



The 57th Session of the International Statistical Institute

May 2007



International Relations
Statistics South Africa



ISibalo

Capacity Building Programme

ISibalo: a Nguni word meaning a “mathematical sum”

- Its brand reflects that of the 57th Session of the ISI and our ISI goal to leave “a lasting impression”
- It showcases KwaZuluNatal as the host province of the 57th Session of the ISI and its language (Zulu)
- It speaks to the drive towards a numerate society, one that has counted from the pre-historic times (reflected in the *maths4stats* iron ochre stone)
- It echoes the 2007 ASSD Rwanda tagline “if you don’t count, you don’t count.”

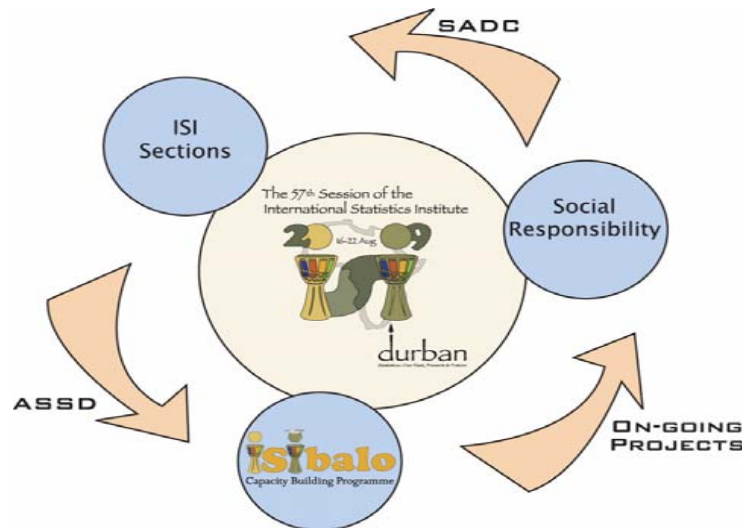
1. Executive Summary: The ISibalo Capacity Building Programme

Nature, Scope and Objectives

A capacity building programme developed as a principal activity of the 57th Session of the ISI to be held in Durban, South Africa. This being the first time the ISI has been held in sub-Saharan Africa in 122 years, ISibalo has been developed with the specific objectives of:

- Promoting broader African scholarly participation (and expertise in the core areas of statistics) within the statistical fraternity at the 57th Session in the 122 year long history
- Ensuring ongoing participatory activities in the key focus areas of statistical development through the promotion and dissemination research in the statistical sciences in SADC and in Africa
- Building human capacity in South Africa, SADC and the African region, especially young statisticians and women
- Bridging the divide through working cooperatively in statistics education

Context of ISibalo Capacity-building Programme



Capacity-Building Regulatory Framework

This programme is set within the context of a number of currently existing capacity-building regulatory frameworks, whose aim collectively is build statistical capacity in Africa. These include:

- NEPAD and African Union Development Frameworks
- SADC Integrated Regional Strategic Plan
- Regional Reference Strategic Framework on Statistical Capacity Building
- Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics
- United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics
- Millennium Development Goals
- ICPD-10
- ICP – Africa
- Work Programme of ASSD and UNECA
- Work Programme of Statistics South Africa

ISibalo Capacity-building programme: Focus Areas

- ISibalo-1: Africa Statistical Research and Capacity Development
- ISibalo-2: Statistics and Demography Research Programme for Young Statisticians
- ISibalo-3: Maths, Stats and the Girl-Child
- ISibalo-4: Maths, Stats and the Girl-Child
- ISibalo- 5: Women-in-Statistics

2. Introduction

The 57th Session of the International Statistical Institute (ISI) to be held in Durban, South Africa, will be the first ISI Session ever held in Sub-Saharan Africa in the ISI's 122 year old history.

