POLICY NOTE

GOVERNANCE, PEACE, AND SECURITY IN THE STRATEGY FOR THE HARMONIZATION OF STATISTICS IN AFRICA (GPS-SHASA)

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Introduction and Purpose of the Brief

The importance of data and statistics in development cannot be overemphasized. Acknowledging this in 2013, the United Nations Secretary General inaugurated the Independent Expert Advisory Group (IEAG) to propose ways to improve data for achieving and monitoring sustainable development. The IEAG's 2014 report, *A World that Counts*, highlights global challenges for the current state of data including the challenge of invisibility gaps in who data is collected from, what we can know from data, and when we find out and the challenge of inequality gaps between those who have access to data and those who do not, and what they need to know to make their own decisions.[1]

The African Union recognized that the use of harmonized and reliable statistics in all fields of political, social, economic, and cultural activity is critical. To this effect, the AU adopted the African Charter on Statistics at the 12th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 04 February 2009.[2] To empower the Charter later in 2009, the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government assigned its secretariat, the African Union Commission (AUC), to develop the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA) in collaboration with development partners. The main purpose of the SHaSA programme is to enable the African Statistical System (ASS) – and African Union member states – to generate timely, reliable, and harmonized statistical information that covers all aspects of political, economic, social, and cultural integration for Africa.[3]

The implementation of SHaSA is facilitated through Specialized Technical Groups. The Specialized Technical Group on Governance, Peace and Security (STG-GPS) emerged to meet the need to develop indicators to measure effectiveness of initiatives such as the Protocol on the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union[4] adopted in 2002 and the 2007 African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance.[5]

Since 2012, The GPS-SHaSA has been active with the support of UNDP. The Committee of Director Generals (CoDG) of National Statistics Offices approved a work plan to pilot the GPS aspects of the SHaSA, funded by UNDP, in five countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Malawi, Kenya, and Cape Verde. Due to the high demand and interest in the initiative, four self-starting countries – Mali, Burundi, Uganda, and Tunisia – also piloted the GPS-SHaSA initiative, using their own resources.

In 2015, UNDP initiated a study to take stock of progress made by the pilot countries and produced recommendations to improve effectiveness and utility of the data collection components. The purpose of this policy brief is to share lessons rendered from that study of progress in the nine pilot countries.

