



What poor numbers?

Author defends his book on African statistics. **Letso Mpho** reports

Professor Morten Jerven wrote a book entitled “Poor Numbers: How we are misled by African Development Statistics”, which the Cornell University published in 2013. Since this publication hit the shelves, Africa became a wounded animal and was eager to respond to the scribe.

On Tuesday, 18 February 2014 in Gaborone, Botswana, Professor Morten presented himself in front of African Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) officials in an effort to support his views. The debate was titled “Are Africans statistics really as bad as they are being portrayed in some international circles?” The title of the debate suggested that Africa’s views are contrary to Professor Jerven’s findings, which paints a dark picture on the mother continent.

Professor Jerven argued that statistical capacity today is unevenly distributed in the African continent and this in itself presents economic growth challenges. Jerven talked at length about the knowledge problem in Africa and that this causes fear for the development of the statistically capacity. He later alluded to the fact that even though this is the case, it is worth noting that other African countries are doing well in collecting data and have reinforced capacity in many respect.

Jerven also mentioned that despite the many challenges that are faced by Africa, there are impressive gains in civil registration. “The book should be viewed as a baseline in areas to improve particularly on these previously neglected,” he explained. He urged African to engage more on areas of statistics and avail resources to produce sound numbers to direct developmental efforts in areas of acute need. The professor

said his book was written to aid those that have interest in economic statistics, particularly the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and calls on African countries to develop statistical capacity.

Panelists’ responses to Jerven’s book were that it undermined Africa’s efforts to improve CRVS. They said Africa needs to conduct thorough surveys on its shortcomings and address areas such as data collection, verification of information, making follow-ups on data to ensure consistent improvement on data capturing and collection.

African countries were also urged to improve data gathering to close information gaps, such as the poverty line, registration of remote dwellers, and to invest more resources to improve on its statistical revolution.

There were four panelists at the debate:

- ★ Professor Ben Kiregyera who has a BSc (Hon) in Statistics and Applied Economics from Makerere University (Uganda), Masters in Statistics for Iowa State University, (US) and PhD in statistics from the University of Essex (UK).
- ★ Pali Leholha, Statistician General of South Africa, and the Chair of Africa Symposium for Statistical Development (ASSD).
- ★ Busani Ngcaweni is Deputy Director-General at the South African Presidency responsible for the Deputy President’s Office.
- ★ Professor Ntonghanwah Forchheh, an associate Professor in the Department of Statistics from the University of Botswana.

The proceedings were moderated by Professor Patrick Molotsi, Executive Secretary of Tertiary Education Council-Botswana.

‘We are united in purpose’

Botswana’s Statistician General paid tribute to the progress made at ASSDs, writes **Temba Sibanda**



The Statistician General of Botswana, Ms Anna Majelantle has extended special thanks to the Honourable Minister of Labour and Home Affairs, Mr Edwin Jenamiso Batshu for the priority accorded to Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) and the vigour of his stewardship in holding the 9th African Symposium on Statistical Development (ASSD) in Botswana.

Giving a vote of thanks at the official opening of the conference, Majelantle said that she is confident that the Minister’s energy will enable Botswana to make a meaningful strides in the implementation of the Africa Accelerated Programme on the implementation of CRVS. Majelantle also paid homage to the Chairman of ASSD, Pali Lehohla for his effective leadership in keeping the ASSD mission alive and on course.

The Statistician General also expressed gratitude to the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), African Union Commission (AUC), African Development Bank (AfDB) and other development partners for their enthusiasm and support since the inauguration of the symposia nine years ago.

“There is no better evidence that we are indeed united in purpose and moving in union towards a common goal. Together we shall transform the planning landscape in Africa by contributing to the formulation of evidence-based policies, through statistics in general and CRVS in particular,” she said.

She also paid a glowing tribute to the United Nation Statistics Division, a global statistics which she said their presence at the symposium provides testimony for collaboration between the global office and Africa on statistics development.

Earlier on the Statistician General praised his Honour the Vice President, Dr Ponatshego Kedikilwe, for having highlighted the need to entrench CRVS in the continental Agenda 2063, the need to develop legal and institutional CRVS frameworks; importance of linking information with CRVS system and the need to address inadequacies in CRVS to avoid the so called “Scandal of invisibility” when he opened the seminar.

She said these will form the basis of deliberations during the conference.

AFRICAN YOUTH INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF AFRICA

Africa needs to count, Africa needs genuine statistics, and these statistics are the key to good governance and development in the continent of Africa. With this, every African is expected to participate in assisting the continent achieve sound and solid statistics by the year 2015.

However young people from Africa found that it was prudent to achieve this mandate.

In 2008, in South Africa, a committee named Young African Statisticians (YAS), men and women from the nations of Africa, was formed with a mandate to champion the Young African Statisticians to participate in idea sharing, research and contributing in having Africa produce genuine and reliable statistics thus good governance and better planning for development on the continent.

This YAS committee is a pan-African cohort of young professional who have a vision to be the change agents for the future of Africa. They are a bridge between educational institutions and the work environment.