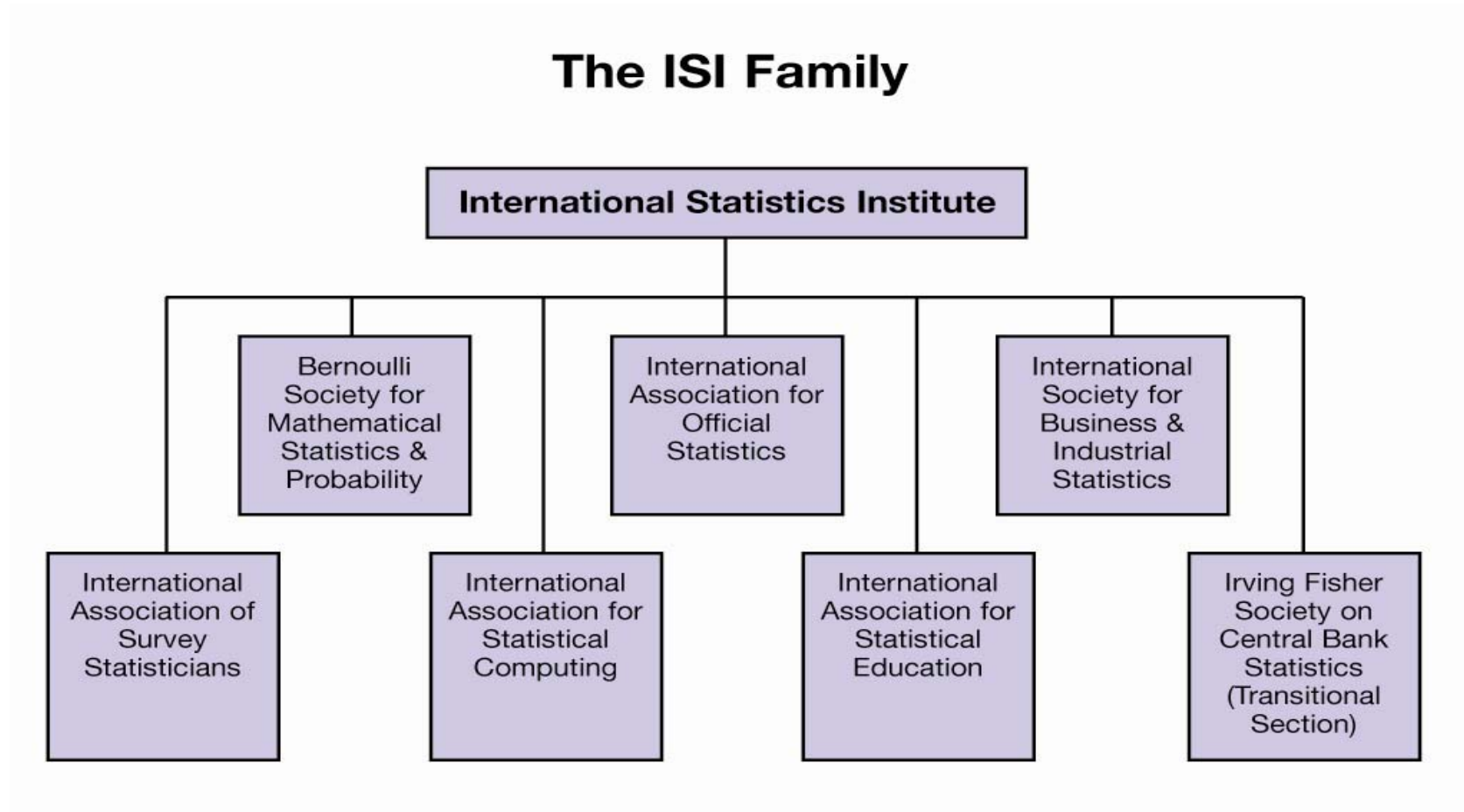
This historic Session will mark a significant milestone in South Africa's critical path towards the development of statistical human capacity. Conventionally, an ISI Session, held biennially, provides a platform for the gathering of over 5000 of the world's statisticians to share experience in a diverse range of statistics amongst public, private, research and educational institutions. Yet historically, African (and even South African) participation at ISI Sessions has remained extremely limited.

As the African region witnesses an upsurge in statistical activity, partnerships and notable political will aimed at improving statistical data measurement and quality for monitoring and evaluating better development outcomes in Africa, an area of focus in this revitalisation process becomes even more acutely that of statistical capacity building.

This report therefore outlines a proposal for the development of a capacity building programme which will mark perhaps one of the most important activities of the ISI 2009 in its endeavour of statistical development in Africa. The ISIBalo Capacity Building Programme has been conceptualised for a number of reasons that include facilitating the broader scholarly participation of Africans at the ISI in 2009, the development of segmented cadres of statistician and demographers in Africa, developing statistics education in Africa, the promotion of research in a science with a fragmented history of African achievement, promoting statistical data utilisation in Africa for evidence-based policy-making and creating a diverse range of for a for sharing best practice.

