

Statistics crucial for effective policy formulation

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Policy recommendations should be evidence based

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It is of critical importance that policy makers spot a problem, set objectives, collect the right data, and do the necessary data analysis to enable them to make well informed policy decisions.

The Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA) is the main custodian of collecting and producing national statistics in Namibia celebrated the African statistics day in Windhoek yesterday.

The day was celebrated under the theme, “Modernising national statistical systems to provide data and statistics to support sustainable peace and development in Africa”.

Speaking at the celebration event, Alex Shimuafeni, the Statiscian General (SG) of the Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA) noted that the celebration aims to raise awareness among decision-makers, financial partners, data producers and researchers about the importance of statistics in achieving the goal of conflict-free Africa.

Governance statistics are fundamental to ensuring that the relationship between the state and its people is inclusive, transparent and accountable as they assist in monitoring the performance of the government, Shimuafeni says.

Statistics create better understanding of contribution of governance in its various dimensions to development and in ensuring that policy making is evidence based, the statistician general said boldly.

Furthermore, macroeconomic decision making that is grounded in data and statistics offers the best path to ensuring strong economic growth, job creation lifting more people out of poverty, he added.

Moreover, the SG notes that socio-economic statistics also help capture the impact of digitization and globalization on production, consumption, employment, investment and financial flows.

Panel discussion

In a panel discussion, Sylvester Mbangi the chief national development advisor at National Planning Commission (NPC), stressed on the importance of statistics in national planning. He pointed out that “if you fail to plan, you plan to fail”.

Data and planning go hand in hand. Therefore, it is impossible to plan and execute something without having the necessary and correct data.

“Economist over the past months have been reporting that the economy is overheating”. But to what extent is it overheating, he questioned. Hence, data is very crucial in making meaningful conclusions.

Indilileni Nanghonga, the senior research and product development officer at Agribank discussed the importance of data in development of Africa. She notes that the Namibia Statistic Agency (NSA) provides credible and reliable data, however, data gaps need to be addressed.

She adds that having no data is better than having wrong data. Hence, it is of critical importance to ensure that one has the right and correct data to carry out the necessary data analysis to enable policy makers and investors to make well informed decisions.

Seila Roseau, UNFPA representative stressed on how data and statistics support sustainable peace and development in Africa.

She notes that it is very important to employ the right data collection method as well as the right technique for data analysis to ensure consistent and effective policies. Sectoral resource allocation decisions are also based on data, she added.

Also, part of the discussion is Isak Neema, the executive for data quality assurance and coordination at NSA who talked about modernising national statistical systems to provide data and statistics. Neema said accurate data lead to effective and well-

informed policy recommendations.

Modernising of statistical systems will reduce human errors in capturing the data and ensure that it is accurate to serve as a tool to drive effective policy formulation in the country, he added.

Lastly, Efraim Dumeni the manager for information and institutional research at Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) talked about the role of sound statistics for academic purposes. He pointed out that data is very crucial for reporting, planning and monitoring and evaluation so that conclusions can be evidence based.-
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