Currently YAS is committed to 14 areas which have been highlighted in the SHaSA report (SHaSA is a Khoisan name for deep, precious water) these areas include Civil Registration and Vital Statistics, Demography, peace and good governance to name a few.

On these areas YAS managed to train five Young African Statisticians for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics system assessment; these trainees are from Rwanda, Kenya, South Africa, Cameroon and Egypt. Two of them have participated in the ongoing Civil Registration and Vital Statistics assessment and development processes.

Young African Statisticians has held three conferences and the committee invites the YAS to the 4th conference that has been scheduled to be held in Kigali, Rwanda 21 - 25 July 2014. The theme of the event will be “Young African Statisticians staking in claim in Unleashing the power of statistics in exposing inequality post - 2015. — *Bonang Mafokate*

Linking IDs with services

It is important to align civil registration with the demands of the statistics sector, writes **Uyapo Order**

"The right to identity and nationality are firmly embedded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child," the Director of Civil and National Registration, Ms Neo Lelang said.

She was addressing more than 700 African delegates who thronged the Gaborone International Convention Centre (GICC), on 18 February to deliberate on comprehensive and effective issues necessary to transform Africa's statistics records to meet international standards.

Lelang said one of the strategies adopted by the Botswana government to meet the demands of the statistics sector is to link the national ID with services provided within the country.

The government of Botswana has indicated that Births and Deaths Registration Acts are the fundamental to exercising human rights. It is for this reason that the government has taken a decision to recognise birth registration as a mandatory task by both parents of the new born baby, within 60 days of occurrence, to both citizens and non-citizens and failure to do so will result with a penalty.

The Department of Civil and National Registration of Botswana has thus made its national Identity card a prerequisite for full citizenship. After the inception of the Children's Act, all children born in Botswana must be registered within the stipulated period and these children have the right to birth registration and birth certificates indicating their biological parent's details and their marriage status.

The birth certificate and national ID are the key tools to identify an individual.

In Botswana, a national ID card is a necessary to access services in government sector, the private sector or parastatals. An ID card provides prima facie proof of the particulars stated therein. It is a trusted, legal way to identify a person and thus is a gateway through which the citizens can access public services, for example, social grants, health services, employment and education. The quality of life of individuals is dependent on secure identification documents, for example, orphan care, old age pension, school enrolment.

Safe, secure and reliable identity management underpins usage of identity card as key to Botswana Citizenship.

Fraud has been a concern for years, leaving the Department of Civil and National Registration the task of maintaining service standards through continuous improvement and standardisation of policy, processes, procedures and resources

Civil registration is a passport to accessing services, such as healthcare and education



and, of course, collaboration with stakeholders. The government of Botswana has therefore launched project in which it will link government services to create a central repository for authentication, which will also be of use to the Private Sector.

The project will allow validation of identity source data to reduce exposure to counterfeit documents. This will be done through legislation governing areas such as data protection, electronic signatures, which are now at Bill stage. The government, therefore, believes that the 'People Hub Project' will be key to the introduction of the eServices by the government.





Botswana: An African gem



Botswana is a mid-sized country of just over two million people; it is one of the most sparsely populated countries in the world. The country's capital city is Gaborone. It's officially known as the Republic of Botswana, in Setswana: Lefatshe la Botswana, is a landlocked country located in Southern Africa.

Most tourists visit Gaborone due to the city having numerous activities for visitors such as hotels which include; The Lonrho Lansmore Masa Square, and the Gaborone Sun that has a casino, amongst others. There is also the Lion Park Resort; it is Botswana's first permanent amusement park.

There are also natural attractions for tourists that include; The Gaborone Dam and Mokolodi Nature Reserve. For anyone who is interest in golf, there are golf courses.

For fine arts you can visit museums in Botswana include;

- ★ Botswana National Museum in Gaborone
- ★ Kgosi Bathoen II (Segopotso) Museum in Kanye
- ★ Kgosi Sechele I Museum in Molepolole
- ★ Khama III Memorial Museum in Serowe
- ★ Nhabe Museum in Maun
- ★ Phuthadikobo Museum in Mochudi
- ★ Supa Ngwano Museum Centre in Francistown

The cuisine of Botswana is unique one of the dishes is called Seswaa, a traditional meat dish made of beef, goat or lamb meat. The meat is boiled until tender in any pot, with just enough salt and shredded or pounded. It is often



served with pap (maize meal) or sorghum meal porridge.

They also share some characteristics with other Southern Africa cuisine for instances they eat, pap, boerevors, samp, vetkoek and mopani worms.— *Kgaugelo Motloutse*

UN endorses fundamental principles

The UN General Assembly recently endorsed the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. These were developed by the UN's Economics and Social Council Statistical Commission.

They guide the production and dissemination of official statistics around the world. This achievement shows how hard the statistical community has worked. "This is an historic moment for the global statistical system," said Stefan Schweinfest, Acting Director at the UN Statistics division. "I am confident that with the continued cooperation, the global statistical community will achieve even more in many challenging areas before us."

