure primary and secondary education provision relate to education completion for both primary and secondary school levels (SDG Indicator 4.1.2), the main proxy to measure tertiary education provision relates to enrolment (SDG Indicator 4.3.2), which is a much less comprehensive measurement.

For Africa, the main source for education data for inclusion in the IIAG is UNESCO. Even where there is data for tertiary education, there is less country coverage than for other school levels: only 21 African countries meet the IIAG variable selection inclusion criteria for tertiary education enrolment, compared to 32 African countries for primary education enrolment.

Despite progress, there are still key data gaps\* in the monitoring of the SDGs for African countries:

\* Gaps in publicly available comparable data to measure development progress.

#### Goal 1: No Poverty



Proportion of population below international poverty line (%): Only 5 countries have data for the period 2019-2022, namely: Malawi, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Egypt, and Gambia.

#### Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation



Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services, by urban/rural (%): Only 28 African countries have data since 2019.

#### Goal 2: Zero Hunger



Prevalence of undernourishment (%): All African countries except for Burundi, Equatorial Guinea and Eritrea, have data from 2012 to 2021.

Proportion of children moderately or severely wasted (%): Only 18 African countries have data available since 2020.

#### Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy



Goal 7 is the only goal for which all African countries have at least one data point since 2021 for each variable. Four of the six variables in this goal have data for the last ten years up to 2021.

#### Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being



UHC service coverage index: All African countries have data for 2019 and 2021.

Health worker density, by type of occupation (per 10,000 population): While 31 countries had data for 2019, the coverage has declined year-on-year and only 10 countries had data for 2021.

#### Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth



Since 2019, the range of coverage for most indicators related to economic growth is between 29 and 54, coverage for indicators related to decent work remains woefully inadequate with unemployment rate data never covering more than 17 countries in a single year.

#### Goal 4: Quality Education



Proportion of children and young people achieving a minimum proficiency level in reading and mathematics (%): Only 19 African countries have data since 2019 and only Kenya and Zambia have data for 2021 (latest data year).

#### Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure



Manufacturing value added per capita (constant 2015 United States dollars): All 54 African countries have data spanning the decade up to 2021.

Total official flows for infrastructure, by recipient countries (millions of constant 2021 United States dollars): 53 African countries have data spanning the decade up to 2021.

#### Goal 5: Gender Equality



Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (% of total number of seats): All African countries have data for 2021.

Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care: Across the last five years, 12 African countries have one data point, the rest have no data.

#### Goal 10: Reduced Inequality



Labour share of GDP (%): 53 African countries have a data available from 2004 to 2020.

The target with the most indicators in Goal 10 is Target 10.5 (Improve the regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions and strengthen the implementation of such regulations).

### Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities



**Proportion of urban population living in slums (%):** 39 African countries have data for 2020, however coverage has fallen over the years data was available for 46 African countries in 2012, 2014 and 2016 and 44 countries in 2018.

Almost 70% of indicators in Goal 11 relate to damage related to disasters or to the reduction of their risks.

### Goal 15: Life on Land



All indicators in target 15 have data for at least 70% of African countries in one year since 2019, except for **Total official development assistance for biodiversity, by donor countries (millions of constant 2021 United States dollars)** for which no African country has data.

### Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production



**Food waste (Tonnes):** 54 African countries have data available for 2019, it is however the only year with available data.

For all other practical variables related to waste, no variable has data for more than four countries since 2019.

### Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions



**Bribery incidence (% of firms experiencing at least one bribe payment request):** Since 2018, only 10 African countries have one data point, the rest have no data.

**Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority (% of children under 5 years of age):** Only five African countries have data for 2021 (latest available data year).

### Goal 13: Climate Action



The only indicators with African data from 2019-2021 to not be related to disasters damage or risk reduction are those under Target 13.3 (Improve education [...] on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning).

These indicators have data for all 54 African countries but only for the 2020 data year.

### Goal 17: Partnerships to achieve the Goal



SDG 17 calls for a global partnership for sustainable development. It highlights the importance of macroeconomic stability and of mobilising financial resources for developing countries.

**Countries with national statistical plans that are fully funded (1 = YES; 0 = NO):** All African countries have data from 2019 to 2021.

### Goal 14: Life Below Water



**Average proportion of Marine Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) covered by protected areas (%):** 54 African countries have data available from 2012 to 2022.

**Average marine acidity (pH) measured at agreed suite of representative sampling stations:** Since 2019, only seven African countries have data available, namely, Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa and Tanzania.

### Lack of data and statistics also hamper the monitoring of Agenda 2063

2023 marked the end of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan (FTYIP) (2014-2023) of the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063. While the Agenda 2063 and the SDGs are relatively well-aligned, even for overlapping goals we see a significant lack of data with only 32% of 68 UNSDG indicators of Goals 6, 7, 9, 11 and 17 covering all countries on the continent. Furthermore, the sources of many data points for African countries are either estimations, global monitoring or modelling – with only 33.5% of data for Africa being produced by the National Statistical System (NSS) from 2006 to 2016. As such, the Second Continental Report on The Implementation of Agenda 2063 identifies NSS strengthening as a priority.

## NGN Opinion Survey: gaps in African governance data

### Insights from the Now Generation Network (NGN)

The Mo Ibrahim Foundation's NGN is a pan-African coalition of youth committed to moving the continent's development agenda forward. It consists of Ibrahim alumni of Fellows, scholars, and thematic experts from all 54 African countries representing various sectors and disciplines.

The NGN survey on data gaps was conducted to gather the voices and opinions of African youth on the continent's data governance landscape. It consisted of one open-ended and four multiple-choice questions.

### 1. Thematic data gaps

What are the governance dimensions presenting the largest data gaps in your view?

- More than half of respondents (50.6%) identified *Accountability & Transparency* as a governance dimension presenting the most significant data gaps.
- Additionally, 38.0% of all responses mentioned sub-categories from the *Security & Rule of Law* category.
- For the remaining categories, respondents found *Women's Equality* (18.8%), *Rural Economy* (30.6%) and *Sustainable Environment* (29.4%) to be the sub-categories with the largest data gaps in their respective categories.

### 2. Challenges for governance data in Africa

Based on your day-to-day work and areas of expertise, what are the key challenges when it comes to governance data and statistics for in Africa?

- An overwhelming 94.1% of respondents included "Lack of data" as a key challenge.
- Only five respondents identified "Proliferation of data" as a challenge, likewise for "Multiplication of international reporting commitments".
- The remaining challenges ("Inaccurate data", "Fragmented data", "Lack of data uptake" and "Lack of data literacy") were all present in about 40% of responses.

### 3. Bridging the gap

What do you think are the main solutions to bridge the governance data and statistics gap in Africa?

- "Stronger administrative data systems" were mentioned in almost 65% of all responses and "Digital literacy and inclusion" was present in more than 45%.
- Only 10 respondents identified "Coordinated donor support" as one of the main solutions to bridge the data gap.



Lack of adequate data continues to put a limitation on policy analysis of some of the most pressing challenges in health and education.



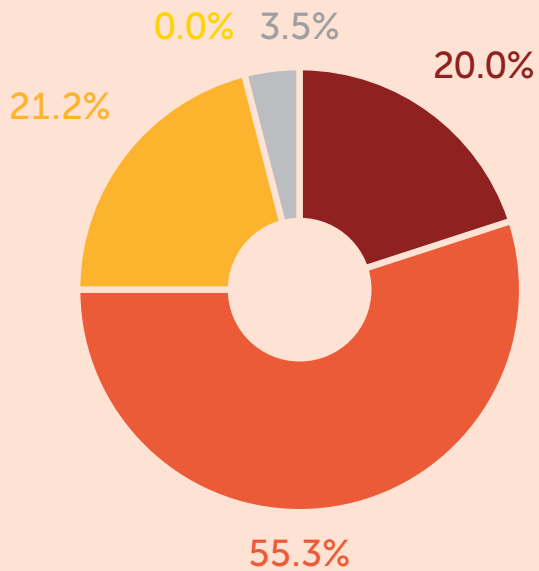
It seems essential to create conditions for the local administration level to be able to have credible data [...] so that it responds to the challenges of sustainable development and the wishes of the population.

#### 4. Data uptake

How do you view African governments' current use of governance data and statistics in policymaking?

- More than 50% of respondents (55.3%) found governance data and statistics use to be absent except for some policy areas.
- Worryingly, none of the respondents stated that governance data use was mainstream across all policy areas.

NGN opinion survey: How do you view African governments' current use of governance data and statistics in policymaking?



I think most governments recognise the utility of data and statistics for policymaking but lack the system/methodology to streamline data collection, vetting and utilisation.

- Absent in all policy areas
- Somewhat absent except for some policy areas
- Somewhat mainstream except for some policy areas
- Mainstream in all policy areas
- Don't know

## Sex-disaggregated data

Sex-disaggregated data are data collected and tabulated separately for women and men, allowing for the measurement of differences between them on various social and economic dimensions. They are required in order to obtain gender statistics.

Gender data gaps are characterised as the lack of:

- Coverage and timely production: regular production of data covering the entire population
- Cross-country comparability: the use of international standard definitions and methodologies
- Complexity: data that cut across domains, revealing patterns and connections
- Granularity: data disaggregated by multiple characteristics

## Mapping gender data availability

Nearly 80% of countries globally regularly produce sex-disaggregated statistics on mortality, labour force participation and education and training. Less than a third of countries disaggregate statistics by gender on informal employment, entrepreneurship, violence against women and unpaid work.

According to a 2019 study published by Data2X and Open Data Watch, assessing the availability of 104 gender-relevant indicators across 15 sub-Saharan African countries, sex-disaggregated data were missing for 48% of gender-relevant indicators both in international and national databases.