3. About the 57th Session of the International Statistical Institute

The **International Statistical Institute** (ISI) is one of the oldest international scientific associations active today. It was established in 1885 and its predecessor organisation, the International Statistical Congresses (ISC), was founded in 1853. The Institute is an autonomous society, which seeks to develop and improve statistical methods and their application through the promotion of international activities and co-operation. The ISI is composed of some 2,000 elected members who are the world's leading statisticians. These members are drawn from roughly 130 countries and their accumulated experience represents a vast store of scientific knowledge, which covers the entire range of official, applied and theoretical statistics. Approximately 3,000 members of the Institute's Sections, which are its Associations and Societies, supplement this reservoir of expertise.



In total, there are about 5,000 individual members in the ISI and its Associations, which provide a forum for international exchange of knowledge between members. The ISI also aims to utilise members' expertise to address general problems of statistical importance. The Permanent Office of the ISI is situated in Voorburg (near The Hague), in The Netherlands. The Institute has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

Statistics South Africa has been mandated by International Statistical Institute, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of South Africa to host, organise, manage and promote the 57th Session of ISI. It will be the first time that the ISI Session will be held in the Sub-Saharan Africa in 122 years. The 57th Session of the ISI has as its main goals:

- **To deliver the best ISI session ever that will leave a lasting impression of Republic of South Africa, and Africa in the world through the provision of quality service to ISI**
- **To build human statistical capacity in South Africa, SADC and Africa beyond 2009**
- **To raise awareness regarding the importance of statistics for development**
- **To demonstrate South Africa's commitment to reverse the legacy of apartheid on mathematics & statistical development.**

3. Statistical Development in Africa: What went wrong?

For South Africa, the urgency to develop mathematics education and statistical education in mathematics has been spurred by the after-effects of an interruption of a historically-founded culture of counting. Dr. H. Verwoed on the 17 September 1953, in addressing Parliament is quoted as saying *“what is the use of teaching the Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice.”* The **Bantu Education Act No 47 of 1953** became the pillar of the apartheid project, a piece of legislation, which sought to consciously de-emphasize the teaching of Mathematics and Science, destroying a generation of scientists, mathematicians and statisticians in South Africa.

Notwithstanding the effects of apartheid on the learning of mathematics, one of the key challenges across the African continents remains that of human capacity especially in the sciences. A combination of the debilitating effects of underdevelopment, economic depression, unemployment, war, poverty and the effects of gender discrimination have wreaked havoc on the education of Africans and black people in South Africa. The devastating personal, political and economic effects continue to be felt and wrestled with today because of a destruction of a generation of scientists, mathematicians and statisticians in South Africa and in the continent. The after-effects of these factors on statistical development in South Africa have been far-reaching.

For the rest of the African continent, a less colourful history can be portrayed for rather different reasons. While many African countries boast a more credible and tangible education outcomes, statistical development remains limited due to a combination of factors. These factors include in the

first instance, current evidence-based approaches to development far exceed the capacity of the poorest countries. This could be attributed to a combination of factors such as capacity problems in African national statistical offices, a lack of political will to support statistics for measuring the development agenda, unsustainable funding initiatives, underperformance, domestic under-funding and conflicting donor agendas. Despite decades of technical assistance and financial aid directed towards statistics, many were not performing adequately

3. Statistical Capacity Building in Africa: Identifying the Challenge

The challenge Africa faces is to build capacity in mathematics and statistics. Five years ago, the Minister for Finance responsible for statistics in South Africa, Minister Trevor Manuel, aptly captured the elevating role of statistics for South Africa's new democracy. Given our unsavoury apartheid legacy infamous for masquerading the truth with statistics, Minister Manuel correctly drew attention to a number of challenges that South Africa faces in its endeavor towards statistical development.

Challenge 1: To raise an awareness for a more healthy regard for official statistics and to restore trust in official statistics. Without the vital element of trust, no official statistics will be reliable.

Challenge 2: To build capacity in statistics. Too few South Africans have the necessary statistical skill our country needs; again this is a lingering result of the apartheid era.

Challenge 3: As South Africa strives for international standards, compliance and comparability, to pace itself relative to our capacity in South Africa. Compliance with the Standardized Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) and the requirements thereof are onerous, yet we lack a sufficient skills endowment to meet all of the requirements.