Principle 1: Relevance, impartiality and equal access

Official statistics provide the government, the economy and the public with data about the economic, demographic, social and environmental situation. Official statistics that meet the test of practical utility are to be compiled and made available.

Principle 2: Professional standards and ethics

To retain trust in official statistics, National Statistics Offices (NSOs) will decide, according to considerations including scientific principles and ethics, on the methods and procedures for the collection, processing, storage and presentation of data.

Principle 3: Accountability and transparency

NSOs will present information according to scientific standards on the sources, methods and procedures of statistics.

Principle 4: Prevention of misuse

NSOs are entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics.

Principle 5: Cost-effectiveness

Data for statistical purposes may be drawn from all types of sources. NSOs will choose the source with regard to quality, timeliness, costs and the burden on respondents.

Principle 6: Confidentiality

Data, whether they refer to natural or legal persons, will be confidential and used exclusively for statistical purposes.

Principle 7: Legislation

The laws, regulations and measures under which the statistical systems operate will be made public.

Principle 8: National coordination

NSOs will promote coordination among statistical producers.

Principle 9: International standards

NSOs will use international concepts, classifications and methods, where possible, to promote the consistency and efficiency of statistical systems between countries.

Principle 10: International cooperation

Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in statistics contribute to the improvement of planning. — Kgaugelo Motloutse



GIS SOLUTIONS FOR AFRICA

Superior mapping solutions for censuses and surveys provide the foundation for quality statistics and as such increase the relevance and credibility of official statistics. GeoSpace aims to build statistical capacity through the introduction of geospatial technology that addresses the unique needs and requirements of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) in Africa.

GeoSpace International is an Africa-based company. Its company's commitment to statistical capacity building in Africa is demonstrated through its continued support of African Symposia on Statistical Development (ASSD). GeoSpace has been a proud sponsor of the ASSD since the first event, which was held in 2006.

The company provides capacity building, technical support and census mapping solutions in more than 15 countries.

The 2020 round of Populations and Housing Censuses will benefit from continued research and development of this technology. Satellite imagery and digital aerial photography (DAP) has become more affordable; the level of detail and quality has improved tremendously.

GIS and Remote Sensing software is much more user friendly than a decade ago. This makes the wider use of the technology in digital census mapping a reality. After years of R&D GeoSpace recently launched SmartClient for Census® — software specifically developed for census mapping. SmartClient for Census is a user-friendly census mapping tool that enables Enumeration Area (EA) boundary digitising in the field. The software compliments existing GIS platforms.

Delegates are invited to visit GeoSpace to discuss their needs and requirements. — Hennie Loots

Visit www.geospace.co.za or henniel@geospace.co.za

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Thursday 20 February 2014		
08:00-08:45	Joint Session of Committee of Director Generals (CoDG) and StatCom Africa-Draft Terms of Reference and Rules of Procudure	Yacob Zewoldi
Session VII: Population and Housing Census (PHC) in Africa Chair: ASSD Chairperson		
08:45-10:15	<i>The objective of the session is to take stock of the current round of PHCs in Africa in terms of achievements of the countries and challenges faced them and to discuss future strategies for Africa in the 2020 round of PHCs</i>	
	Presentation I: Assessment report on the 2010 round of Population and Housing Censuses	UNECA, AfDB, UNFPA
	Presentation II: Presentations on country experiences in the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses	Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, Young Statisticians
	General Discussions	
10:15-10:45	Coffee/Tea Break	
Session VIII: Continued		
10:45-12:30	Presentation III: Presentations on country experiences in the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses	The Gambia, Madagascar, South Africa
	Brainstorming Session on 2020 Round of Population and Housing Censuses	ASSD Chairperson
	General Discussions	
12:30-	Social Programme and Lunch	

Jeudi 20 Février 2014		
08:00-08:45	Session conjointe du Comité des Directeurs Généraux (CODG) et de StatCom Africa - Termes de Références et Règles de procédure (drafts)	Yacob Zewoldi
Session VII: Recensement de la Population et de l'Habitat (RGPH) en Afrique Président de Session : Président du SADS		
08:45-10:15	<i>L'objectif de cette session est de faire le bilan du cycle en cours des RGPHs en Afrique en termes de réalisations des pays et des défis auxquels ils ont eu à faire, et aussi discuter des stratégies futures pour l'Afrique, dans le cadre du cycle 2020 des RGPHs</i>	
	Présentation I : Rapport d'évaluation sur le cycle 2010 des RGPHs	CEA, BAD, FNUAP
	Présentation II : Présentation d'expériences-pays sur le cycle 2010 des RGPHs	République Centrafricaine, Cote d'Ivoire Sénégal, Jeunes statisticiens
	Discussions Générales	
10:15-10:45	Pause- Café/Thé	
Session VII - Suite		
10:45-12:30	Présentation III : Présentation d'expériences-pays sur le cycle 2010 des RGPHs	Gambie, Madagascar, Afrique du Sud
	Session Brainstorming sur le cycle 2020 des RGPHs	Président du SADS
	Discussions Générales	
12:30-	Déjeuner et Programme social	