- In international databases, 22% of the indicators lack any sex-disaggregation and 26% are missing data entirely.
- In national databases there are more missing observations (35%) but a smaller proportion (13%) that lack sex-disaggregation.

Large gender data gaps in both international and national databases mean that there is a need for a coordinated effort to improve data collection and adopt common standards for indicator compilation.



**Across 15 sub-Saharan African countries, sex-disaggregated data are only available for 52% of gender-relevant indicators**



### Best practices from the continent

#### Kenya: using national surveys to measure women empowerment

In 2020, the Gender Data Network (GDN) and UN Women released a Counted And Visible toolkit as a reference guide for how to produce disaggregated gender statistics in education from household surveys. In Kenya, this initiative spurred the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) and UN Women to conceptualize and launch a new Kenya Women's Empowerment Index (WEI), drawing upon data from existing national surveys.

#### South Africa: using digital methods to track gendered effects of the COVID-19 pandemic

In South Africa, the new National Income Dynamics Study—Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey (NIDSCRAM) is a nationally representative panel survey of 28,000 South African individuals conducted via phone in 11 national languages. The same individuals are contacted each month to ascertain the changing impact of COVID-19 upon income and employment, their household welfare, receipt of grants and about their knowledge and behaviour related to COVID-19. The survey, which includes questions on men and women's wellbeing and other gendered dynamics, has helped highlight inequalities resulting from the pandemic.

In November 2023, Open Data Watch released the Gender Data Compass (GDC), a tool for building robust, inclusive and effective gender data. The GDC assesses the current state of gender data (availability and openness) and the ecosystem (institutional foundations, capacity and financing) that enables governments to produce and use gender data. Gaps in availability showed that environmental gender data had by far the lowest availability with a score of just 6. The second lowest availability scores were in the categories Health and Nutrition and Agency and Economic Advancement. The lack of disaggregated gender data in Health and Nutrition can have drastic effects, since men and women have different access to and uptake of health resources, as well as differences in risks and susceptibilities to illness. And the lack of data on agency and economic advancement makes it impossible to track advancements in gender equality.

## Local and disability data

### Local data

Local-level official statistics can shed light into local disparities beyond regional or national averages, thus helping to build trust in public information.

Local data is important for policymaking, often underpinning the decision-making of civil society and service delivery from central and local governments.

The need for local-level statistics is also related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, where targets often require action at the local level for countries to succeed in reaching the goals on a national level.

The Agenda commits to 'leaving no one behind', which includes the need to measure, for example, urban and rural populations.

#### Looking beyond the 'tyranny of averages'

If governments are to succeed in achieving sustainable development for all, they must not succumb to the 'tyranny of averages', but rather dig deeper. Otherwise, they will overlook pockets of deprivation and waste opportunities to target resources to those communities and individuals needing assistance the most.

### Disability data

An estimated 1.3 billion people experience significant disability. This represents over 16% of the world's population, or 1 in 6 of us.

#### Disability data is being severely undercounted in Africa

- Official government statistics from the Africa region report the percentage of persons with disabilities to be as low as 2-5%, but in some countries it is likely closer to 20-22%.
- Disability data is limited to a narrow set of impairments. Data collected is limited to physical impairments which are at times conflated with health conditions and this results in reporting low disability prevalence rates.
- Disability data is mainly collected through either census or survey methods. The nature of both methods leads to differences in results even within the same countries or regions.
- Disability data needs to be further disaggregated to uncover other patterns and trends amongst the population.

# Filling data gaps: Capturing the voices of Africa's youth

*Afrobarometer*

Afrobarometer has spent the last quarter of a century collecting data on the “voices of the people” across the African continent. In our most recent Round 9 (2021–2023) series of public attitude surveys, we interviewed more than 53,000 African citizens in 39 countries on topics from trust and corruption to democracy and military rule. These data are used by policymakers, journalists, advocates, and others to inform programmes and policies, strengthening governance by taking the perspectives, priorities, and experiences of ordinary Africans into account.

There is only one problem. Up to now, Afrobarometer has only interviewed adult citizens aged 18 and above. But the median age in Africa is just 19, meaning that nearly half of the continent's population is under age 18 and has been excluded from our surveys. We can, and do, ask the adults we interview what they think about critical youth issues, e.g. what are the greatest challenges facing Africa's young people (50% say unemployment), whether governments should invest more in addressing youth priorities (59% say “yes”), and how well the government is doing in addressing the particular needs of youth (sizeable majorities say “not well”).

But given the youthful demographic profiles of most African countries, stakeholders have a growing interest in the particular attitudes and experiences of Africa's youngest citizens. Although it boasts the world's youngest population, Africa is ruled by some of its oldest leaders. Better data on youth perspectives are essential to bridging this gap and helping Africa's aging statesmen build policies that meet the needs of the up-and-coming generations.

This is especially true because of the vast differences in generational experiences, for example between those who were born prior to the democratic openings of the 1990s and those described in South Africa and elsewhere as the “born free” generation. Promoting better governance requires that we understand how Africans of all ages perceive their political systems, the effectiveness of their governments, and their role in holding their governments accountable. But it is especially critical to understand how the youngest – and largest – cohorts feel about these issues. Do younger Africans still reject military rule the way their parents did, even though far fewer of them have personally experienced it? Do they value – and exercise – their rights to vote, speak, and associate to the same degree that their parents do? Are they finding new ways to engage with their leaders, and with one another, that we may not even be effectively measuring yet? And how do they understand Africa's place in the world in the face of growing threats from climate change, pandemics, global conflicts with profound local impacts, and an endless array of economic challenges, both global and local?

Capturing the views of those under 18 – even if, at least initially, we limit ourselves to expanding our surveys to 16- to 17-year-olds – presents its own set of challenges. Differences in daily routines (school!) and preferred modes of communication and interaction (online!), and lack of familiarity with questionnaire-toting fieldworkers present some initial hurdles. More daunting are the implications of their status as minors who may be protected by different consent rules, such as requirements for parental permission, than their 18-and-above counterparts. An added level of complication is that consent rules for minor research subjects, as well as the official age of majority, vary from country to country. All of this has implications for the time it takes to complete an interview, the amount of time teams must spend in the field, and the cost of data collection.

But these are challenges worth overcoming. The African Union's Agenda 2063 and the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development both highlight the essential role young people must play in transforming governance and catalysing sustainable development in Africa. More than a third of the targets for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reference youth. Finding new ways and new opportunities to capture and amplify the voices of Africa's next generation is essential to answering their demand for a better future.

## Relying on local reporting in conflict data collection

### *Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED)*

Local sources, media published in local languages, and partnerships with local organisations can be essential to developing a robust and methodical conflict data collection system and, subsequently, a better understanding of political unrest. Local reporting is particularly useful in more restrictive environments for international media, along with addressing bias. Accounting for these issues is vital for an event-based dataset like the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), which records disaggregated conflict and demonstration events. More specifically, the inclusion of local partnerships and sourcing can mitigate potential errors in conflict data, namely omission, inflation, and misrepresentation. For these reasons, ACLED prioritises reporting from local partnerships and sources, especially with broadened coverage using local languages (hereafter, collectively referred to as local reporting), to create a unique ‘sourcing profile’ for each country.

Local reporting provides information for most events recorded by ACLED in Africa. While national news outlets in various local languages continue to produce reports for over half of the total number of events in Africa, local partners provided over 6,000 unique events in 2022 that were not reported by other sources – 18% of the total number. Local journalists reporting on new media platforms (including Twitter, Telegram, and WhatsApp) also account for a growing amount of coverage in difficult information environments, providing reports for over 14% of events in 2022. Subnational sources covering specific geographic areas, such as an administrative district or urban area, offer a further resource to understand unrest in targeted areas – making up 6% of the total number of events in 2022.

The inclusion of local reporting into a specific sourcing profile for a country or area can aid in overcoming the potential for errors related to inflation. More data does not necessarily equal higher quality data due to issues often arising from duplicated events and the inclusion of events outside the catchment of a particular coding methodology. Triangulation with local reports – often capturing specific details – can play an important role in determining potential duplicate events. In addition, relationships with local data collection partners often aid in identifying false reports and misinformation.

Omission errors can be mitigated by local reporting through increased attention to certain types, geographic areas, or periods of conflict that are missed by other kinds of reporting. Even in more open media environments, local reporting often captures events that might be perceived as less important to larger traditional media, such as small protests and spontaneous mob violence incidents. Some geographic areas can also receive limited attention from traditional media, requiring local reporting to fill these gaps and report on events in these places.

In the case of Mali, for example, few media organisations can report on the conflict in the troubled Gao region due to the ongoing insurgency by Jamaa Nusra al-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM). ACLED has partnered with local organisations to address these reporting gaps. Through these relationships with local organisations, ACLED is able to gather information in hard-to-access contexts and integrate thematic, regional, and country-level expertise into the data collection programme. With the information made available to ACLED from local sources, the Gao region accounted for 18% of total political violence events recorded in Mali in 2022 – making it the

region with the second highest levels of violence in the country. Without these local partner reports, Gao falls to the third highest levels, making up only 12% of total events of political violence in Mali.

Additional omission errors also arise from seasonal reporting difficulties. Many English-language and international sources report less in December due to the Christmas holiday season, for example, which affects the understanding of unrest in certain countries – especially those that do not widely participate in the holidays. The potential significance of this bias is evident when comparing conflict datasets, which show that the inclusion of local sources can correct this seasonality bias. In the case of Yemen, including local sources resulted in an increase in political violence events most years in December compared to a decrease when relying on only international or English-language sources.