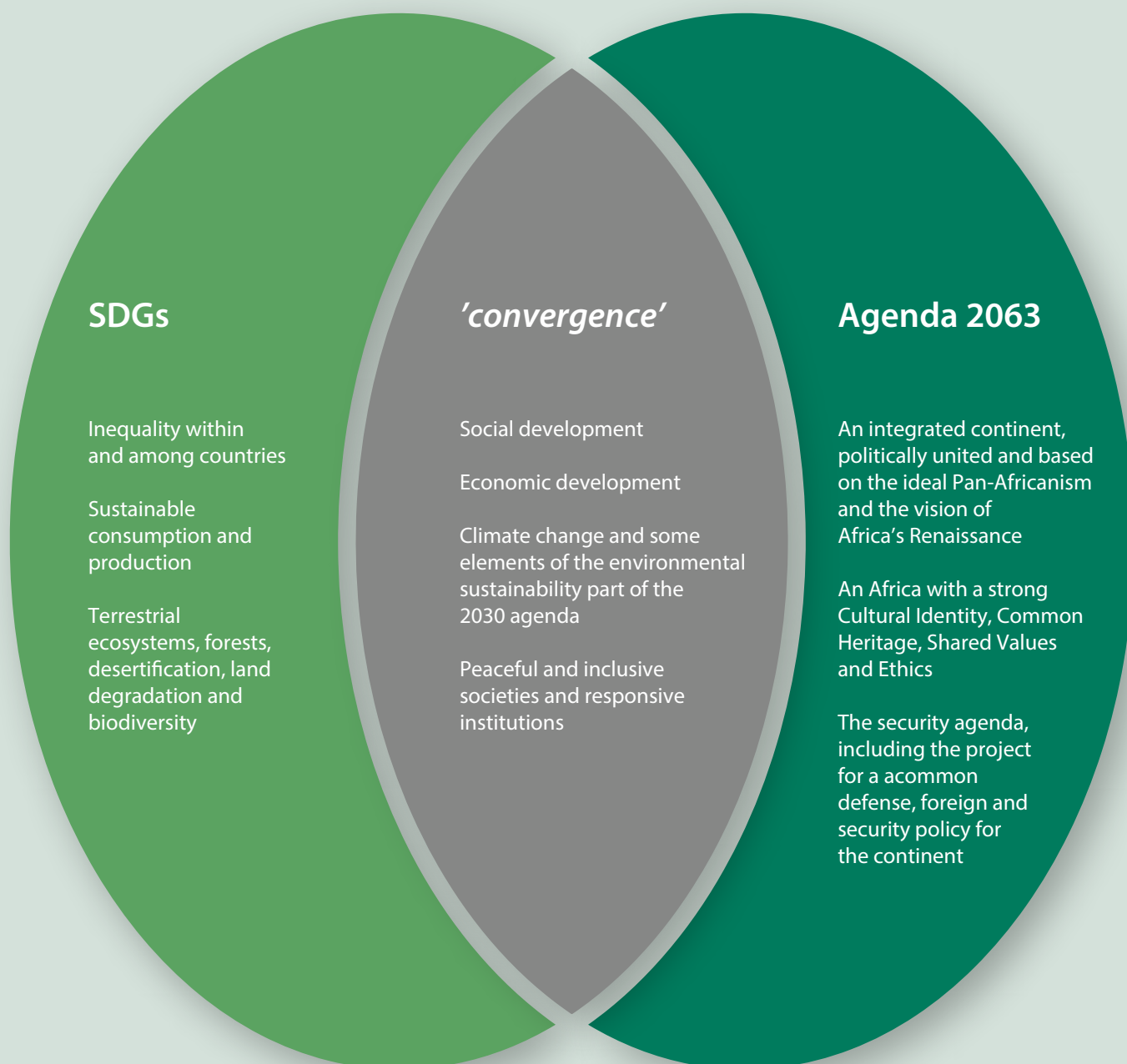# Agenda 2063 Aspirations 3 and 4 and Sustainable Development Goal 16

Agenda 2063 of the African Union, adopted in 2013, envisions "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena".[6] The Agenda adopts the objectives of sustainable development and inclusive growth, equal opportunity, and good governance. Two of its seven Aspirations are particularly relevant to GPS-SHaSA: Aspiration 3 envisions an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law; and Aspiration 4 envisions a peaceful and secure Africa.

The UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted unanimously by all 193 UN member states in September 2015, including all African states that signed Agenda 2063. The SDGs recognize that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. Most relevant for GPS-SHaSA, SDG 16 seeks to "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels".[7] SDG 16 strongly agrees with Agenda 2063 Aspirations 3 and 4. More broadly, both initiatives converge around social development, economic prosperity, climate change and environmental sustainability, and peaceful and inclusive societies with responsive institutions.

The Common African Position on the Post 2015 Development Agenda, Africa's contribution to the SDG negotiations, provides detail on critical priority areas for Africa within the SDGs and insight on areas where the two development plans do not necessarily align. The Common Africa Position does conform to Agenda 2063.

With the adoption of Agenda 2063 and the SDGs, the GPS-SHaSA survey tool has been revised to reflect these new development agendas. The GPS-SHaSA has potential for tracking both SDG 16 and Agenda 2063 Aspirations 3 and 4 on governance and on peace and security. Consequently, it can help to reduce duplication of efforts among AU institutions and prevent the development of redundant tools for tracking governance, peace, and security on the continent. The GPS-SHaSA provides coordination among and between the key AUC departments and divisions such as the Political Affairs Department, Economic Affairs Department/Statistics Division, Department of Peace and Security, and the Continental Early Warning System as a critical beneficiary.