Challenge 4: The fourth challenge draws attention to what gets measured? Who determines that? These questions remain pertinent for South Africa as statistics becomes even more a vital part of growing our democracy and the need for timely and accurate statistics for evidence-based decision-making becomes even more real.

While these challenges outline the key issues that determine a framework for statistical capacity building in Africa, they remain common to much of the problems faced by the broader African community. At a continental level, the challenges of statistical capacity building are influenced to a large extent by the statistics demand-driven results-based development agenda.

At the end of the 1990s, Africa's leaders committed themselves to the continent's renewal with the creation of the African Union and the adoption of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Both initiatives were intended to address Africa's development challenges; place African countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development; and extricate the continent from the malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in a globalizing world. Africa's leaders also committed themselves to the results agenda, including Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and other national and sectoral development plans. The results agenda requires clear and systematic measurement and reporting on achievement of outputs, outcomes, and the impact of development policies and programs using better statistics. Better statistics are required to inform various development challenges facing Africa and are a necessary part of the development infrastructure. The results agenda has led to an unprecedented increase in demand for better statistics, putting severe pressure on already fragile and underperforming national statistical systems in many countries. Concerted action is needed to address this problem. In particular, statistical systems need to be reformed and strengthened, and statistical capacities need to be built in a sustainable manner if the data challenges posed by the results agenda are to be met (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2006)

Despite statistical capacity-building initiatives in Africa over the past 40 years or so, the capacity of most countries in the region remains weak, and there is little use of data by policy-makers. The Reference Regional Strategic Framework (RRSF) sets out a coherent framework to build this capacity, in line with the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics (MAPS). The framework will provide guidance to countries on how to improve their statistics and increase their use in policy-making and decision-making. For this to happen, key stakeholders in the national statistical systems in Africa will have to work in concert and within this framework.

3. Reversing the Legacy: where did we start?

Since then, Statistics South Africa has embarked on a series of activities to enhance statistical development in South Africa. The vision is to create a numerate society in South Africa.

In July 2002, Statistics South Africa co-hosted with the South African Statistical Association (SASA) and the Association of Mathematics Educators of South Africa (AMESA), the 6th International Conference on the Teaching of Statistics (ICOTS-6). The ICOTS-6 kick-started an outreach to local mathematics educators. This endeavour recognized the cross-curricular need for data handling as an anticipated outcome, resulting in vast amounts of statistical material being included throughout the various phases of the new school curriculum. In particular, the hosting of the highly successful ICOTS-6 conference in July 2002 prompted the enquiry by the ISI as to the possibility of our hosting the 57th Session of the ISI in 2009.

The 6th International Conference on the Teaching of Statistics (ICOTS-6), which was held in Cape Town in July 2002, kick-started an outreach to South African Mathematics Educators through a programme called the **maths4stats** campaign. In 2006 the maths4stats campaign ran a competition

for Mathematics educators in Grades 10, 11 and 12. A total of 26 educators were identified nationally to attend the 7th International conference on the Teaching of Statistics (ICOTS-7), which was held in Bahia, Salvadore in Brazil, 2-8 July 2006. The theme of the conference quite aptly titled was “**Working cooperatively in statistics education**” which for us in South Africa was timely given the introduction of a statistics component at Grade 10.

After Brazil, much momentum has been gained as the **math4stats** campaign begins its roll-out plan whose principal purpose is to strengthen (at national level) the statistics component of mathematics, while making recommendations on how to train mathematics teachers to better succeed in educating a cadre of statistical literate students. This endeavour recognizes the cross-curricular need for data handling as an anticipated outcome and the need to develop vast amounts of statistical material for inclusion throughout the various phases of the new school curriculum.