Engagement with differing local media types also offers important nuances that can improve understanding of conflict. Relying on written reporting may skew conflict to urban areas, whereas rural areas may rely further on radio broadcasts in local languages. Radio remains a popular news source in Somalia, for example, and monitoring key radio stations provides hundreds of unique events not reported elsewhere – making up over 13% of political violence and demonstration events recorded in the country in 2022. Likewise, in Egypt's restricted and shrinking media environment, local reporting through new media forms has become an increasingly important means of capturing Islamic State violence. New media in Egypt provided the sole source for 71% of political violence events between 2018 and 2022.

While all sources contain biases, local reporting plays an important role in triangulation to check for misinformation errors. Repressive states, for example, tend to alter key details to fit official narratives. Additionally, armed groups operating in conflict zones often limit access for journalists, controlling the information released from these areas for traditional media. International sources may apply particular framing that biases reporting on political unrest.

While offering numerous advantages, local reporting also poses some challenges. These can include the introduction of additional biases, conflict framing, reporting delays, and insufficient or sporadic funding that creates problems for consistent reporting. Thus, local reporting must be incorporated into broader conflict data collection systems using a rigorous methodology and understanding of biases present at the local level. The utility of local sources also varies depending on the particular context. In a challenging information environment like Somalia, local partners were the sole reporters of half the political violence events recorded in the ACLED dataset for 2022. These contexts vary drastically from more open media environments, such as South Africa, where less than 5% of events were solely reported by local partners.

Collectively, local reporting offers important insights for efforts to collect information on conflict and demonstrations, often contributing to a more robust picture of political unrest than is available through traditional – and especially international- English-language media.

# Chapter 03.

Solution:  
the data  
investment  
case



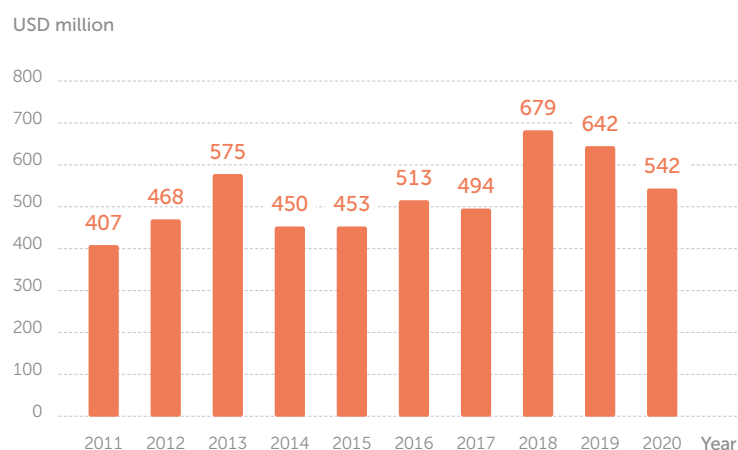
## INTERNATIONAL FUNDING FOR STATISTICS IS ON THE DECLINE

Reports by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21), Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) and others show statistics are perennially underfunded globally, currently attracting a mere 0.34% of total Official Development Assistance (ODA). As a result, the funding gap for properly monitoring the SDG indicators stands at approximately \$200 million per year.

### During COVID-19, funding for data globally suffered the largest drop since the start of the SDG era

- According to the PRESS 2022 report, international support for data and statistics amounted to \$542 million in 2020 (compared to \$642 million in 2019 and \$679 in 2018).
- Between 2018 and 2020, while the total volume of ODA (excluding COVID-19-related support) from Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members decreased by 3.2%, there was a decline of more than 20% in funding for data from the same group of donors.

### World: funding for data and statistics (2011-2020)



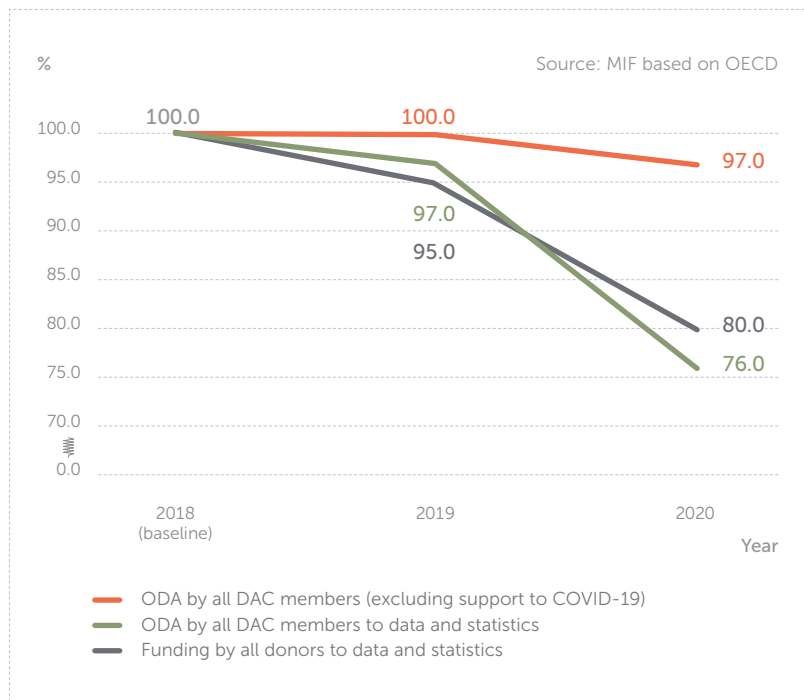
Source: MIF based on OECD

International funding for data and statistics fell by \$100 million between 2019 and 2021, the biggest decline since the start of the SDG era

Funding for data and statistics fell more sharply during the pandemic than ODA (excluding COVID-19 related aid)



### World: ODA & funding for data and statistics (2018-2020)



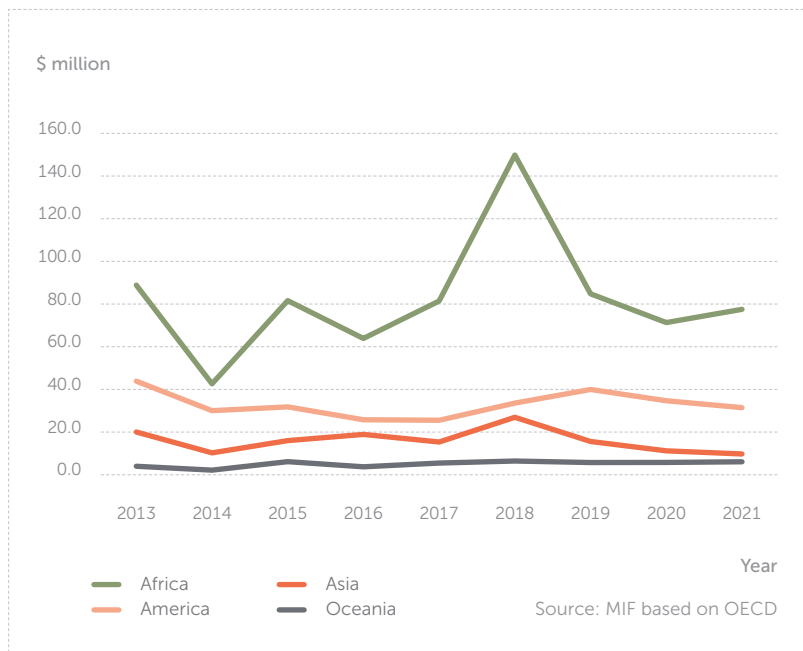
#### Gender data funding has more than halved between 2019 and 2020

Funding for gender data dropped from \$91 million to \$37 million between 2019 and 2020. According to the PRESS 2022 report, the reliance on a few donors for funding for gender data poses great risks. In the SDG era, five donors have largely provided fully two-thirds of funding for gender data – this is much higher than what was provided by the top five donors for overall data and statistics (55%).

#### Africa receives more funding for data and statistics than any other world region, but decline has been sharp since 2018

- According to the OECD's Creditor Reporting System, ODA for data and statistics from all official donors to Africa is higher than for America, Asia and Oceania combined in every year between 2013 and 2021.
- In 2021, the latest data year, ODA funding to data and statistics in Africa amounted to \$77.2 million (compared to \$30.9 million in Asia, \$9.9 million in America and \$6.0 in Oceania).
- However, since 2018, ODA for data and statistics to Africa has nearly halved (going from \$149.3 million in 2018 to \$77.2 million in 2021).

### World regions: ODA funding for data & statistics (2013-2021)



Only 3% of public health surveys in the African region are funded by their governments, instead depending on external donors

NSOs in sub-Saharan Africa reported a decrease in funding from both government (71%) and donors (59%), according to the PRESS 2021 report

### Power of Data: Unlocking the Data Dividend for the SDGs

Data is a huge untapped potential for governments and donors – as evidenced by an investment case commissioned by the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, investments in strengthening data systems can offer an average rate of return of \$32 of economic benefits for \$1 invested.

