



**Brief on the SADC Protocol on Statistics
for the
Committee on National Economy, Trade and
Labour Matters**

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

African Charter on Statistics	ACS
Bank of Zambia	BoZ
Eighth National Development Plan	8NDP
International Monetary Fund	IMF
Ministry of Finance and National Planning	MoFNP
National Statistical System	NSS
National Strategy for the Development of Statistics	NSDS
Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan	RISDP
Southern African Development Community	SADC
Southern African Development Coordinating Conference	SADCC
Strategy for the Harmonisation of Statistics in Africa	SHaSA
United Nations	UN
United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics	UNFPOS
Zambia Revenue Authority	ZRA
Zambia Statistics Agency	ZAMSTATS
United Nations Security Council	UNSC
Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit	DMMU

1. INTRODUCTION

This Brief has been prepared by the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) for the Committee on National Economy, Trade and Labour Matters on the ramifications of the ratification of the Southern African Development Community (SADC)'s Protocol on Statistics. Pursuant to *Article 63 (2) (e) of the Constitution of Zambia (Amendment) Act No. 2 of 2016*, the National Assembly is required to approve international agreements and treaties before they are acceded to or ratified. Further, Section 5 of the Ratification of International Agreements Act No. 34 of 2016 has provided for Approval of proposal for ratification by National Assembly. The SADC Protocol on Statistics has 41 Articles to facilitate its implementation in the Region. The Protocol has sixteen (16) State Parties, including Zambia though the copy made available only shows three (3) having signed at the time. The Brief has mainly focused on the economic aspects of the possible implications of the Protocol.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE SADC PROTOCOL ON STATISTICS

The predecessor of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) was the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC), established in 1980 in Lusaka, Zambia. In 1992, Heads of Government of the region agreed to transform SADCC into the Southern African Development Community (SADC), with the focus on integration of economic development. SADC members are Angola, Botswana, DR Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The objectives of SADC, as stated in Article 5 of the SADC Treaty (1992) are to:

- a) achieve development and economic growth;
- b) alleviate poverty;
- c) enhance the standard and quality of life of the people of Southern Africa and support the socially disadvantaged through regional integration; and
- d) build on democratic principles and equitable and sustainable development.

To attain the SADC objectives, Member States must work together to address regional shortcomings for mutual benefits. To facilitate attainment of the overarching objectives, protocols provide codes of procedure and practice on various issues, as agreed by Member States. *A Protocol is a legally binding document committing Member States to the objectives and specific procedures*¹. Presently, SADC has thirty-three (33) Protocols², inclusive of those not yet entered into force.

The SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020-2030 sets out a comprehensive 10-year development agenda for addressing *social, economic, political, and governance* issues in the Region. In the RISDP, cross-cutting issues include Gender, Youth, Environment and Climate Change, and Disaster Risk Management, which are central to ensuring that the formulation, deliberation, adoption, and implementation of regional protocols, strategies, policies, and programmes is undertaken in an inclusive manner.

Note: Attainment of the various objectives under each pillar of the RISDP requires coordination and harmonisation of regional statistics. Overall, the RISDP recognises the importance of developing a robust and responsive statistical system to underpin regional integration processes, including measurement of progress and impact. This ensures tracking of targets and indicators which have been set on specific objectives.

