



Takwimu

Young African Statisticians Programme

Advancing the continental Statistics Agenda for development

African countries in the 1960s initiated a process of continental integration, through the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The objective was to advance and accelerate economic and social development on the continent, as well as to promote political stability. The [African agenda 2063](#), endorsed by African Heads of State and Government in 2013 advances the vision of the OAU and lays out a robust framework for the continent's development. Agenda 2063 which is Africa's blueprint and master development plan prioritises inclusive social and economic development, continental and regional integration, democratic governance and peace and security amongst other issues aimed at repositioning Africa to becoming a dominant player in the global arena. The agenda is aligned to and emboldens the vision and priorities of the 2030 sustainable development agenda.

The role of data and statistics in the successful implementation of this continental development agenda cannot be overstated. The agenda urgently calls for data that are accurate, objective, timely, consistent, harmonized, comparable across time and space, and produced efficiently and regularly across countries. Such are required to establish baselines, to identify performance targets and indicators, to monitor progress in implementation, and to assess impact and outcomes of different interventions. The African Statistical System (ASS) is at the heart of implementation of the African agenda.

Regrettably, the ASS today faces critical institutional and organizational challenges constraining its ability to adequately avail statistics that meet the required standards. Some of the challenges include: ¹Low appreciation of the value and importance of statistics across society; Low levels of political support for statistics; inadequate funding for statistics; Inadequate institutional capacity; Inadequate coordination, collaboration among data producers; Inadequate resources (human and financial); Unsatisfactory data management; as well as challenges arising from the transitions towards digital technologies coupled with the necessary change of guard as older professionals exit statistical practice.

Takwimu: Investing in Young African Statisticians

Established in 2021, the Takwimu Young African statisticians programme is built upon the premise that young Africans constitute a critical mass of the current and future statistical leadership on the continent hence their training and engagement in the continental statistical agenda is paramount in ensuring sustainability of the gains made so far, addressing prevailing challenges and advancing the continental statistical agenda as desired. Young statisticians provide a bridge between the current and future statistical leadership and hence must be deliberately natured to ensure that they effectively occupy their place and play their part. It is

¹ Strategy for the harmonization of statistics in Africa (SHaSA).



noteworthy that Africa is the youngest continent in the world, with 60% of the entire continent aged below 25, and with the world's top 10 youngest countries by median age being Africa². The role of youth in Africa's development (through statistics and more broadly) cannot be ignored; youth therefore must constitute the core of the continent's statistical development agenda.

i) Objectives of the Takwimu Young African statistician's programme

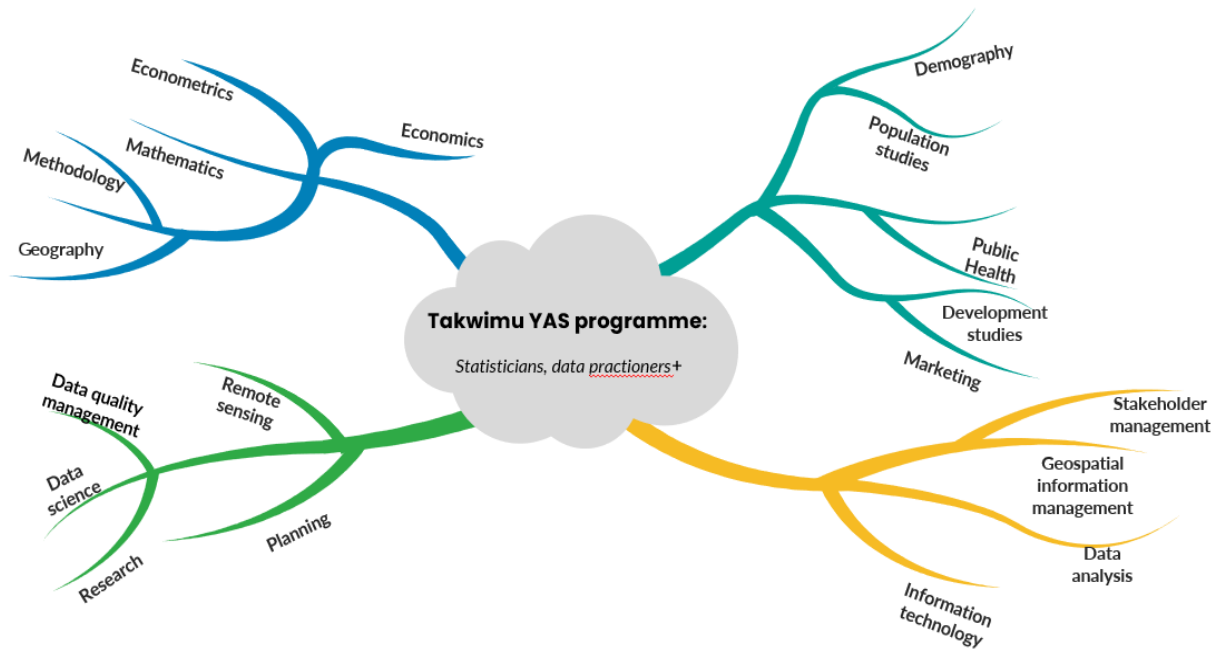
The Takwimu young African statisticians programme seeks to create a platform to train and empower a new generation of skilled young Africans who will actively engage and contribute to the continental statistical discourse and therefore towards the continent's development agenda. The programme takes cognisance that most graduates of academic training institutions lack exposure and knowledge on key issues of the ASS and seeks to bridge this gap by providing opportunities for young professionals to participate in national and regional data and statistical forums. The programme also seeks to facilitate mentorship of young professionals by facilitating engagement with more experienced statisticians. The objectives of the programme align to the four themes of the continental [strategy for the harmonisation of statistics in Africa \(SHASA\)](#) namely: (i) To Produce Quality Statistics for Africa; (ii) to coordinate the production of Quality Statistics for Africa; (iii) to build a sustainable institutional capacity of the African Statistical Systems (ASS); and (iv) To promote a culture of quality decision-making. The programme's strategic plan for the period 2022-2025, focusses at 3 strategic objectives: ***To Mobilize and institutionalize the YAS Programme at country level; To Advocate for and involve YAS in modernizing the national statistical system; and To Build capacity for research, knowledge and information management.***