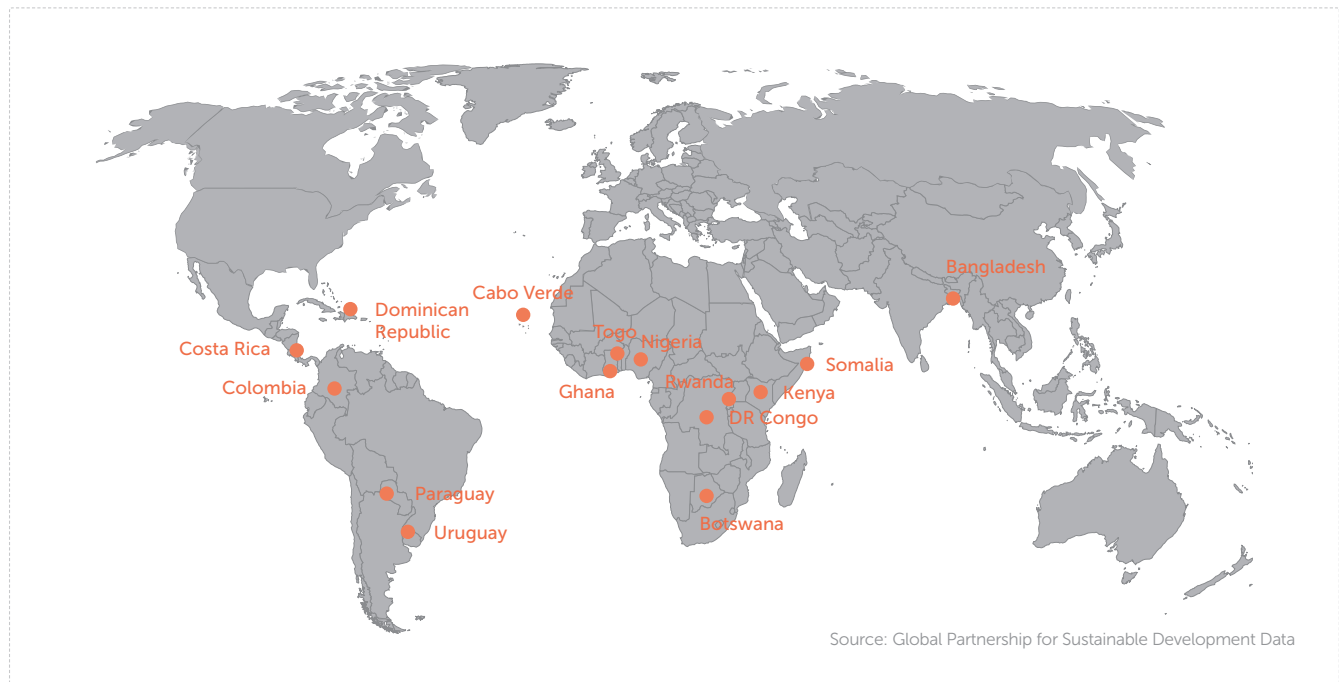
On the SDG Acceleration Day, on 17 September 2023 in New York, the UN High Impact Initiative 'Power of Data: Unlocking the Data Dividend for the SDGs' was launched. This is one out of 12 High Impact Initiatives<sup>1</sup> that the UN Secretary-General identified for the UN development system to accelerate SDG realisation.

At the heart of the High Impact Initiative are cutting-edge national data partnerships which will bring together governments, tech companies, civil society, donors and other stakeholders to build on existing initiatives to strengthen the use of data and drive progress on the SDGs and other development agendas.

- 15 countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America have already announced the launch of national data partnerships, supported by the UK with an initial \$7.5 million.
- Of the 15 countries globally that have launched national data partnerships, nine are African: Botswana, Cabo Verde, DR Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Somalia and Togo.

<sup>1</sup> The 12 UN High Impact Initiatives are: Energy Compacts: Scaling up ambition to deliver on SDG7; Nature Driving Economic Transformation: Leveraging the power of biodiversity and nature to drive equitable economic progress; Food Systems Transformation: Transforming food systems for a sustainable world without hunger; Transforming Education: Learning to build a better future for all; Global Accelerator: The Global Accelerator on jobs and social protection for just transitions; Digital Public Infrastructure: Scaling inclusive and open digital ecosystems for the SDGs; SDG Stimulus: Scaling up long-term affordable financing for the SDGs; Transforming4Trade: Paradigm shift to boost economic development; Local2030 Coalition: Pushing key transitions and achieving the SDGs by 2030; FutureGov: Building public sector capabilities for the future; Power of Data: Unlocking the data dividend for the SDGs; and Spotlight Initiative: To eliminate violence against women and girls.

## World countries: national data partnerships launched (August 2023)



### Power of Data: roadmap to 2030

#### By September 2024:

- 30 countries will have announced the launch of national data partnerships.
- 15 countries will have functioning national data partnerships that are actively and collaboratively solving data problems in-country, utilising data for better decision-making, digital transformation, and economic growth.
- Two additional donors will be supporting national data partnerships.
- A wider group of donors and multilaterals will be aligning their data systems funding and technical assistance with priorities identified by the initial 15 countries.
- Tech companies will be providing substantial in-kind support aligned with priorities of 15 countries.
- NGOs and others will engage with national data partnerships at a country level.

#### By 2030:

- 50 countries will be the driving forces of data strategies aimed at accelerated progress on SDGs.
- 50 countries will have secured financing for data and statistics, both domestically and internationally, in order to support national priorities and strategy.

On average, investing \$1 in data systems delivers a return of \$32 in the form of economic benefits for the country

9 out of 15 countries globally that have launched national data partnerships are African

## The central role of National Statistical Offices (NSOs): independence is key

- National Statistical Offices (NSOs) are usually the coordinating body for a country's national statistical system.
- NSOs are in charge of identifying, collecting, processing, analysing and disseminating official statistics on behalf of the government.
- NSOs are a part of government, but they should have independence – this is key to their position as trustworthy information brokers and they should remain free from influences that might bias their data or analyses.
- However, NSOs and the larger statistical system should be responsive to the changing demands of policymakers and the public's need for reliable information.



NSOs are the  
cornerstone  
of national data  
ecosystems

### Guidance for NSOs is provided by the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

**Principle 1:** Official statistics provide an indispensable element in the information system of a democratic society, serving the Government, the economy and the public with data about the economic, demographic, social and environmental situation. To this end, official statistics that meet the test of practical utility are to be compiled and made available on an impartial basis by official statistical agencies to honour citizens' entitlement to public information.

**Principle 2:** To retain trust in official statistics, the statistical agencies need to decide according to strictly professional considerations, including scientific principles and professional ethics, on the methods and procedures for the collection, processing, storage and presentation of statistical data.

**Principle 3:** To facilitate a correct interpretation of the data, the statistical agencies are to present information according to scientific standards on the sources, methods and procedures of the statistics.

**Principle 4:** The statistical agencies are entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics.

**Principle 5:** Data for statistical purposes may be drawn from all types of sources, be they statistical surveys or administrative records. Statistical agencies are to choose the source with regard to quality, timeliness, costs and the burden on respondents.

**Principle 6:** Individual data collected by statistical agencies for statistical compilation, whether they refer to natural or legal persons, are to be strictly confidential and used exclusively for statistical purposes.

**Principle 7:** The laws, regulations and measures under which the statistical systems operate are to be made public.



**Principle 8:** Coordination among statistical agencies within countries is essential to achieve consistency and efficiency in the statistical system.

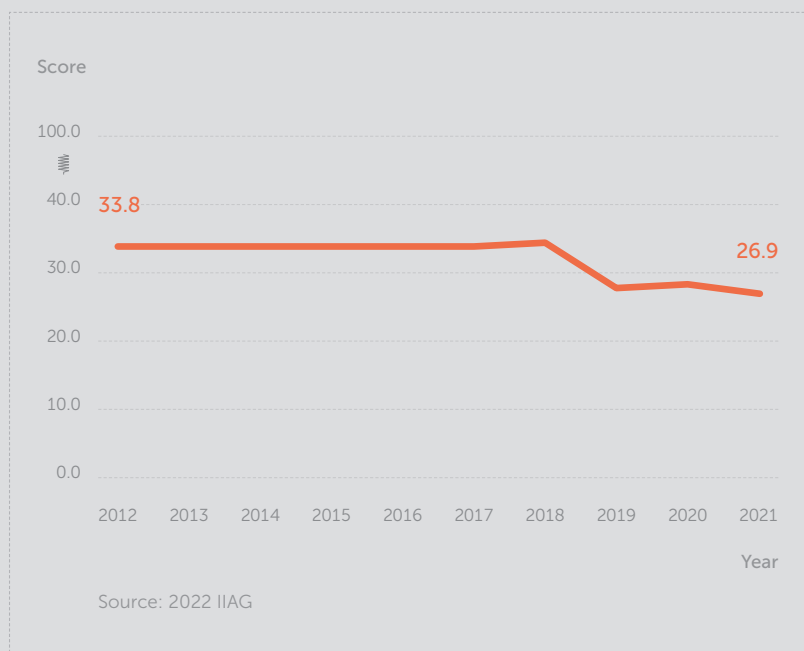
**Principle 9:** The use by statistical agencies in each country of international concepts, classifications and methods promotes the consistency and efficiency of statistical systems at all official levels.

**Principle 10:** Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in statistics contributes to the improvement of systems of official statistics in all countries.

### Independence of NSOs in 2022 IIAG

The African average score for the IIAG sub-indicator *Independence of the National Statistics Office*<sup>1</sup> has deteriorated by -6.9 score points between 2012 and 2021.

#### Africa: *Independence of the National Statistics Office* (2012-2021)



Only 7 out of 54 African countries have improved in the IIAG sub-indicator *Independence of the National Statistics Office* between 2012 and 2021 – Comoros, Gambia, Morocco, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe

The IIAG sub-indicator *Statistical Data Coverage & Openness*, which measures the availability and the openness of key statistical indicators on websites maintained by NSOs, has improved by +15.5 score points between 2012 and 2021.

<sup>1</sup> This IIAG sub-indicator *Independence of the National Statistics Office* measures the extent to which the NSO has the autonomy to collect data of its choosing, the autonomy to publish data without prior clearance or approval from any branch of the government, and funding is sufficient to collect and publish data of its choosing.