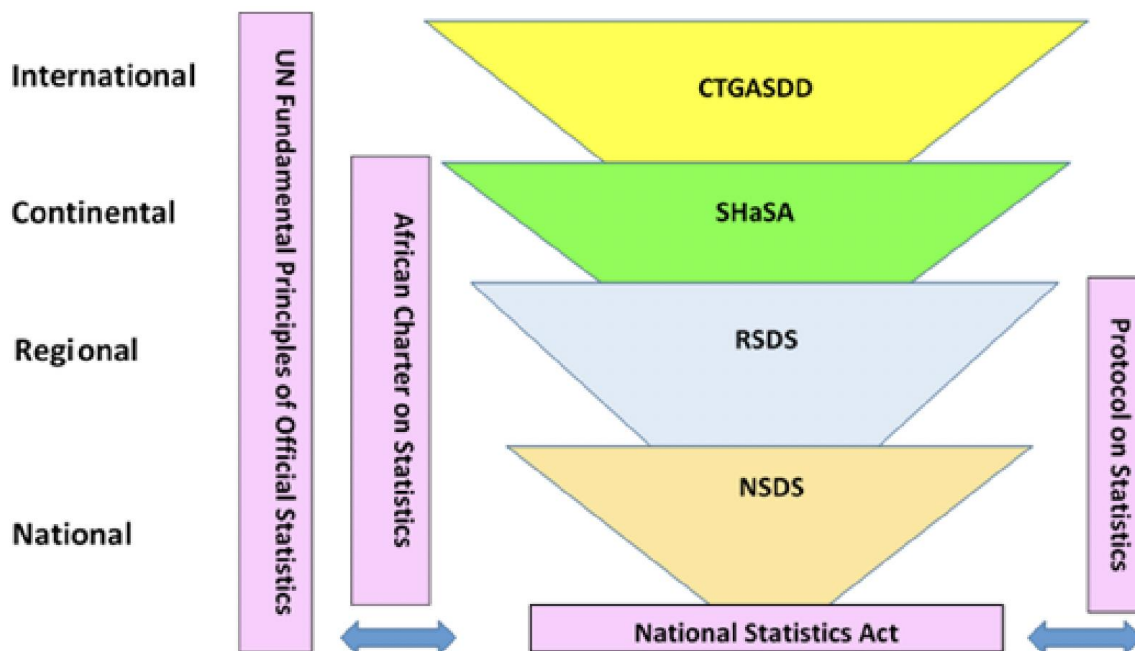
In 2014, SADC Member States recognised the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 29, endorsing the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (UNFPOS) which lays down the values and principles that govern official statistical work; in addition to the African Charter on Statistics (ACS) adopted by the African Union in February 2009. Further, the Second Strategy for the Harmonisation of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA II) was adopted by the African Union in January 2018, in time for legal reforms around statistics in Zambia as the Statistics Act, 2018 was assented to on 23rd December 2018. The above are guiding frameworks to achieve the vision of the African Statistical System to *generate timely, reliable, and*

¹<https://www.sadc.int/pages/sadc-protocols>

²SADC Treaty, Protocols, Charters, Agreements: Status of Instruments in Force, April 2024

harmonized statistical information, covering all aspects of political, economic, social, and cultural integration for Africa, as embedded in Agenda 2063.³

Figure: 1 Statistical Principles and Frameworks at different Levels



CTGASDD - Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data

SHaSA- Strategy for the Harmonisation of Statistics in Africa

RSDS - Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics – such as the SADC RSDS

NSDS – National Strategy for the Development of Statistics - such as SNSDS in Zambia

Based on the above, Member States resolved to put in place a legal framework for statistics development in the SADC Region, acting on recommendations of Council Ministers. The Council of Ministers is an organ of SADC established by Article 9(1) of the Treaty. The SADC Protocol on Statistics aims to put in place a SADC Regional Statistical System, which will enhance cooperation between and among the key players specifically the SADC Secretariat through the Statistics Unit and National Statistical Systems of SADC Member States that are responsible for the development, production and dissemination of official statistics.

³ SADC Protocol on Statistics-2021

3. OVERVIEW OF ZAMBIA'S STATISTICS ENVIRONMENT

Among the objectives of the SADC Protocol on Statistics, is to promote a culture whereby *policy, planning, decision making, monitoring and evaluation of development processes* at every level *are informed and driven by good quality statistics*. As such, there is need to ensure that various requirements and Articles of the Protocol align with the Country's National Development Planning. Some of the objectives of the Protocol align with the mandate of the Zambia Statistics Agency (ZAMSTATS) - ensuring there is coordination among stakeholders of the National Statistical System at national, regional and international level. This is done with harmonised efforts and collaboration with institutions such as the Zambia Revenue Authority, Bank of Zambia, and the private sector.

Over the years, the planning processes in Zambia have emphasised achievement of outcomes or results. This has evolved as a result of global efforts among national governments that aim to report on achievements of outcomes and impact of development policies and programmes. Based on the above, the results-based agendas in Zambia include the Vision 2030 and 8NDP; the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) at regional level; the Africa Agenda 2063 at continental level; and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at international level. These agendas are very much “data intensive” and statistics is now recognised internationally as an integral part of the results agenda.