4. Why the ISibalo Capacity Building Programme?

In August 2007, South Africa will take over the baton from Portugal to host the 57th Session of the International Statistical Institute in Durban, 16-22 August 2009. For South Africa and Africa in general, this will mark a significant milestone in the history of statistical development for a number of reasons:

- An ISI Session will be held for the first time in Africa in 122 years;
- Participation in previous ISI Session has always had extremely limited African participation;
- The past five years have seen too many significant gains in South Africa and in Africa on capacity-building initiatives more broadly not to give recognition to such efforts leading up to and during the 57th Session of the ISI;

- Finally, the role of host country in influencing the core scientific programme of an ISI Session is very limited but the host country still has a mandate to encourage broader participation through a number of parallel scientific programmes and activities determined by its own national or regional agenda on statistical development.
- **South Africa will invest over R30 million in the ISI in 2009. Substantive gains to this project far exceed those even of 2010 World Cup in the form of development of human capacity and sowing seeds for the creation of a generation of scientists in South Africa and Africa**

4.1 What is the ISIBalo Capacity Building Programme?

The ISIBalo Capacity Building Programme is Flagship Programme of the 57th Session of the ISI to be held in Durban in 2009. It builds its framework and programme of action around (i) the key topics of the ISI Scientific Programme for the ISI Session in 2009; (ii) the objectives of the Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical capacity Building in Africa (RRSF) to “strengthen the analysis of data” and to “improve data dissemination”; (iii) promoting research in South Africa on statistics education and (iv) to showcase the statistical education and research work of the African scientific and statistical community.

The ISIBalo Capacity Building Programme of the 57th Session of the ISI intended to encourage African scholarly participation. It builds on three pillars:

- The African commitment (through ASSD and ICP-Africa) to capacity-building
- The SADC regional capacity-building initiative
- South Africa’s commitment to a numerate society

Through cooperative endeavours in statistics education, ISIBalo capacity-building programme will provide a space for a number of scholarly and scientific research activities, ongoing statistics education activities and training programmes that will first, work towards statistical capacity building in Africa, and second, promote broader African and South African participation at the ISI in 2009 through special topics, workshops, contributed papers and special ISI Presidential sessions.

4.2 Objectives of the ISI in relation to ISIBalo

The broad objectives of the ISI that hold relevance for the ISIBalo programme is to:

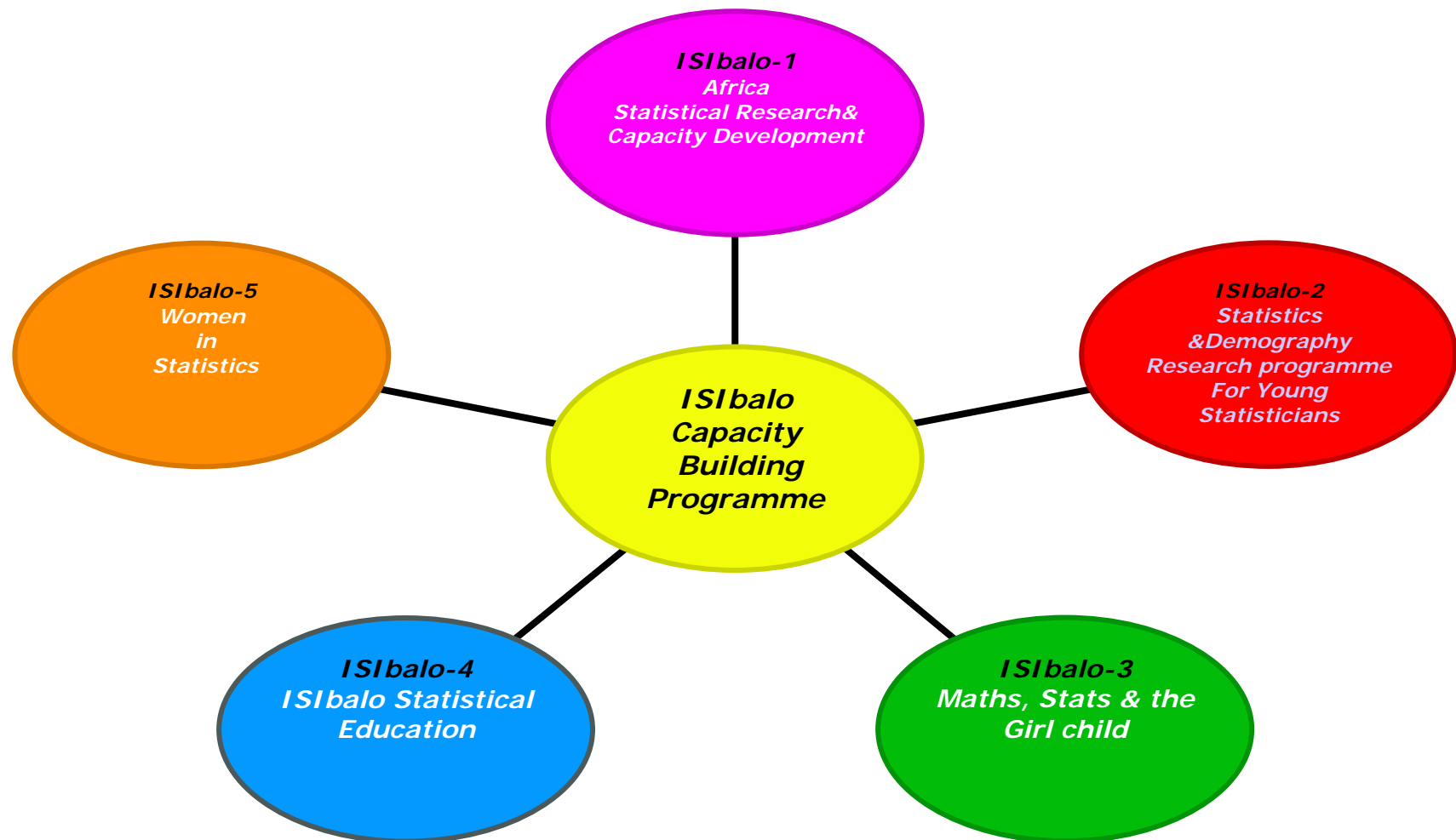
- **Enhance the ISI's support for the statistical community;**
- **Promote and disseminate research in the statistical sciences;**
- **Promote and disseminate research and best practice in all forms of statistical education;**
- **Establish an appropriate role for the ISI promoting public awareness of good statistical practice and its value to the community, and in supporting good practice;**
- **Define and institute a constructive role for the ISI in supporting the development of young statisticians, and in encouraging the ongoing participation of older members;**
- **Place an emphasis on providing an interface amongst statisticians specialized in different fields and active in academic, official and private sector statistics.**