# The power of data for governance: key challenges that NSOs currently face on the African continent

*Philippe N. Gafishi, Inter-Regional Adviser, OECD/ PARIS21*

Better data and statistics are critical for setting development targets, measuring progress, and accelerating action including good governance. With the unprecedented increased in and evolving demand for data in terms of scope, quantity, quality, timeliness and disaggregation from national development plans, Agenda 2063, Agenda 2030 for sustainable development goals, recent crisis including COVID-19, climate change and conflicts affecting Africa in particular; national statistical offices (NSOs) in Africa continue to be at the forefront of developing and coordinating national statistical systems (NSS) as well as engaging with the larger data ecosystem to fit for purpose. Therefore, NSS in Africa need to innovate and adapt quickly not only in terms of data production, but also in more effectively re-using, analysing, disseminating, and communicating statistics, including from other alternative data sources.

Despite the progress made by NSOs in Africa to improve data production and dissemination in different statistics domains, including governance statistics, NSOs face numerous political, budgetary, or structural challenges and roadblocks when it comes to statistical legal framework, institutional arrangements and coordination, data production coverage and modern infrastructure, data quality and governance, human capital and capacity development, and sustainable financing for statistics - which impair the capacity of NSOs to produce official statistics and fit for purpose. Governance statistics<sup>1</sup> has been even more affected as it was not prioritised in the statistics programmes and strategies.

In the efforts to address the aforementioned challenges, 83% of African countries have developed and implemented National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) in 2023. Its implementation in Africa varies with country context from 40% to 80 % due to several limitations.

**Most of countries in Africa have developed or revised their statistics law based on the African Charter for Statistics and the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics but lack effective implementation.**

While the capacities of the NSO are a key factor when discussing statistical output, the framework in which it functions is crucial to fulfil its mandate including coordinating statistics from line ministries and agencies, local governments, and other data producers in the national data ecosystem. One important issue that affects many African countries today lies in the fact that the statistical laws are meant primarily for the NSOs and not the entire NSS. This could lead to inconsistencies in the production and dissemination of official statistics across different organs within the NSS. Lack of coordination, poor collaboration and data sharing, modest data quality, and duplication of efforts are some of the issues that arise from this asymmetric application of the law. The statistics act should also consider the changing data environment, increasing complexity of the new data ecosystem with frontiers of the traditional NSS being extended. Lastly, it is important for the laws to consider data innovation with the use of new technologies and should be strictly defined as to not leave any leeway or grey areas which could end up being used to meddle with official statistics and affect the mandate and professional independence of the NSO. While revising the statistics law or even its regulatory implementation decrees, it is important to integrate governance statistics and map its data ecosystem stakeholders.

**NSOs in Africa have introduced the use of new technology in data production processes but still need a lot to modernise internal infrastructure and extend the scope of data production and quality to meet user needs efficiently.**

With the advent of new technologies and further advancements in innovation and data science,

<sup>1</sup> The recent revised Classification of Statistical Activities (CSA 2.0) has explicitly included "Governance statistics" and "Human rights statistics" as domains in official statistical nomenclature.

initiatives at the NSS level need to unlock the new potential for efficiency gains. Big data and artificial intelligence have been at the centre of most debates these past years and would allow NSOs to make extraordinary improvements in most aspects of its area of work. The use of these new technologies would allow NSOs to automate data production and dissemination processes. Furthermore, these tools can be used to analyse data more effectively and efficiently, removing the human error part of the question and automating the processes which are labour intensive. Leaps can be made in the domain of predictive analysis by having an AI fit hundred of thousands of models to find the ones which would have the highest predictive power which can be used to close data gaps better. But using this technology comes at the cost of the need for massive improvements in infrastructure. The use of foreign AI tools into official statistics creates security and confidentiality threats given the low capacity of data protection from NSOs in Africa. To mitigate this risk, African NSOs need to improve their basic IT infrastructure which encompass better network capabilities and higher computing power, which need to be coupled with more stable power supplies and air-conditioning. Once the NSOs have the capacity to collect, store and handle big data, they will obtain the possibility to develop their own artificial intelligence that would follow national data security policy and regulations. NSOs should also use this opportunity to introduce governance statistics in the discussion.

**While NSOs in Africa have staff with relatively fair statistics skills, the emergence of new and non-traditional data sources calls for developing new knowledge and skills in such areas as data science, artificial intelligence, leadership, and management.**

Advancements in innovation, digitalisation and IT infrastructure will be ineffective if they are not coupled with trainings to improve the human capital of the NSO and NSS in Africa. A mix of trainings covering technical and non-technical skills need to be available in order to make the best use of progresses made so far in data science. This field touches many actors in the private and public sectors of a country. Facilitating exchanges with scholars and data scientists from other sectors will allow the staff of the NSO to gain insight into new processes and methodologies. Overarching this, non-technical skills cannot be left behind as trainings in communication, teamwork, leadership, managing change and problem-solving are crucial for project management, stakeholder engagement and community mobilisation to support the production and use of data and statistics. Trainings in these non-technical skills can be sourced from local and international organisations that specialize in this matter.

**African NSOs are often faced with the issue of insufficient and unsustainable financing for statistics which hampers the capacity of the office to collect, analyse and disseminate disaggregated data and statistics for better governance.**

Domestic financing for statistics has been volatile and inadequate in Africa, coupled with uncoordinated external support to development data which in many cases leads to duplication of efforts. This issue became particularly flagrant in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic which led to catastrophic consequences for NSOs in sub-Saharan Africa. More than 90% of the NSOs surveyed by UNSTATS answered that the pandemic affected their capacity to produce essential monthly and quarterly and administrative data statistics. African countries should at least implement the decision of the Heads of State of the African Union to allocate 0.15% of national budgets to the development of statistics. It is also important to note that statistics is a public good and an NSO that is only financed by a weak stream of public funds will have its independence put into question and will not be able to implement important projects to improve governance without the commitment of the government support. Budget deliberation for that matter should prioritise governance statistics activities at the same level as other key development areas.

## Filling data gaps with non-official sources of data such as citizen-generated data or data collected by private companies

“Citizen-generated data allows people and communities to gather and take control of the data affecting their daily lives” (UN Secretary-General António Guterres, World Data Forum 2023)

- With less than seven years remaining to achieve the SDGs, citizen-generated data (CGD) can help fill key data gaps to “leave no one behind”.

### What counts as CGD?

- Social media posts, audio messages, survey data, news articles, videos on YouTube, and even in cultural forms captured digitally
- Community data, usually facilitated by citizen groups or civil society

### Importance of CGD

- Empower citizens to be agents of change, enhancing participation and accountability
- Enhance data availability, timeliness, quality, openness and inclusiveness
- Provide valuable insights, especially for marginalised populations

#### Collaborative on Citizen Data

A collaborative of communities, CSOs, NSOs, human rights institutes, academia, regional and international organisations, aiming to:

- Develop and finalise the Copenhagen Framework on CGD, to be presented to the UNSC in March 2025 – the draft conceptual framework/roadmap for this was agreed at the second UN Expert Group Meeting on Citizen Data (Copenhagen, September 2023)
- Provide a space to share knowledge, resources and experiences
- Foster collaborations
- Provide a platform for advocacy and mobilisation of relevant stakeholders
- Identify conceptual and methodological gaps and inform further development of guidance based on ongoing research and sharing of experiences

#### Using CGD in Kenya to fill gaps in official statistics

The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) is a global leader in the operationalisation of the use of CGD to fill gaps in official reporting. The KNBS quality approach to CGD is based on special validation criteria, which are part of the Statistical Quality Assurance framework published in 2022.



# A Global Data Infrastructure to access privately held data

*Open Data Institute (ODI)*

Data such as statistics, maps, real-time sensor readings and experiment results help us to make decisions, build services, gain insight and develop new scientific theories and innovations. As our populations grow and our economies and societies become ever more reliant on generating value from data, it is becoming increasingly important to build and maintain the vital data infrastructure that makes it possible to collect, manage, use and share this valuable data. And as our economies and societies become more interconnected across the globe, this data infrastructure will need to become increasingly global as well. Despite these complexities, a number of initiatives have proven the value of building and maintaining Global Data Infrastructure (GDI): Open Street Map is one of the most successful examples of collaboratively maintained global data infrastructure in the world, the WHO's Global Clinical Platform for COVID-19 facilitated the sharing of patient-level anonymised clinical data collected from nearly 40 countries during the pandemic and Copernicus, part of the European Union's Space programme, collects and publishes earth observation data "in support of tackling global challenges". One major emerging area of focus is on developing GDI to share data and insights to enable research. As was made clear by the impact of sharing health data during the pandemic, there is enormous potential value to increasing access to data for research - not just in areas like health, but in addressing climate change, improving policy-making, combating exploitation and the spread of mis and disinformation online, confronting democratic and societal polarisation and fragmentation and driving innovation. However, as the pandemic also made clear, building and maintaining global data infrastructure to increase access to data for research is complex and difficult. In order to drive progress in this area, this project will investigate how the development and maintenance of global data infrastructure can be used to break down silos and facilitate collaboration across boundaries to enable research aimed at addressing pressing challenges. At the ODI, we've just launched a programme of work around Global Data Infrastructure, with a primary focus on how to enable access to data currently siloed within private entities that could be used by public-interest researchers to address pressing global challenges. For instance, through supporting private-public partnerships, mandating access through legislation, paying for access, building data institutions to facilitate safe access, and/or through utilising privacy-enhancing technologies to enable access while protecting sensitive information.

## **Creation of tools from civil society organisations**

The Open Data Institute, the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) and Value for Good on behalf of UNDP have been working together to conduct research that will inform the design and development of an online Data to policy Navigator. This playbook is targeted at policymakers from low- and middle-income countries and will provide information, guidance, and practical tools to support each step of the policymaking process. It seeks to respond to the emerging needs of evidence-informed decision-making in the current context of increased social, economic, environmental and political challenges.