In the Zambian context, the Statistics Act (2018) gives effect to the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and Principles of the African Charter on Statistics. ZAMSTATS is a public body established under the Statistics Act, 2018 with a mandate to collect, compile or disseminate official statistics. As such, the principles of official statistics enshrined in the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the African Charter on Statistics are recognised and apply under this Act. By ratifying the SADC Protocol on Statistics, ZAMSTATS *will play a key role in putting in place necessary coordination mechanisms at local, national, regional and international levels, to enable the overall coordination of the statistical function*

within the National Statistics System. It is worth noting that the country's statistical capacity index improved to 62.5 in 2020 from 52 in 2017 against the 7NDP target of 60.⁴

4. OVERVIEW OF THE SADC PROTOCOL ON STATISTICS AND IMPLICATIONS

The SADC Protocol in Statistics is important for Zambia and may play a role in attaining Zambia's Vision 2030 goal of become a prosperous Middle-Income Nation by the year 2030, through enhancement of monitoring the attainment of objectives set in both the Vision 2030 and in National Development Plans like the Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP).

4.1.1. Objectives of the SADC Protocol on Statistics

The objectives of the Protocol are as follows:

- i. serve as a legal framework for enabling and enhancing statistical development and innovation in the region;
- ii. promote a culture whereby policy, planning, decision making, monitoring and evaluation of development processes at every level are informed and driven by good quality statistics;
- iii. strengthen harmonisation of compilation and dissemination of official statistics in state parties in order to make them relevant, timely and reliable for the purpose of assessing and measuring progress of regional integration in the region;
- iv. ensure harmonisation of standards and methodologies as per international best practices for production and dissemination of national and regional statistics;
- v. serve as an advocacy instrument for statistical development and usage in the region;
- vi. enhance cooperation and collaboration between key stakeholders of the National Statistical System (NSS) on statistical matters;
- vii. to ensure alignment of the goals of national statistical strategies to regional, continental and international statistical strategies for the development of statistics;
- viii. provide a framework for enforcing compliance on minimum standards on quality and transmission of statistics in standardised formats; and

⁴ Eighth National Development Plan (2022-2026), p. 67

- ix. serve as an instrument for undertaking resource mobilisation and capacity building to implement national and regional statistical programmes.

4.1.2. Articles in the Protocol

Articles 3 to 10, deal with principles, strategies for development of statistics, legislation, data sources and collection, innovation, geospatial information and data disaggregation. Articles 11 to 25 detail specific statistics and what should be observed in their production. Articles 26 to 29 provide guidelines on quality, transmission, dissemination, and security of statistical data. Articles 30 to 41 details on the implementation and administration of the Protocol.

Presented below are key points on some Articles in the Protocol.

Article 3 – Guiding Principles

Part C of Article 3 states that “state parties shall ensure that official statistics are compiled and disseminated based on professional independence, standards and ethics determined only by statistical considerations, free from bias and political interference, and all users having equal access to statistical information.

It should be noted that the various Articles in the Protocol further obligate a State Party to follow other internationally adopted guidelines and manuals in the production of statistics. For example, under Article 11, poverty statistics should be produced in accordance with the United Nations Development Programme handbook on How to Build a National Multidimensional Poverty Index. Similarly, Article 14 on Macroeconomic Convergence and Finance Statistics requires State Parties to be consistent with, among others, the following in the production of statistics:

- 1) UN System of National Accounts Manual;
- 2) International Labour Organisation Consumer Price Index Manual;
- 3) World Bank International Comparison Programme Handbook and Guidelines on Purchasing Power Parities; and
- 4) International Monetary Fund Government and Finance Statistics Manual.

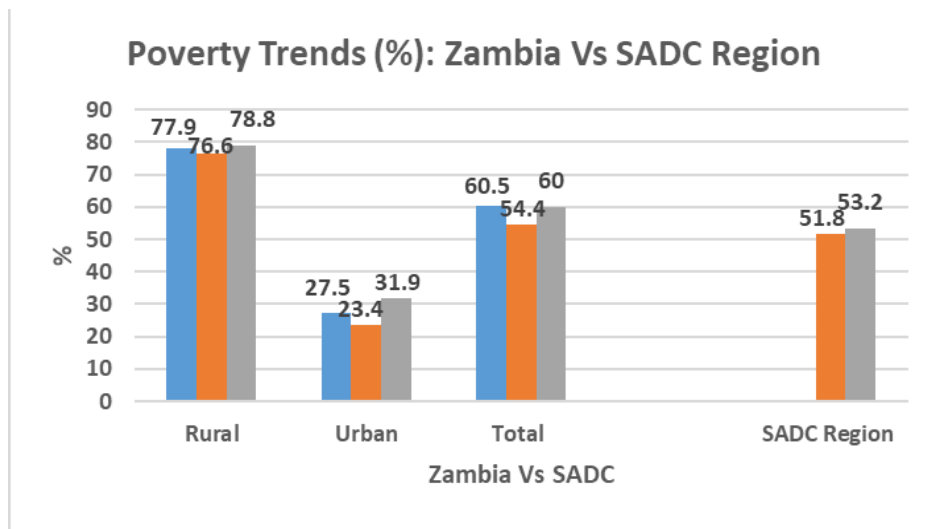
Article 6 – Data Sources and Collection Techniques and Article 11-Poverty Statistics