ii) Membership of the Takwimu Young African statistician's programme

"Young statisticians" refer to students, early and mid-career statisticians, data practitioners and related professions. The programme recognizes the collection of professions and skills that contribute to the skill-mix of the statistical value chain: demography, population studies, methodology, economics, econometrics, mathematics, geography, geospatial information management, remote sensing, public health, development studies or economics, planning and other expertise required for stakeholder engagement, research, collection design, information technology, data science, data transformation, analysis and data quality management in a statistical value chain.

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Youth_in_Africa#:~:text=Africa's%20population%20as%20a%20whole,median%20age%20of%2015.1%20years.

Membership



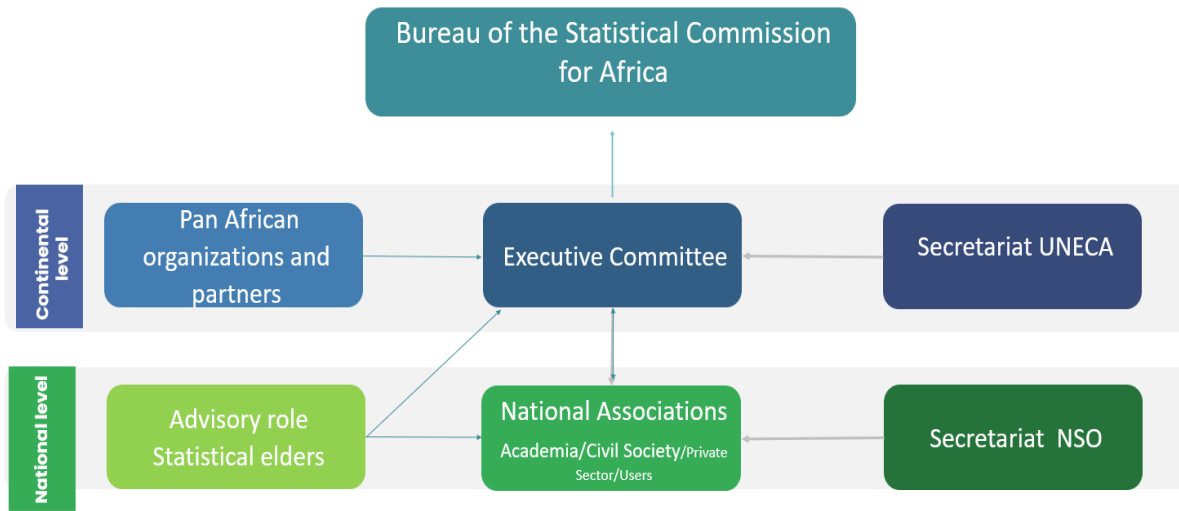
iii) Governance structure

Takwimu is a flagship programme of the Statistical Commission for Africa, established under decision B of the 8th meeting held in October 2022. Under the theme Statistical capacity development in Africa, the Commission noted that it:

- 1) Approves the creation of the Takwimu Young African Statisticians Programme, with ECA, through the African Centre for Statistics, as its secretariat; and the 2022–2025 strategy.
- 2) Calls upon African countries to endorse and institutionalize the Takwimu Young African Statisticians Programme by establishing young statistician associations, and supporting the proper functioning of the Programme objectives.
- 3) Calls upon development partners to scale up their support for the African statistical system to ensure its transformation and modernization in response to the growing needs of users.

The programme is managed by an Executive Committee composed of young professionals from Togo, Kenya, South Africa, Senegal and Egypt who work across the Planning, Economics, Demography, Demography and Economics disciplines respectively, within the entire national statistical system, including the private sector and the academia. The Committee reports to the Bureau of the Statistical Commission. The Figure below summarises the programme’s governance structure.

Governance structure



iv) Contact details

For more information, please contact the programme's Secretariat at: takwimu@un.org.
More information about the programme is available at www.uneca.org.