## **Participatory data approaches**

At the ODI, we've launched a new joint programme of work, Participatory data, in collaboration with the Aapti Institute and supported by the Patrick J. McGovern Foundation, which aims at elucidating diverse methods of empowering individuals to actively engage in the data ecosystem. Further participation ensures that the value of data is distributed across more people - for example, Citizen Space is an app used by public organisations to include more people in decision-making, like ensuring that electric vehicle charging stations are placed where they are most needed by citizens.

# Empowering the informal sector through data: a case study from Affinity in Ghana

*Dr Tarek Mouganie, Founder and Group CEO, Affinity Africa*

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are major drivers of social and economic growth, and they are key to unlocking Africa's resilience and prosperity.

Africa is the world's youngest continent, where 60% are under the age of 24. With a population of 1.1bn projected to go up to 2.3bn by 2050, millions of new jobs need to be created. Africa is also the lowest tax paying region at 16.6% tax to GDP versus the OECD average of 33.8% and almost 55% of taxation is derived from indirect taxes like VAT (versus 35% in OECD countries), a clear sign of the narrow taxpayer base. A big reason for these differences is the size of the informal sector, estimated to employ up to 86% of the African population.

There are two ways to increase employment and the taxpayer base:

1. Increasing the size of registered businesses and encouraging new registrations
2. Transforming informal businesses to registered businesses

Formalisation and new business registrations is possible if the business environment is friendly and frictionless. But given that the informal sector is largely unbanked, empowering them with affordable and convenient financial products would reduce their vulnerability, fuel growth, increase employment, encourage formalisation, and grow the taxpayer base.

Traditional banks, designed with risk frameworks based on parameters defined by the Global North, have proven difficult to access as well as too expensive. Despite innovative solutions leapfrogging these hurdles, from mobile money to digital lending, we still find that over 90% of SMEs cannot get access to financing and over 60% of adults do not have a bank account.

## **Affinity<sup>1</sup>: banking the majority**

Affinity, a branchless digital bank that provides convenient and affordable banking services to the unbanked and underserved market, soft launched in Ghana on the 26th of October 2022. Affinity offers current, savings and investment products as well as working capital and growth capital loans using online and offline digital channels designed to bank the majority.

Core to our strategy was to understand the needs of our target audience before products were designed. Through this customer-centric approach, we discovered that women in the informal sector were the most hesitant – so by solving for them, all others would be considered. The major themes that were uncovered were affordability, convenience, and trust.

With no marketing spend Affinity has acquired 30,000 accounts in a year. For almost 90% of our customers we are their first bank account and over 60% of accounts are owned by women. Four years devoted to research and build is paying off.

<sup>1</sup> [www.affinityafrica.com](http://www.affinityafrica.com)

To date Affinity has helped customers save \$26m and provided \$12m in loans, focusing on our flagship product which is new to the market, growth capital - long term and affordable financing. Our loans enable our customers to invest in their businesses, increasing revenue and boosting employment. We have seen revenues of our borrowers increase fivefold and employment by 350%.

After processing over 200,000 deposit transactions, we are gaining a deeper insight into the behaviour of the informal sector, such as:

1. Accounts are used for both personal and business purposes
2. We receive 9 inflows for every outflow, the inverse behaviour of salaried individuals
3. Savings are cyclical and seasonal; they drop on holidays and peak early in the week
4. It takes six months for customers to build trust and for us to see savings grow
5. Balances are ~3x the average retail bank account and ~10x the average mobile wallet
6. 15% of informal customers save with us each day versus 6.8% for formally employed
7. Our savings rate is 36% versus the EU average of 6%

As we continue to collect more data and scale, we plan to introduce new and affordable products for our informal customers, including automated loans and merchant devices to digitise payments.

### **Informed decisions through data**

We have seen informal sector workers vilified by governments and romanticised by NGOs as low-income women (which our data shows may not be the case). The only thing that is clear is that they are misunderstood.

When these customers are shut out from formal services, there is simply not enough data available to understand behaviour. This new set of data could enable the private and public sector to create more informed products and policies.

To empower SMEs and boost formal employment we need to encourage the private sector to provide affordable services like those at Affinity. Governments need to encourage formalisation with tax breaks, improving the ease of registration as well as other incentives (value add services).

Until then, and for companies like Affinity to succeed and scale, an environment with collaborative policies, stable and agile government infrastructure (such as identification databases), as well as an enabling macro environment (inflation, interest rates, and currency stability) is urgently needed.

# The Power of Data: knowledge and technology driving sustainable development

*Dr Claire Melamed, CEO of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data*

Even though we are at the halfway point of the 2030 Agenda, fewer than half of all countries are able to produce data on even 80 of the 231 SDG indicators.

At a time of growing crises and shrinking budgets, when governments and donors need to make the most of every dollar, it is particularly critical to invest in the data that can increase the efficiency and impact of all other spending. As AI, digital services, and other technologies driven by data enter the mainstream, investments in data also become foundational for strategies of economic growth and stronger service delivery. Recent research found that, on average, investing one dollar in data systems delivers a return of \$32 in the form of economic benefits for the country.

- **Data is a critical element of good government decision-making.** Timely and accurate data is vital to guide politicians and bureaucrats as they choose between options, allocate scarce resources and develop new policies. Without good data, governments are making policy in the dark. With good data, governments can effectively target resources – as when the National Police force in Kenya identified that most accidents took place on just 150km of the 6,200km road network. Better data meant they could target accident hotspots and make the money go further.
- **Data is key to digital transformation.** Realising the benefits of digital systems to drive progress in critical areas like health, education or climate will rely on a foundation of safe and trusted data. Research for the UN found that digital public infrastructures in the climate sector can accelerate emissions control efforts by five to ten years through sharing key data and driving better policy.
- **Data is the new raw material for economic growth.** Technologies like AI, which are built with data, will add trillions to the global economy. To share in this growth and innovation, countries need to invest in the foundations: strong skills, infrastructure and a policy framework that builds rights and accountability into the system.

Fully mobilising the power of data for sustainable development will deliver enormous benefits. But these will not come automatically – they need to be planned for and invested in. Political leadership is vital, and the right support from development partners.

**Political leadership:** Governments need to lead on prioritising data systems, setting in place the investments and regulatory and policy frameworks to create the foundations of a system that protects rights and drives innovation and entrepreneurship. Increasing skills both inside and outside of government is a critical investment, as is ensuring access to the connectivity and compute power that enables the development and use of new technologies.

Governments need to take political leadership, identifying priorities and ensuring that institutional strategies are aligned behind a single vision of a data system that is the foundation for sustainable development.

**Development Partners:** Effective support to national data systems is about the quality as well as the quantity of funding. More money is needed, but it has to be spent in the right way – on data systems, not just on individual data points or platforms.

Too often donor programmes are not coordinated and in some cases, actively undermine each other, with money and time wasted on unconnected or competing priorities that do not align with what countries actually need. In Ethiopia, for example, donors used 40 different indicators to measure SDG 7.11, access to electricity, which prevented cooperation and made it harder for the government to get a picture of which households had access.

Support for data needs to be coordinated internally in donor agencies, by linking up the data component across sectoral investments, and also coordinated within countries across different donors, aligned behind country priorities within National Data Partnerships.

**Companies:** much of the technology, as well as the data itself, that will power progress is created and owned by the private sector. New models of public-private partnerships, aligned with the business models of the sector and with national values and priorities will be needed so the private sector can play its part in creating data systems that can be the foundation for equitable, sustainable growth.

Data is at the heart of government strategies for delivering services, driving economic growth and overcoming global challenges. The time is now for the political leadership and strong partnerships that can deliver on this potential before it is too late.

## Survey answers from partner organisations and individuals (including a variety of IIAG data sources)

### 1. What are the main data gaps in your dataset - topics you would like to measure or ways you would like to disaggregate the data but are not able to at this stage? Why are they data gaps? Are you anticipating being able to fill these data gaps in the near future?

"There is a need to come up with indicators focusing on public debt transparency, given the challenges African countries face as regards debt sustainability." (African Institute for Development Policy)

"More indicators are needed to assess the levels of women's representation in Africa. For example, indicators that measure the representation of women in key Commissions or Boards, including the Electoral Management Bodies and The Boards of State-Owned Enterprises in Africa, would provide more details on how African countries are progressing regarding women's representation. This would go beyond the representation of women in the National Assemblies, Cabinet and the Judiciary, which the Africa Integrity Indicators measure." (African Institute for Development Policy)

"As of October 2023, Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) Reports from African nations have been published covering 352 fiscal years with an estimated 19% of the data required to be disclosed to the EITI available on government portals meaning that approximately 81% of required disclosure are not made available in an open format". (Daryll Griffith, Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative)

"Data gap in Africa is a major challenge for monitoring and evaluating the goals and aspirations of Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 respectively. Almost 70% of indicators pertinent to health and well-being (SDG 3) cannot be captured in African countries. As far as good governance, rule of law and promotion of democracy is concerned, the overall reporting on SDG 16/Aspiration three of Agenda 2063 remains faint across African countries. The picture is quite mixed towards promoting democratic practices, rule of law and respect to human rights. Only 6-10 out of 23 indicators of SDG 16 are measurable with available data" (Sara Tawfik Hamouda, African Peer Review Mechanism)

"Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) measures over 500 indicators across 13 areas of democracy, so our approach is pretty encompassing. Having said that, we do not cover for example specific conditions for the youth, or specific socio-cultural groups, or de facto levels of inequality". (V-Dem Institute)

"The main difficulty is to find databases to establish a list of media experts and to work on our daily monitoring. We need more African media monitoring tools with community radios, TVs, radios, online and main local language (Hausa, Kiswahili)." (Reporters without Borders)