Article 6 requires State Parties to collect household-based and enterprise-based information for compilation of official statistics in both formal and informal sectors of their economies using various data collection instruments.

The Article also states that State Parties shall implement survey design methodologies to conduct economic census, household expenditure, demographic, labour force, living standards and any other survey at most every 3-5 years.

Further, Article 11 requires State parties to produce and disseminate Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) by gender and age in accordance with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Handbook – with dimensions of health, education, standard of living and other dimensions tailored to national priorities. This will ensure production of national and regional poverty statistics.

Figure 2: Poverty Trends: Zambia Vs SADC Region



Source: Constructed by PBO using data extracted from Highlights of Poverty Statistics in Zambia

Comment: *It would be worth finding out the capacity of ZAMSTATS in collecting these statistics, and the data collection instruments available. Before the 2022 Living Conditions Monitoring Survey (LCMS) was done, the last one was conducted in 2015, a period of 7 years apart. However, Article 6 (2) (b) requires state parties to produce these statistics every 3-5 years. The Committee may wish to find out if ZAMSTAT is well funded now that it is technically autonomous.*

Article 12 – Industrial Statistics

Article 12 emphasises on the need for State Parties to develop statistics on industrial sector and manufacturing related services to generate relevant annual statistical indicators to facilitate the monitoring and measuring of progress on the implementation of the SADC Industrialisation Strategy and related strategies at national level.

The Article further requires State Parties to produce and disseminate industrial sector indicators such as: Producer Price Index, employment, compensation of employees, output, value added, intellectual property, productivity and environmental expenditures to measure the performance of the industrial sector in the region.

Comment: *With regards to industrial statistics under Article 12, Zambia can further benefit through the SADC Protocol on Industry, which was developed with the aim of building a diversified, innovative and globally competitive regional industrial base to enable the Region to achieve sustainable and inclusive industrial development⁵. Through this Protocol and the SADC Protocol on Industry, Zambia can benefit through the promotion of industrialisation in an equitable and co-ordinated manner; in addition to promoting and attracting investments in industrial and related sectors with the use of official statistics for decision making.*

⁵ Parliamentary Budget Office-Brief on the SADC Protocol on Industry: for the Committee on National Economy, Trade and Labour Matters.

Article 14 – Macroeconomic Convergence and Finance Statistics

Article 14 provides for state parties to produce and disseminate monthly, quarterly, and annual macroeconomic statistics using common methodological standards and statistical classifications to monitor progress of SADC macroeconomic programmes and financial policies. Manuals and guidelines include: the IMF Government and Finance Statistics Manual for compilation of public finance statistics to support fiscal analysis, the IMF External Debt Statistics Manual for production of statistics on external debt for early detection of countries external vulnerability.

Comment: In the SADC region, Zambia is one of the countries which is under the IMF Programs Extended Credit facility (ECF), which is aimed at restoring debt sustainability. In 2022, Government enacted the Public Debt Management Act. One of the provisions in the Act law is publication of debt statistics through reports such as the debt summary reports and debt sustainability analysis reports. There has been an improvement in data availability. The Committee may however follow up on the establishment of the Debt Management Office, which will be key in provision of debt statistics.

Article 15 – Trade Statistics

According to this Article, State Parties shall produce and disseminate monthly, quarterly and annual merchandise trade statistics flows within the region and with the rest of the world in accordance with the UN International Merchandise Trade Statistics Manual recommendations for measuring progress in the implementation of trade policies in the region.

Further, clause (2), (3) and (4) require State Parties to set up collaborative arrangements with institutions involved in production of trade statistics for annual undertaking of informal cross-border trade surveys, analysis of exports and import prices competitiveness, and strengthen collaboration of individual NSS in the production of data in services trade, in order to measure progress in implementation of trade in services policies in the region.