Before adopting either Agenda 2063 or the SDGs, the AU had established the African Peace and Security Architecture[8] (APSA) in 2002 and the African Governance Architecture[9] (AGA) in 2010. The APSA aims at conflict prevention, management, and resolution with a view to promoting 'peace, security, and stability on the continent'. The AU established the AGA as the overall political and institutional framework for the promotion of governance in Africa. The AGA constitutes a reflection on the part of the continent on how it can build on and protect the gains in democracy and governance processes that it has achieved. Though these preceded Agenda 2063 and the SDGs, they demonstrate a tradition of commitment in the continent to build good governance and to achieve peace and justice.

SDGs

Inequality within and among countries

Sustainable consumption and production

Terrestrial ecosystems, forests, desertification, land degradation and biodiversity

'convergence'

Social development

Economic development

Climate change and some elements of the environmental sustainability part of the 2030 agenda

Peaceful and inclusive societies and responsive institutions

Agenda 2063

An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideal Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance

An Africa with a strong Cultural Identity, Common Heritage, Shared Values and Ethics

The security agenda, including the project for a acommon defense, foreign and security policy for the continent

Agenda 2063 Aspirations 3 and 4 and Sustainable Development Goal 16

The Role of the National Statistics Organization

The development of a core set of GPS indicators to be measured by African National Statistical Offices (NSOs) is propelled by the African integration process that requires the availability of harmonized statistics for policy-makers across the continent, including in the areas of governance, peace. and security. The work of GPS-SHaSA focuses on assisting Africa's NSOs, under their Committee of Directors General (CoDG), to guide and to realize the comparative advantages in the collection of GPS data.

The NSOs anchor SHaSA for its statutory responsibility for generating data. In addition, the NSOS have official legitimacy as public institutions, accumulated expertise in the statistical field, subscribed to establish standards and procedures, apply large samples that permit disaggregation, and can ensure sustainability of data collection and dissemination. Furthermore, the NSOs can secure cost-effectiveness by using add-on modules and in some instances are already experienced in GPS statistics.

Pilot Implementation of the GPS-SHaSA

As explained in the introduction, the CoDG approved piloting of the GPS-SHaSA survey tools in five countries that represent five different regions of the AU: Cameroun, Central Africa; Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa; Malawi, Southern Africa; Kenya, Eastern Africa; and Cape Verde, Island States. In addition, four self-starter countries – Burundi, Mali, Tunisia, and Uganda – also piloted the surveys using their own resources. UNDP has supported GP-SHaSA S since 2012 through the Regional Service Centre for Africa with the intention:

1. To enable the regular production of harmonized, reliable, and timely statistics on GPS by African NSOs;
2. To build sustainable national, regional, and continental institutional capacities for the regular production of GPS statistics; and
3. To foster a culture of decision-making and accountability based on GPS statistics, at all levels.

Survey Tools

A key tool of the GPS-SHaSA is the survey questionnaire. The Governance component of the survey asks questions related to human rights and democracy: access to, trust in, and functioning of institutions; transparency and control of corruption; and the nature and extent of citizens' participation in the electoral process. The peace and security component explores threats perceived as most worrying: as well as people's general feelings of safety and satisfaction with their lives and safety as a whole, questions focus on physical integrity, crime levels, and peoples' perceptions of conflicts, in particular the prevalence of conflicts, their underlying causes, and the future trends for conflicts. The final component of the peace and security survey covers public security services, mainly the police, gendarmerie, and the military: examining how ordinary people perceive the efficiency and transparency of public security services, and to what extent they are trusted.