"The main gaps are four: lack of adequate data on public attitudes and experiences for sub-national analysis (a nationally representative sample of n=1200 or n=2400 is not large enough to disaggregate findings for most sub-national units); coverage of young people (to date, Afrobarometer has only surveyed adult populations aged 18 and above); coverage of special topics (Afrobarometer questionnaires for each round include core tracking items on democracy, governance, the economy and related issues that are included in every survey to be tracked over time and special modules on critical selected topics such as migration and COVID-19, however, there is always far more demand for space on the questionnaire than is available); and countries that we cannot cover (in its most recent round, Afrobarometer covered 39 of 54 African countries, most of the countries that are not covered are not viable due to either insecurity, lack of political openness that could impede respondents' ability to speak freely, and lack of an adequate census frame". (Afrobarometer)

"Some of the indicators we particularly struggle with are: number of residential mortgages outstanding, percentage of women who own a house alone and/or jointly, number of formal dwellings completed annually, total number of residential properties with a title deed. This is often because there is not a digitised deeds registry in country, or information is collected but not made public on a regular basis. We also struggle to access data on number of households at each income segment. This limits our ability to undertake analysis on housing affordability". (Centre for Affordable Housing Finance in Africa)

"Most of the data we collect for the Yearbook is national level, so level of disaggregation is less of an issue. However there are certain countries which are chronically weak on data and each year we struggle. Those include: CAR, Chad, Eritrea, Gabon, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Libya, Mauritania, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan." (Centre for Affordable Housing Finance in Africa)

"In general -- our coverage is between 97-100% on the aggregate sex of members, Speakers, and Committee Chairs. Coverage is lower for disaggregated data that combines both the sex and age of members, per parliamentary chamber. We began with around 50% coverage in 2014 and that has grown to 75-80% today but requires continuous effort to maintain current figures given the election/renewal cycle of parliaments (between 60-90 elections held per year). Recently, we've noticed more parliaments adopting a policy of privacy whereby members are not required to provide or publish personal details, such as age or year/date of birth. Thus -- data collection on the sex/age of individual members to support aggregate calculations is the most time-consuming and contains more gaps". (Inter-Parliamentary Union)

"In the context of the African region -- we have a lower return rate for post-election questionnaires and it can be difficult to fill gaps or verify information via desk research. This is mainly due to information that is available online. Parliamentary websites in the region are less developed (e.g. Somalia, Niger), not updated as often or active (e.g. Malawi, Mali, Mauritania), or simply don't exist (e.g. Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Liberia, South Sudan). And when age data is provided -- we tend to accept a lower coverage rate as the age or date of birth of MPs can be harder to come by, even for parliaments themselves. One could surmise that this can be due to lack of resources for collecting that information and/or its availability (i.e. dearth of vital statistics). Further, there are more parliaments in the region "in transition" or not functioning normally, which impacts data: Burkina Faso, Chad, Eritrea, Libya, Guinea, Mali, South Sudan, Tunisia etc.". (Inter-Parliamentary Union)

"Data on subnational government revenue is very poorly recorded in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Thus, there are large amounts of tax/other revenue that governments collect which, in high income countries, we would be able to account for in tax statistics, but in LMICs we rarely get a full picture of. These gaps exist for various reasons, e.g., disconnect between local and central governments, lack of capacity to compile the data according to government finance statistics standards, etc.". (United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research)

"I have identified three areas in which there are major data gaps for some African countries (mostly in sub-Saharan Africa): wastewater management; municipal solid waste management; and greenhouse gas emissions". (Environmental Performance Index)

"Data on child mortality in sub-Saharan Africa are limited in terms of quantity, quality and timeliness. Accounting for 2.8 million under-five deaths in 2021 (nearly 60% of the world's total) and almost 30% of live births, sub-Saharan Africa only accounted for about 30% of data to inform levels and trends in child mortality (5,900) globally since

1990. In comparison, Europe and Northern America, as well as Australia and New Zealand, account for 20% of all data points since 1990, while accounting for less than 9% of all live births and around 1% of the global under-five deaths in 2021". (United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation)

"Countries that are at risk of not achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) child mortality targets often have less recent and reliable data. If current trends continue, over 80% of countries in sub-Saharan Africa will not meet the SDG target for under-five mortality. Among these countries, the most recent data point was, on average, seven years old." (United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation)

"Data gaps in official statistics in Africa are numerous and very different from country to country. Despite efforts and improvements, key statistical data is missing in major economic and social areas (such as census, employment, consumption, etc.). Moreover, statistics on climate change are dramatically missing, because they are complex, multi-domain, and require sophisticated set up, collection and dedicated efforts." (Cristina D'Alessandro, Centre on Governance at the University of Ottawa)

"During the time that Global Integrity was in charge of producing the Africa Integrity Indicators, we found the following data gap challenges: the indicators around the judiciary measured exclusively the workings of the highest court (supreme and/or constitutional courts), not always reflecting the composition or independence of the lower courts, which are as vulnerable to state capture as the higher courts or even more so; the focus of the indicators measuring the protection of ethnic and religious minorities and LGBTQI+ individuals are also assessed in a way that doesn't necessarily apply evenly to contexts across the continent and misses distinct nuances in ways that countries engage with these groups; there may be a gap in the data regarding health sectors that isn't captured in health information indicators and the procurement indicators; and the education sector, also rife with corruption in certain countries, is also completely absent from the index". (Global Integrity)

"Though significant progress has been made in the availability of procurement data, COVID-19 exposed serious blind spots in emergency procurement processes, particularly in the health sector, that resulted in billions of dollars lost to corruption and embezzlement. There is little data available in sectors such as education, making it difficult to improve education service delivery and learning outcomes. A dozen countries across the continent live under kleptocratic regimes, and a lack of data on officials' assets, resource revenues, and illicit financial flows prevents those countries' citizens, and the international community, from keeping kleptocrats and their enablers accountable. In the race to develop green technologies, a lack of data on the mining and trade of rare earth elements makes the sector extremely vulnerable to corruption and capture by those looking to take advantage of the scramble." (Global Integrity)

## **2. What are the main obstacles/challenges that you face during data collection with a focus on African countries? (e.g., specific variables, countries, regions, etc.)**

"The indicators on Africa Integrity Indicators are based on expert opinions. Thus, the quality of the data produced depends largely on the quality of experts interviewed and involved in the data collection process. In restrictive countries, it is challenging to find experts willing to provide their perspectives on the status of governance in their respective countries for fear of repercussions. This eventually affects the quality of the data produced". (African Institute for Development Policy)



"Many African countries publish a lot of open data through their data portals created by AfDB. However, many of these portals are not updated regularly or only include data from international sources. Therefore, few of the datasets that exist in these portals can be used in Open Data Inventory (ODIN), instead forcing us to rely on PDF publications that are often difficult to find and navigate on NSO websites". (Open Data Watch)

"There are both 'hard' and 'soft' infrastructure constraints to the production and disclosure of EITI data in our 29 African country members of the EITI. With regards to 'hard' infrastructure, challenges in Internet connectivity and government entities maintaining their respective websites have posed challenges in building public data disclosure systems. With regards to 'soft' infrastructure, there are challenges related to workflows internal to certain government entities that have complicated archiving of information and data. There has been a tendency in some government contexts for specific government entities to operate in a silo, with little information sharing with other government entities. This has complicated public disclosure of data that involves several different government entities, such as data on subnational transfers of extractive industry revenues collected at the national government level". (Daryll Griffith, Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative)

"African national statistics have different capacities to digest, analyse and present statistical data as far as obstacles for data collection is concerned. There is a myriad of reasons for these disparities including investment in technology and use of digital tools for data collection at national level, human and financial resources, digital literacy, and investment in digital infrastructures. On another note, political will and ownership remain key to avail certain type of data and variables especially those pertinent to political freedoms, violence, illicit financial flows and human trafficking (SDG16)" (Sara Tawfik Hamouda, African Peer Review Mechanism)

"There are two main constraining factors: one is funding and the other is how many country-experts there are to tap into in the world and we have at present no plans to further expand the coverage of V-Dem". (V-Dem Institute)

"Limited application of Access to Information (ATI) laws – only 26 African countries have ATI laws-, lack of transparency and government obstruction from many African decision-makers, restricted access to data on natural resources, as well as the impossibility to access data in some authoritarian countries, pose significant obstacles and challenges hindering effective data collection in African countries, limiting our understanding of media violations and impeding efforts to promote transparency and freedom of the press". (Reporters without Borders)

"The main challenges during data collection are: samples (challenges vary from country to country but can include access to sample frames, timeliness of support from national statistics offices in drawing samples, willingness of national statistics offices to draw samples according to Afrobarometer protocols, as well as availability, quality and/or cost of Enumeration Area maps); interference/impediments from national or local governments in a few countries; insecurity; and funding". (Afrobarometer)

"There are two issues. First, the data may not be collected in the first place, so Central Banks and other regulators don't have a legal framework which requires banks to report on lending. Second, in a number of countries, the data is collected by government but is not made public online or via publications. In these cases, our Yearbook authors need to try to make direct contact with those organisations and convince them to release the data, which is often a struggle". (Centre for Affordable Housing Finance in Africa)

"Barriers include: limited resources both for parliaments and the IPU (staff, time, technology); lack of protocol for data reporting; staff turnover and reliable/ knowledgeable focal points in parliaments; parliamentary hierarchy can slow down or prevent reporting of data; accessibility of information (i.e. data not available on the parliamentary website or not kept up-to-date); as well as transparency (what a parliament is willing to share)." (Inter-Parliamentary Union)