Comment: Current Trade Statistics are key in spearheading the goal in regional integration and effective implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area

(ACfTA), which can eliminate cross trade border barriers in the SADC region. Trade Statistics may also guide member countries on comparative advantage on traded goods in the region.

Article 18 – Agriculture and Food Security Statistics

Article 18 requires state parties to implement the Global Strategy to improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics endorsed by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to produce agriculture statistics on a sustainable basis and to apply the basic data and information needed to guide decision making on agriculture and rural sector. This will require data on:

- i. Crop items;
- ii. Livestock items;
- iii. Aquaculture and fisheries products;
- iv. Forestry production;
- v. Agricultural inputs;
- vi. Socioeconomic characteristics of agriculture and rural households;
- vii. Land cover and use;
- viii. Public expenditure in rural areas;

PBO Comment:

The Agriculture sector has been identified as one of the drivers in the economic transformation agenda. As Zambia implements the 8NDP, top priority and focus is the Economic Transformation and Job Creation Pillar. The key drivers are manufacturing, mining, agriculture and tourism sectors. Although the sector provides livelihoods to more than 70 percent of Zambia’s population, it has been growing at a lower rate than the annual national population growth rate of 2.8 percent.

*The sector has been constrained by low productivity, limited mechanisation, inadequate agriculture infrastructure, skills gap, inadequate research and development, inadequate specialised staff and dependence on rainfall.*⁶

⁶ Ministry of Agriculture Strategic Plan (2022-2026).

*Production and dissemination of agriculture statistics is important as a way of enhancing timely planning. Apart from the items listed above on article 18, it would have been important to also incorporate the aspect of **environmental analysis, climate change and mitigation measures**. The two go hand in hand, and the fact that most of the agriculture sector in Zambia is rainfall-dependent. In 2024, Zambia's economy grew by 2.3 percent compared to 5.4 percent in 2023, attributed to the impact of the drought which has significantly reduced agriculture production and electricity generation.*

*The Committee may wish to know that ZAMSTATS produces **Agriculture and Environment Statistics**, with a focus on **Crop Forecast Survey, Livestock and Aquaculture, and Post-Harvest Survey**. This survey is important in meeting the requirements of article 18. However, timely meteorological reports may be key in addressing challenges in this sector.*

At national level, coordination mechanisms will need to be put in place between ZAMSTATS and Ministry Agriculture. This will ensure harmonized production and dissemination of agricultural statistics.

Article 19 – Environment, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Statistics

In this article, state parties are required to design and implement sustainable institutional arrangements and statistical coordination with relevant stakeholders to develop a nationally centralised database on disaster risk reduction, environment and climate change statistics in accordance to international guidelines. This will include:

- i. Vulnerability measurement in climate change and disaster risk assessment;
- ii. Coping and adaptive capacity in terms of resilience of households, businesses, communities, socio-ecological systems and whole country;
- iii. Impact of damages and losses on social, economic and environment dimensions.

PBO Comment:

In analysing the requirements of article 19, the Committee may wish to know that Government in 2024 launched the National Green Growth Strategy. The strategy is aimed at creating green jobs, enhancing resilience to shocks and creating business opportunities.

In the 2025 National Budget, Government has pronounced to expand, modernise and maintain meteorological equipment such as the automatic weather stations that have been installed in all the 116 districts. The Committee may wish to interrogate the status and effectiveness of the automatic weather stations, with regards to dissemination of weather statistics.⁷

Further, to increase access to weather-related information, Government has digitised climate data records. This is in addition to scaling up provision of meteorological information for use in the aviation, agriculture, water, and energy sectors as well as in disaster risk management. The Committee may wish to interrogate Ministry of Green Economy and Environment and Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU) on the status of these pronouncements, in line with requirements under article 19.