4.3 Objectives of the ISIBalo Capacity Building programme

It is in this context that ISIBalo aims to:

- **Develop segmented cadres of African human capacity in a science with a fragmented history of African achievement**
- **Leave a lasting footprint of the ISI in Africa in the context of the objectives of the ASSD in its 53-year forward looking vision**
- **Have broader and long-term ripple effect on reversing the debilitating legacy of Bantu education in South Africa**
- **Promote an African renaissance in statistics education: working towards “better data for better development outcomes”**
- **To give tribute to visionaries, pioneers and front-runners of the ASSD agenda in the 21st century**

5. Activities of the ISibalo Capacity Building Programme



6. ISIBalo Capacity-building programme: Focus Areas

ISIBalo-1: Africa Statistical Data Research & Capacity Development

Programme Coordinating Team: Professor Tukufu Zuberi (ACAP), Mr. Jerry Banda (UNSD), Dr. Dimitri Sanga (ECA), Dr. Miranda Mafafo (Stats SA), Dr. Heston Phillips (Stats SA), Professor Ubomba-Jaswa, Mr. Charles Lufumpa (AdB), Professor Tim Dunne (University of Cape Town), Mr. Oliver Chinganya (IMF), Dr. Delia North (University of KZN), Ms. Cecilia Makupe (University of Malawi), Ms. Mapitso Lebuso (National University of Lesotho), Mr. Chibwe Lwamba (USAID), Ms. Said Aboud (National Statistics Office of Tanzania), Dr. Vitalis Muba (EASTC), Dr. Carlos Arnaldo (Eduardo Mondlane University), Ms. Khamarunga Banda and Dr. Lynette Hlongwane.

Programme Collaborating Partners: ACAP, HSRC, African Migration Alliance, African Population Council, DEMSA, SASA, MRC, CSIR, NRF, ARC, University of KwaZulu-Natal

One of the major thrust of the work programme of the UNECA and the Friends of the ECA in revitalising statistical development in Africa, is to ensure ongoing dialogue and an interface between the statistical landscape with that of policymaking and planning. The need for better data for better development outcomes is underscored by the need for data analysis and dissemination that elevates the role of statistics in key policy issues in Africa.