The survey's modules were drafted within the framework of a continent-wide process to collect and monitor reliable, harmonized indicators in all areas and sectors of national socio-economic and political life in each country. The methodology was designed to respond to the pressing need for relevant and reliable statistics, to be able to track and report on government action, and to effectively prevent and manage conflict. The selected indicators fall well within the continent's approved normative framework, and in particular, are in line with two reference documents: the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance[10]

for governance statistics, and the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union[11] for peace and security statistics. Obviously, the chosen methodology applies the principles of the African Charter on Statistics.[12]

The questionnaire aims at collecting three categories of information simultaneously:

- the experiences and behaviours of citizens,
- value orientation regarding democratic governance norms, and
- perceptions and opinions.

In addition to these three categories of information in the modules, socio-economic and demographic information is gathered through the base survey on sex, age group, education level, ethnic group, geographical location, migratory status, job market participation, poverty level, and similar points. Combination with the three first categories of information makes it possible to draw up the most comprehensive picture of the different dimensions of governance, peace, and security. Correlations within the socio-economic variables can identify groups or sub-groups in the population that are most affected by the dysfunctions of the governance and peace and security systems The ultimate objective is to install appropriate, targeted policies that are adapted to the specific situation of each country.

Advantages of the basic GPS-SHaSA approach: The strength of the approach is that the methodology meets basic principles for measuring and monitoring governance. These principles may seem trivial for an audience familiar with statistical surveys. However, the discussions in defining indicators for SDGs show that the need and possibility of statistical monitoring of governance is not necessarily obvious to policymakers or development actors. Moreover, even among statisticians, applying statistical tools to topics beyond NSOs' standard domains do not naturally make sense. Therefore, the goal is to show how the traditional strengths of statistical surveys are particularly relevant to assess and monitor governance, peace, and security in each country. Alongside the benefits of quantification,

when properly conducted, the surveys collect the views of all categories of the population. Resulting advantages of inclusiveness, participation, and enhancement of democratic debate cannot be dismissed.

Advantages of the statistical approach: Investigating large samples of individuals who are representative of the general population ensures the relevance and reliability of the data collected. Transparency can be ensured on the method of measurement, standards, and procedures for surveys of households being made consistent. Moreover, the quantitative approach allows monitoring of developments and comparisons over time and between regions or countries, since the methodology is consistent from one period to another and from one country to another. These are inherent characteristics of any well-designed statistical survey; however additional interest is generated when they allow in-depth analysis illuminating the decisions and the definition of policies. The GPS-SHaSA surveys not only provide aggregates or indicators that can be tracked, they make available to the public a database that is an analytical resource. There is the option to break down information according to different categories of the population – gender, poverty, ethnic group, region, discriminated population, and others – correlating different information originating in different groups to understand the views or behaviors of the population.

A participatory process – gaining a voice: Statistical surveys offer the opportunity to different categories of individuals to express themselves and to be heard as a voice in a sample that represents them. Survey results can thus be a means for citizens to exert pressure: a way to challenge decision makers on citizens' dissatisfactions, needs, or expectations. This process of relaying the views of the vast majority, and of concerned minorities, is particularly important in countries where such information is lacking, or where civil society is poorly organized. In the absence of representative data, perceptions may be biased in favor of a group with a traditional role or opportunity to dominate opinion, or business as usual may grant an unwarranted legitimacy to the views of presumed experts who do not represent most citizens. Thus, dissemination and provision of

survey results open the way to democratic debates.

The content of the questionnaire: The choice of questions, the sequence of their presentation, and their precise wording are part of the GPS-SHaSA survey methodology. The questionnaire design stems from long term experience derived in field testing the relevance and robustness of survey results; the interaction among representatives from regional NSOs in the GPS-SHASA process; and dialogue with different actors in validation and training meetings in the pilot countries. Thus, a draft set of questions was selected in governance and in peace and security modules starting from different experiences and ongoing surveys successfully conducted periodically over the past two decades, from modules developed by DIAL-IRD[13] researchers in the early 2000s, from Afrobarometer[14] surveys, and from victimization surveys of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime.[15] The questions were chosen because of their relevance to the GPS-SHaSA objectives, notably harmonization of indicators across the GPS themes and analytical relevance, using simple questions that allow robust interpretations. The same applied to the field manual and the tabulation plan, developed in successive iterations. The collective construction of the overall apparatus was essential for the success of the statistical protocol to ensure real ownership by the collaborating countries.