5. STATISTICS STATUS IN ZAMBIA AND ALIGNMENT WITH 8NDP

In line with requirements of Article 4 of the SADC Protocol on Statistics, Zambia in 2023 launched the Second National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS2) for the period 2023-2027. The NSDS was designed to address the data challenges the country was facing, by adopting a sectoral approach whereby eleven (11) sectors were selected.⁸ The state of statistics in each sector was assessed and a Sector Statistics Plan (SSP) was designed to address sector-specific data challenges. The NSDS2 is a national strategy which, if fully and well implemented, may positively impact evidence-based national development. The NSDS2 is an instrument for **Table 1: Table 1: Sectors selected for first phase of the NSDS2 process**

Government Ministries	
1	Agriculture
2	Commerce, Trade and Industry
3	General Education
4	Gender
5	Health
6	Finance and National Planning
7	Fisheries and Livestock
8	Tourism and Arts
Government Agencies	
9	Bank of Zambia
10	Zambia Revenue Authority
11	Zambia Statistics Agency

Source: Extracted from the Second National Strategy on Development and Statistics

⁷ Budget Speech (2025)-Ministry of Finance and National Planning

⁸ Second National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (2023-2027)

the development of an integrated National Statistical System (NSS) as provided for in the Statistics Act, 2018.

Under the Good Governance Pillar of the 8NDP, one of the strategies is to strengthen national data and information systems. The objectives, and various outputs and indicators under this strategy are shown in Tables 2 and 3 below. ZAMSTATS is the key institution recognised to oversee the attainment of objectives in strengthening national data and information systems.

Table 2: Objectives in the 8NDP under Human Development and Good Government Environment

<p>Human and Social Development Pillar</p>	<p>Strategy 4: Strengthen Integrated Health Information System:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Integration of Health information system and upscaling and automation of civil registration and vital statistics.
<p>Good Governance Environment</p>	<p>Strategy 1: Decentralise Public Service Delivery Systems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fully operationalise the Statistics Act of 2018 for an integrated National Statistical System. ○ Improve the coverage of Civil and Vital Registration Systems as well as improving Administrative Data Systems. ○ Operationalisation of the Integrated National Registration Information System (INRIS). The INRIS will lead to enhanced security systems through identification of citizens, and optimisation of various public services, such as tax administration. ○ Infrastructure development to strengthen the use of Information Management Systems across all sectors.

Source: Extracted from the Eighth National Development Plan (2022-2026), page 54.

Table 3: Pillar 4: Good Governance Environment-Output Targets and Indicators

Programme	Output	Indicators	Target	2022				2023				2024				2025				2026			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Strategy 2: Strengthen national data and information systems																							
Integrated Management Information System	Policies and guidelines for integration of management information systems in the NSS developed	Guidelines in place to enable integration of management information systems in the NSS	1					1															
	Developing a structured data storage	Data Management Plan for ZAMSTATS File Servers Developed	1					1															
	Developing a National Data Warehouse	Hardware and software for establishing of the National Data Warehouse procured	1					1															
Infrastructure Development	Establish in-service training centre at ZAMSTATS for NSS		1							1													
National Statistical Reforms	Statistical Plans developed by sectors		25	3	4	4			2	2			2	2			2	2			2		
	National Strategy for Development of Statistics launched	Second National Strategy for Development of Statistics (NSDS2) in place	1							1													
Human Resource Development	Establish statistical units in MPSAa with skills to produce quality statistics	Number of statistical units established in MPSAs	25				3				5			5			6				6		
	Targeted Statistical Capacity Building and Training conducted	Number of targeted MPSA staff and Statistical Agency staff provided with statistical capacity building and training	20				2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	2					2		
	Capacity building programmes undertaken	No. of Human Rights Commission Officers trained	60	20				10		10				10							10		
	Public Officers trained	Number of officers trained in tailor made programmes under the National School of Government	20,000				1000		2000		4000			6000							7000		
	Legislative Performance Audit training conducted	Number of officers trained in conducting legislative performance audits	30							30													

Source: Constructed by PBO using data extracted from the 8NDP implementation plan (2022-2026).

Comment: The Committee may wish to interrogate ZAMSTATS on the status of implementation of programmes under the 8NDP under the strategy to strengthen national data and information systems. The targets include capacity building programmes for human rights officers, training of 20,000 public officers, among others.

Apart from the targets set in the 8NDP with regards to strengthening national data and information systems, the Second Strategy for the Development of Statistics (2023-2027) has also outlined desired coordination and collaboration strategies in the National Statistical System (NSS). Statistical coordination or integration is such an important strategic issue to the

functioning of the NSS that it is explicitly provided for in the Statistics Act No. 13 of 2018. It is further emphasised that Statistical coordination is essential to achieve mutual support and synergy among data producers, avoid duplication of effort and production of conflicting data, thereby attaining data quality.