This sub-programme will therefore provide a collaborative platform for data analysis and dissemination in Africa. Building on the published “Demography of South Africa”, various research teams will be established to prepare manuscripts and thematic papers key socio-demographic aspects of population and development in Africa for presentation at the annual ASSD, annual thematic meeting of ISIBalo Data Research and Analysis stakeholders and at a special session of the Demography of Africa at the 57th Session of the ISI in 2009. ISIBalo-1 will also revive the Africa Statistics Association as the scientific research arm of the statistical community in Africa

ISIBalo-2: Statistics and Demography Research Programme for Young Statisticians

Programme Coordinating Team: Professor Graham Kalton (WESTAT), Dr. Lehana Thabane (McMaster University, Canada), Dr. Miranda Mafafo (Stats SA), Dr. Heston Phillips (Stats SA), Mr. Themba Mohoto (Stats SA), Ms. Mantikoane Lelosa (Stats SA)

One of the key overall objectives of the ISI is to “...encourage the participation of younger statisticians in the ISI ...” Notwithstanding this objective, the demography of the statistical community in the SADC region and in Africa displays quite an alarming inclination to an older, male predominance. This sub-programme of ISIBalo is intended to increase the participation of younger statisticians in the promotion and dissemination of research in statistical sciences. It

aims to prepare young researchers to take ownership of their research projects, and develop their skills in communication and responsible conduct of research, and provide them with the skills and reflection to develop into effective supervisors and mentors

Through a research and mentoring programme, key research topics will be identified by a programme research panel in the key areas of demography and survey methodology. A call for research proposals will be sent out. Selected proposals to be identified by panel will undergo a scientific research process based on original scientific research methods in statistics/demography, presentation of papers at selected scientific meetings such as the SASA conference in November 2007, DEMSA conference in 2007 and the African Population Conference 2007. A series of seminars as part of the endeavour to mobilise and network young scientists in order to advocate their interests in a policy debate, will also take place between 2007 and 2009 to allow participants an opportunity to further develop their papers for presentation at a Special Session for Young Statisticians at the ISI in 2009.

This programme will involve a number of activities at one level for the young women in statistics in their early career. At another level, the programme will focus on diverse activities for women in management and leadership in national statistical offices in Africa. Currently very little has been done to develop women's participation in statistics and in the ISI in South Africa, SADC and in Africa. A draft proposal has been developed to ensure this, which will also build on the SADC Development Account and the ECA's Gender Development Account. Further collaborations are envisaged with the South African Women in Science Association and the African Women in Science Association.

ISIBalo-3: Maths, Stats and the Girl-Child

Programme Coordinator: Dr. Miranda Mafafo, Dr. Lynette Hlongwane and Ms. Khamarunga Banda

Programme Collaborating Partners: Department of Education, KZN Provincial Department of Education, Department of Science and Technology, South Africa Mathematics Foundation

“**The Girl Child in Africa**” campaign has provided a context for this sub-programme of ISIBalo that aims in its first instance to provide through a variety of bursary schemes and educational opportunities for the girl-child in mathematics (grades 1-9) and statistics (grades 10-12). Activities will involve girls' camps for mathematics and statistics in the winter and December holidays, Annual ISIBalo Mayoral Achievements for the girl child in Maths and Statistics, work shadow programmes for grade 10 and 11 mathematics and statistics girl children in the December holiday. The programme will also focus on promoting the participation of girls in Mathematics Week, Mathematics Olympiad and regional Science EXPO. A “Mathletes” programme for girls will be provided to reinforce learning mathematics for girl-children.

ISIBalo-4: The ISIBalo Statistical education Programme: “Statistics Education for the Future”

Programme Coordinators: Dr. Miranda Mafafo and Mr. Themba Mohoto

Programme Collaborating Partners: Department of Education, KZN Provincial Department of Education, Department of Science and Technology, South Africa Mathematics Foundation

One of the mandates of the ISI is to promote best practice in all forms of statistical education. The International Association of Statistical Education (IASE) has in place a programme to develop through teaching methods, activities and curriculum development, the reinforcement of statistics at high school level. South Africa has made tremendous progress towards developing the teaching of statistics in schools. When Statistics South Africa launched the maths4stats campaign, the longer-term vision was to continue to ensure a sustained approach to international best practice in the teaching and strengthening of mathematics and statistics in schools.

The framework of ISIBalo-4 is still determined by this vision but draws its objectives on the tenets of the IASE. Its activities are also determined by the already proposed themes of the IASE for the ISI Session to be held in Durban in 2009: “Statistics Education for the Future” which aims to raise awareness on the relevance of studying statistics. This is a theme strongly advocated at ICOTS-7 in Brazil in 2006, and to promote research into statistics education by practitioners of statistics education.