Relevance of coverage: The module on governance encompasses key principles of democratic governance including rule of law, equity, transparency, democratic accountability, and participation that relate to the eleven basic principles underlying the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance[16]. Likewise, the module on peace and security, seeks to measure violence and insecurity experienced everyday by the population that can hinder the development potential of the country, underpinned by the principles put forward by the Protocol on the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.[17]

More broadly, the GPS-SHaSA initiative has sought to triangulate systematically three types of sources to ensure a maximum degree of coherence and insight: normative charters and conventions currently in force at the African level, administrative statistics, and surveys. This was captured in two matrices aligning the governance indicators with those of peace and security, for both survey and administrative instruments.

The GPS-SHaSA survey tools, and especially the questionnaire, were designed through a participatory process. Different workshops have gathered internal as well as external expertise to consider the state of the art in the field and to develop, validate, and document the entire enterprise from the questionnaires.
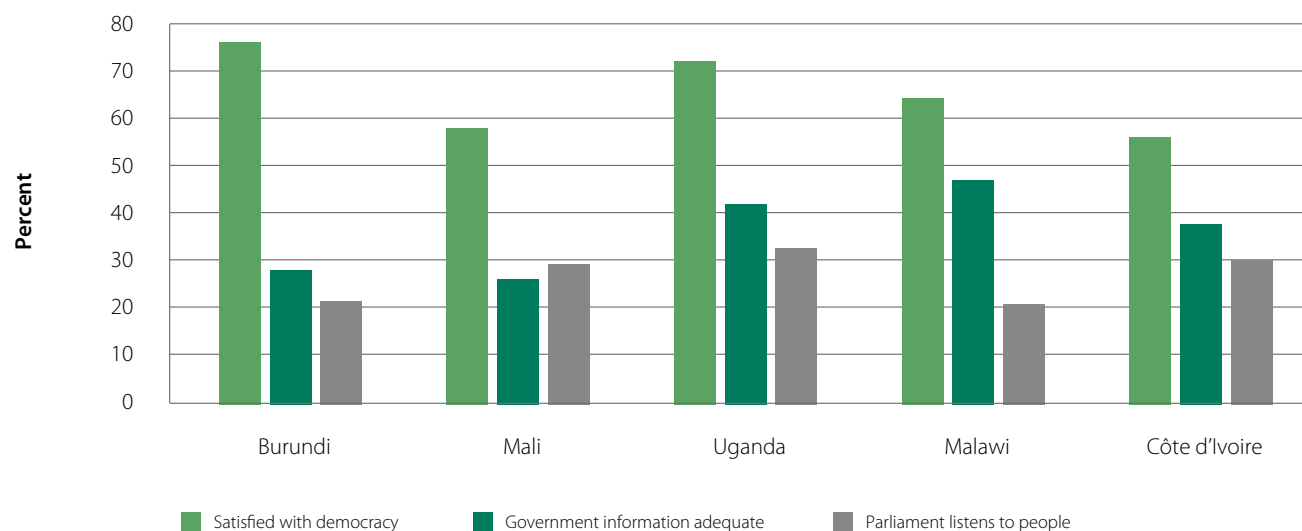
Considering the various advantages that the GPS-SHaSA presents, it is evident that no alternative tool currently exists for the AU and its member states to use for gathering data on governance, peace, and security. It thus presents an opportunity for partnership, collaboration, and integration among AU and national institutions. Encouraging development of similar tools to measure the same values would amount to duplication and waste of scarce resources.