Table 4: Desired Coordination and Collaboration in the NSS

Type of coordination	Expected achievement
Coordination among data producers	There should be technical coordination ensuring that data from different sources are consistent and comparable. This can partly be achieved through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ System-wise adoption of standardised concepts, definitions and classifications. ○ Development and implementation of an annual National Statistical Programme.
Coordination between data producers and research and training institutions	This form of coordination aims at mainstreaming users in the NSS so that they can play proactive and critical roles in the development of the NSS.
Coordination/collaboration between data producers and data suppliers	Data suppliers may be under statutory obligation to supply needed information for statistical purposes. However, there are increasing non-responses to statistical enquiries, especially among establishments. Appropriate arrangements should, therefore, be made to guide appropriate relationships with respondents to enquiries.
Coordination between data producers and research and training institutions	This type of collaboration is critical to ensure that the NSS is supplied with trained statistical personnel and that more in-depth definitive analyses of statistical data can be done, leading to evidence-based policies and decision making. This also helps in identification of training needs for the NSS.

Source: Extracted from the Second Strategy for the Development of Statistics (2023-2027)

Comment: One of the objectives of the Protocol is to enhance cooperation and collaboration between key stakeholders of the National Statistical System (NSS) on statistical matters. Zambia already has a NSS which is being coordinated by ZAMSTATS. Although guidelines and policies for the integration of management information systems in the NSS were put in place in 2023 (according to the 8NDP implementation plan), the Committee may wish to find out the status of collaboration and coordination under the NSS.

6. EXPECTED BENEFITS OF RATIFICATION

As Zambia implements the 8NDP, production and dissemination of official statistics is key in ensuring attainment of targets and objectives. This is further in line with requirements of the Protocol for member states to put in place a National Statistics System, which is key in harmonising statistics at national and regional level. Apart from potential benefits in the various articles listed above, the anticipated benefits of ratifying the Protocol are as follows.

- 1) Enhanced Regional Integration and trade, as espoused in the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP).
- 2) Harmonised Statistics Publications (Macroeconomic Bulletins, Trade Statistics Bulletins, and Harmonised Consumer Price Index).
- 3) Establishment of the National Statistics System which is key in the production and dissemination of Official Statistics.
- 4) Enhanced transparency and accountability
- 5) Improved Monitoring and Evaluation Practices.
- 6) Improved Governance by supporting policy development, resource allocation, and accountability – thereby facilitating informed decision making.
- 7) Facilitation of regional competitiveness through benchmarking across various sectors; agriculture, trade, energy, macroeconomic environment, climate change and disaster management, industrial development, manufacturing. Overall, the protocol will enhance best practice in various sectors of the economy.

7. EXPECTED CHALLENGES OF RATIFICATION

In analysing the SADC Protocol on Statistics, the following have been identified as potential challenges.

- i. Lack of capacity building for staff in Statistics in various Government Departments and Ministries may affect Zambia's ability in meeting certain objectives in the Protocol. The 8NDP aims to train 20,000 Public Officers in Statistics between 2022 and 2026. The Committee may wish to interrogate on the status or progress in meeting this target.
- ii. Inadequate funding to institutions like ZAMSTATS has potential to affect attainment of objectives set in the SADC Protocol on Statistics. Our National Statistics System is being coordinated by ZAMSTATS. At national level, the NSS is key in the dissemination and harmonization of quality and official statistics in the SADC region.

8. CONCLUSION

Based on the various articles stipulated in the article, Zambia can benefit from ratification of the protocol through areas such as trade, industrialisation, climate change and disaster management, energy, agriculture and food security, production and dissemination of poverty statistics, production and dissemination of macroeconomic fundamentals and targets, among others. This is based on the prevailing challenges the country is going through such as debt distress, drought and the energy crisis.

On 18th August 2021, three countries namely Mozambique, Tanzania and Malawi signed the SADC Protocol on Statistics. Based on the various Articles stipulated in the Protocol, Zambia can benefit from ratification of the protocol through areas such as trade, industrialisation, climate change and disaster management, energy, agriculture and food security, production and dissemination of poverty statistics, production and dissemination of macroeconomic fundamentals and targets, among others.

The Protocol on Statistics has potential to enhance regional trade among member countries of SADC as espoused in the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and the

African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) through removal of trade barriers. Zambia's commitment in enhancing production and dissemination of quality and official statistics has been demonstrated through implementation of the Second National Strategy in Development of Statistics and the 8NDP.