For this reason, as preparations for ISI 2009 unfold, the ISIBalo programme will continue to provide support to maths4stats through the participation of Maths educators at the IASE meeting in Portugal, 17-20 August 2007. While the maths4stats campaign focuses on Maths educators in their understanding of the Maths curriculum and Learning outcome 4, ISIBalo-4 complement this approach with a more diverse focus on the participation of schools and learners of mathematics at primary, secondary and high school through a variety of activities that including:

- **The ISIBalo Annual statistical Project Competition**
- **ISIBalo Awards of Achievement in Statistics**
- **Work shadow programmes on Statistics**
- **Mathematics week and Mathematics Olympiad (SA/Africa)**
- **“Mathematics and Statistics” Fair**
- **Statistics Career Junction**
- **Africa Statistics Day for learners – 18 November**
- **ISIBalo Adopt-a-school**
- **2010 World Cup soccer programme for ISI 2009**
- **The ISIBalo Mathematics Bus**

- **ISIBalo teaching aids Project**
- **ISIBalo statistics road shows**
- **Research programmes for Educators and Learners for the ISI 2009**
- **Development of mathematics and statistics resource toolkits**

Emphasis will be placed on “growing our own timber” of learners and educators who will participate in ISI 2009 through collaborative work on key theme of the IASE. These educators will be drawn from the entire database of educators who teaching Mathematics at Grade 10-12 level, who entered and wrote the maths4stats Selection test of May 2006. In agreement with the KZN Provincial government, primary focus will be placed on educators and subject advisors in the KZN province as the host province, and even more specifically, educators, learners and subject advisors in the city of Durban. Special Topic Sessions will be arranged in consultation with the ISI 2009 Scientific Programme Committee. The 21st August 2009 has been identified as the “*Bring kids to ISI 2009 Day*” to mark also South Africa handing over the ISI Session baton to the next host, the Republic of Ireland. The last day of the ISI 2009, 22 August 2009 will also be ISIBalo Soccer Day for schools in the Durban area to mark the end of the ISI, but the beginning of the 2010 World Soccer run up. Activities of the 2010 World Soccer programme being developed with Statistics New Zealand will be rolled out.

ISIBalo-5: Women-in-Statistics

Programme Coordinating Team: Professor Cynthia Clark (Chair of ISI Women-in-Statistics), Dr. Anne Letsebe (Presidency), Dr. Miranda Mafafo (Stats SA), Ms. Kefiloe Masiteng (Stats SA), Ms. Awa Thiongane (ECA), Dr. Maseka (University of the North), Dr. Delia North (University of KZN), Ms. Cecelia Makeup (National University of Malawi)

In 2003, the then President of the ISI, Mr. Dennis Trewin noted the low participation of women in statistics and in the ISI. Under the umbrella programme of the ISI’s Women-in-Statistics, the ISIBalo women-in-Statistics programme also has as its overarching objective:

- *By making actions to mobilise and network women statistics, ISIBalo aims to increase their visibility and participation in national, African and international research and their invitation to advisory boards and scientific committees*
- *To increase the participation of women in decision-making and evaluation procedures of Statistical Development Framework Programmes*
- *To foster reflective practices by raising awareness of the implications of gender dimension of theoretical and practical components of statistical programmatic work areas.*
- *To develop scientists’ skills in incorporating this practice into their research ideas and methodologies*
- *To encourage policy developments at national level concerning the issue of women in statistics as a broader element of the sciences.*

Conclusion

This report outlines a ground-breaking programme, the ISibalo capacity building programme that will involve a number of collaborative initiatives in South Africa, SADC and Africa towards ensuring full African participation at the 57th Session of the ISI. Through the five identified sub-programmes, a number of key activities have been identified in ensuring the ongoing, sustainable development of human statistical capacity in a continent with very little history of achievement in the sciences, especially statistics. Collectively and through cooperative endeavour, a new page of history is being written within the framework of the ASSD, Africa's Regional Reference Strategic Framework for Capacity Building and ICP-Africa, which will culminate in special topic sessions, workshops, EXPO's and theme days at the 57th Session of the ISI to be held in Durban in August 2009.