Data-driven Analysis of Governance, Peace, and Security in Afica

The GPS-ShaSA pilot phase offered an opportunity for data-driven analysis of governance, peace, and security issues in African countries. Of the nine pilot countries, Burundi, Mali, Uganda, Malawi, and Côte d'Ivoire successfully generated GPS data (Figure 1). These five countries, with NSOs acting as early implementers of the GPS-SHaSA surveys, represent established democracies as well as those emerging from transition or still turbulently in transition. The main purpose of the SHaSA is to enable the NSOs to generate timely, reliable, and harmonized statistical information, covering all aspects of political, economic, social, and cultural integration for Africa. This helps to drive forward the continental integration agenda and development needs, which are pivotal goals of African Heads of State and Government. SHaSA therefore provides information on the African integration process and highlights priority statistical requirements for its three major dimensions: political integration and regional and continental governance, economic integration, and social and cultural integration. The results bear not only on Africa initiatives, but also on indicators of SDG 16. This confirms the importance, alongside other sources and kinds of data, of NSOs' monitoring SDG 16: "Without peace and good governance, all the gains made in Goals 1-15 will be wiped out. Without accountable and effective institutions of government, there will be no room for addressing systemic issues."[18]

Figure 1 Perceptions of democracy, transparency, and accountability

Legend: Satisfied with democracy · Government information adequate · Parliament listens to people

Follow Up Actions

Analysis of the pilot phase allows recommendation to be made and minor flaws to be corrected. The key institutional weaknesses affecting data gathering and utilization in Africa, as identified by SHaSA, are wide ranging. They include low appreciation of the value and importance of statistics across society; low level of political support for statistics; low priority and inadequate funding for statistics; inadequate institutional capacity on values and norms, bureaucracy, performance management, and accountability; inadequate coordination, collaboration, networking, and information sharing; and insufficient use of data for policy and decision-making.

However, successful initial implementation of the pilot in nine countries demonstrates that these challenges can be surmounted. UNDP is partnering with the AU Economic Commission with further support to the African Statistical System. The African Statistical System is a partnership composed of national statistical systems that include data providers, producers and users, statistics research and training institutes, and statistics coordination bodies; statistics units in Regional Economic Communities (RECs); regional statistical organizations; regional training centers; statistics units in Pan-African organizations; coordination bodies at the continental level; and frameworks.

Maintaining the momentum among member states and following up in pilot countries will require further support instruments and arrangements. Specifically, backing is needed for a number of specific interventions:

1. Support for the twenty African countries that have indicated commitment to implement GPS-SHaSA. This involves training, advocacy, coordination with other agencies of government, innovative technology for data gathering and analysis, mobilization of civil society, dissemination of survey findings, and further support to implement all findings from the survey.

2. The AU Institute for Statistics (StatAfric) should be the focal point of GPS Statistics in Africa. As within NSOs, a specific structure within StatAfric should be created to host these data sets.
    a. Enact statistical norms, mindful equally of the African context and international requirements;
    b. Ensure horizontal coordination with the other continental statistical centres, in particular the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).
    c. Ensure vertical coordination: to sub-regional centres, stakeholders, and NSOs and to international organisations.
    d. Promote GPS statistics in all respects, notably with continental institutions such as APRM and donors operating in Africa.

3. The same kind of institutional arrangements should apply at the sub-regional level, such as statistical divisions of West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), Southern African Development Community (SADEC), and others, to apply the principle of subsidiarity.

4. GPS-SHaSA should work even more closely with the AU team responsible for steering Agenda 2063, offering its indicators as a reliable and harmonized evidence base for monitoring the implementation of the peace and governance aspects of Agenda 2063.

5. Support StatAfric to launch GPS-SHaSA entry into the second phase, and to embark on broader GPS data production.

Endnotes

1   http://www.undatarevolution.org/report
2   http://africafoicentre.org/index.php/instruments-of-foi/82-african-charter-on-statistics/file
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18   Paul Okumu, Africa Platform, *Social Watch e-Newsletter*, 214, 15 May 15, 2015.

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