"Child mortality estimates for sub-Saharan Africa rely on household surveys, which provided 94% of the included data points in the region since 1990. Data from household surveys may suffer from quality issues like underreporting of the number of deaths, sampling errors and non-sampling biases. Hardly any country in the region, has a well-functioning Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) to inform in a timely manner on child mortality level and trends. Approximately half of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa have their most recent data point on child mortality dating back more than five years. The average extrapolation period for the region is 6.5 years, compared to about one year in Europe and Northern America. This lack of recent data creates uncertainty and necessitates longer extrapolation periods in a region where children face the highest risk of death." (United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation)

"Beyond age disaggregation, the current data limitations in terms of geographic location and social economic and demographic risk factors pose serious challenges for monitoring levels and trends in child mortality and to identify the most vulnerable groups. Since data at the national level can often mask subnational trends, which may significantly differ from national aggregates. Given the region's high mortality rates and growing child population, there is an urgent need for targeted action in sub-Saharan Africa." (United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation)

"There are three main reasons for data gaps in official statistics: much data is collected and treated, but not disseminated (it remains in national statistical offices, but it is not published or used for analyses and studies, it is henceforth as if it does not exist); critical statistical capacities (methodological, technical, but also related to governance and coordination) are still missing; and national statistical offices lack the appropriate funding to hire and retain the required staff to carry out their duties properly." (Cristina D'Alessandro, Centre on Governance at the University of Ottawa)

"The main obstacles are the following: disparities among countries are so large that it is difficult to set in place activities benefitting a series of countries and adapted to all of them; it is often difficult to implement an activity with long-term effects, building capacities once for all in a given domain (changes of staff or needs may produce a loss of the capacities previously built); varieties of stakeholders (due to a similar donor perspective focusing on similar domains or to funding requirements) supporting national statistical offices with similar activities create overlaps and a waste of resources". (Cristina D'Alessandro, Centre on Governance at the University of Ottawa)

"In implementing the Africa Integrity Indicators project, Global Integrity faced two main challenges. The first was finding researchers in certain countries where either the government actively repressed free expression and criticism, or the pool of available and eligible researchers was fairly small. The second major challenge was a bias in the indicators toward common law systems of government prominent in Anglophone countries as opposed to those with civil law systems based on the French or Portuguese models." (Global Integrity)

### 3. What solutions could you think of to fill the data gaps in your dataset?

"The availability of experts to provide opinions in restrictive countries can be remedied through collaboration among data-producing institutions in Africa and globally. This could also provide tangible solutions to various data gaps which exist in restrictive and unstable countries". (African Institute for Development Policy)

"Key solutions to fill data gaps to monitor and evaluate performance against the SDGs and Agenda 2063 include: invest in human resources dedicated for data generation, collection and analysis in Africa; engage civil society to have a constructive role in data collection and support government in the SDGs and Agenda 2063; provide capacity building training to strengthen capacities of national offices as far as data disaggregation, analysis and collection are concerned; and encourage a high-level dialogue with policymakers to provide free access to information, prioritise statistical vision for the government and the implementation of the National Development Plan" (Sara Tawfik Hamouda, African Peer Review Mechanism)

"The African Peer Review Mechanism adopted innovative tools to assist countries in tracking and assessing governance gaps including Governance Gap questionnaire, implementation of principles for effective governance of SDGs, and a specialised survey to assess the perceptions of governance mechanisms for the implementation of Agenda 2063 and 2030. These surveys and tools encourage national executives including national statistical offices and other concerned authorities". (Sara Tawfik Hamouda, African Peer Review Mechanism)

"RSF supports the establishment of a global African platform dedicated to media monitoring, listing existing media outlets, prioritising documentation of violations, and implementing real-time reporting mechanisms. Promoting partnerships and knowledge exchange will allow stakeholders to work collectively to overcome data gaps and advocate for greater transparency and respect for press freedom in Africa". (Reporters without Borders)

"Most of the issues that prevent us from working in every country require political resolution, e.g., through political pressure applied and political incentives offered by neighboring states as well as regional, continental and global actors. However, one factor that can be addressed through adequate funding is ensuring that all countries can effectively complete credible censuses on a regular schedule, especially in countries that are post-conflict or have recently experienced major transitions". (Afrobarometer)

"Data gaps could be filled with: third-party site for parliaments to directly see and report data; more IPU staff to manage/collect and follow-up on data gaps". (Inter-Parliamentary Union)

"To fill existing data gaps, the first indispensable step required is to be able to map out the data available and to be able to properly locate it and grant to African states access to it, including to the privately held data". (Cristina D'Alessandro, Centre on Governance at the University of Ottawa)

"To address data gaps, various strategies can be employed: establishing partnerships with organisations actively engaged in addressing social issues, utilisation of advanced technologies (building models and employing Artificial Intelligence), as well as tapping into open datasets" (Open Data Institute)

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ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project	LMIC	Low- and Middle-Income Countries
AfDB	African Development Bank	MAPS	Marrakesh Action Plan on Statistics
AFIDEP	African Institute for Development Policy	MDG	Millennium Development Goal
AIH	Africa Information Highway	MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
APAI-CRVS	Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics	NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
ASSP	Africa Symposium on Statistical Development	NIDSCRAM	National Income Dynamics Study Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey
ATI	Access to Information	NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
AU	African Union	NSO	National Statistical Office
AUC	American University in Cairo	NSS	National Statistical System
CGD	Citizen-generated Data	ODIN	Open Data Inventory
CRVS	Civil Registration and Vital Statistics	ODA	Official Development Assistance
DAC	Development Assistance Committee	ODP	Open Data Platform
DHS	Demographic and Health Surveys Program	OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative	OGD	Open Government Data
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	PARIS21	Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century
FTYIP	First Ten-Year Implementation Plan	PAS	Pan African Statistics Programme
GDC	Gender Data Compass	RRSF	Reference Regional Strategic Framework
GDDS	General Data Dissemination System	RSPA	Rural Sector Performance Assessment
GDI	Global Data Infrastructure	SDDS	Special Data Dissemination Standard
GDN	Gender Data Network	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	SDSN	Sustainable Development Solutions Network
GIZ	German Development Corporation	SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
GHO	Global Healthcare Opportunities	StatCom-Africa	Statistical Commission for Africa
GST	Global Stocktake	UHC	Universal Health Coverage
HISWACA	Harmonizing and Improving Statistics in West and Central Africa	UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination
ICT	Information and Communication Technology	UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
ID4D	Identification for Development Initiative	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
IHME	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
IAG	Ibrahim Index of African Development	UNSC	United Nations Security Council
ILO	International Labour Organization	UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
IPC AFRICA	International Comparison Program for Africa	UNSTATS	United Nations Statistics Division
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union	V-DEM	Varieties of Democracy
JNIM	Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimin	WEI	Women's Empowerment Index
KBA	Key Biodiversity Area	WHO	World Health Organization
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics		
LIC	Low-Income Country		



This report puts together the main data-driven facts and figures about the 'The power of data for governance' theme, contributions and quotes from external experts, including members of the Foundation's Now Generation Network (NGN). The main focus of the report is to assess Africa's data demand, the status of available data as well as the case for increased investment for data. This research publication does not intend, by any means, to be exhaustive. The topics and data selected are those that the Mo Ibrahim Foundation (MIF) finds the most relevant.

This report makes use of the latest available data from a wide range of sources. A reference list containing all the sources used for this document is provided at the end of the report. Sources used are not always the primary data sources.

Each graph is accompanied by their respective data source. Where necessary, additional notes on the data used are also provided throughout the report.

Data included in the report was correct at source at the time of research. In some cases, the numbers may not add up to the total due to rounding.

This report provides comparisons of regional averages. The composition of regions may vary according to source. When data in the report is presented disaggregated for Northern African and sub-Saharan African countries, this is done reflecting the choices made at source.

African averages are, in most cases, taken directly from source. If they have been calculated for the purpose of this report, they are unweighted. As not all sources provide data for the 54 African countries, some averages may not include data from all countries.

Data for Morocco may or not may include Western Sahara depending on the source.

The Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG), which is featured several times throughout this report, is a composite index which gives a statistical measure of governance performance in 54 African countries, produced by MIF. The 2022 IIAG, its latest iteration, covers a ten-year time period from 2012 to 2021. Compiled by combining 256 variables from 47 independent African and international data sources, the 2022 IIAG is the most comprehensive collection of data on African governance. To distinguish IIAG data from other data sources, IIAG measures always appear italicised. To download all IIAG resources and datasets, please visit: <https://iiag.online/downloads.html>

Unless stated otherwise, data for SDG indicators comes from the United Nations Statistics Division's (UNSD) SDG Global Database, as such data availability concerns relate solely to data available via the data portal and not data available through websites of countries' National Statistical Offices (NSOs) which may not be internationally comparable.

Population census data was collected from UNSD and only goes back to 1985, thus excluding DR Congo's 1984 population census from the timeline presented in this report. Year displayed in timeline is the year in which the latest census was completed.

Household survey data was collected through a combination of United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), UNICEF's Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME). For this reason, household surveys conducted by countries not registered in these databases do not appear in the timeline presented in this report. Year displayed in timeline is the year in which the latest survey was completed.

Agricultural census data was collected from the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) World Programme for the Census of Agriculture. Supplementary modules were not included in the timeline presented in this report. Year displayed in timeline is the year in which the latest census was completed.

Figures pertaining to Official Development Assistance (ODA) were sourced from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Creditor Reporting System (CRS) database.

Additional content and information were drawn from the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data's 2023 Data Festival in Punta del Este, Uruguay.

A short survey was sent to partner organisations of MIF to assess in their view what the main data gaps were, the challenges they incurred and solutions they implemented. Responses were consolidated into one Annex that can be found at the end of the report.

MIF is committed to making data freely available and accessible. We welcome and encourage any accurate reproduction, translation and dissemination of this material. The material must be attributed to the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, but not in any way that suggests that the Foundation endorses you or your use of the material.

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