

The Ethiopian Statistical Association held its 24th Annual Conference

Founded in 1990 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Ethiopian Statistical Association (ESA) has more than 700 members. The association held its 24th Annual conference on 27 June, 2015 at the College of Natural Sciences, Addis Ababa University with a theme “**Harnessing the Power of Data for Poverty Reduction in Ethiopia**”. The event was attended by more than 175 members of the association and guests from various governmental and non-governmental organizations.



From left to right: Mr. Setegn Tigabu, Dr. Shibru Temesgen, Mr. Yao Faustin, Dr. Chukuwdozie Ezigbalike, Ms. Aberash, H.E. Dr Debretsion.

In his opening speech, Dr. Debreteyion Gebremichael, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, appreciated the initiative taken by the Association to make “DATA” as the main focus of its 24th Annual Conference. He said that as the global economy gets more competitive and the challenges to be addressed are becoming more complex, data, especially statistical data, have become the most powerful way to integrate and analyse various dimensions of problems and seek for viable solutions.

In order to solve any crisis in the world, Dr. Debreteyion said, we need to identify and know the extent, in other words we need to monitor and evaluate causes and cases.

He also said that Statistics play a vital role in poverty reduction and world development and the issues that are raised in the conference are convincing that data should be further enhanced and harnessed to design sustainable development programs, to effectively and efficiently reduce or eliminate poverty in all its forms in our country.

“The Ministry is committed to working closely with the Ethiopian Statistical Association,” Dr. Debreteyion added. “It also needs other professionals, associations, academic and research institutions, non-governmental organizations, federal and regional government agencies to contribute their part in this national task to eradicate poverty and transform the living standard of our people,” he said.

Shibru Temesgen (PhD), ESA’s President, said that data have core values in improving people’s life style, good governance, building democracy, transparency and accountability. In general, it is a basis for

sustainable development and poverty reduction, he said. He also indicated that there is shortage and lack of data in terms of volume, coverage, quality, access, time, and relevance, commonly in developing countries, which challenges evidence based decision making. In consequence, he added, some policies fail; plans miss targets and objectives; people suffer from unsuccessful policies and plans of service delivery. This requires, he said, enhancement of the production and use of data, building on the existing capacity of statistical agencies, academic and research institutions and development partners that especially have crucial role in the development of National Statistics System (NSS).

Basically, worldwide data revolution that aimed to improve the production, accessibility and use of data is an important opportunity to harness the power of data for sustainable development.

According to Shibrú (PhD), the Association has been creating forums of discussion and conferences that have contributed for the country's NSS and the development of the profession in the country. Production of quality data, civil registration and vital events (CRVS), research and education, health development and agriculture were some areas that the Association has contributed to so far.

“Data is critical at the centre of everything, because without a good quality data it will be impossible to design and monitor any development programs and policies,” said Yao Faustin, Country Representative, UNFPA.

Mr. Yao underlined that despite many improvements, Africans were lagging behind in data management.

According to Mr. Yao, inability in integrating management information systems as a national system, lack of accurate and reliable data, mismatch between the available data and the development questions we need to answer are the main challenges. “The conference is timely because it is coming 2 years after



AU summit and is held in the year 2015 which will be a year switching from MDG's to sustainable development agendas, so, UNFPA will continue its support and will be part of it”, said Mr. Yao.

During the conference 7 research papers were presented and discussions took place. The association introduced its five year strategic plan, and presented its annual report as well as financial report, and members approved the strategic plan and reports after extensive discussion and feedback. Finally, election of executive members, including the president and vice president, was conducted, and the conference was concluded successfully.

The Association will celebrate its 25th Silver Anniversary and the 1st international conference at the beginning of 2016. It is expected that the event will be held colorfully collecting noble statisticians worldwide and will create an opportunity to open new partnerships among the statisticians and organizations affiliated within National and International Statistics Systems. Detailed information about the event will be released soon.