

Washington D.C., December 9, 2025

H.E. Mohamed El-Amine Souef  
Chief of Staff  
Cabinet of the Chairperson  
African Union Commission  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

***Subject: Aide-Memoire of the Implementation Support Mission for the  
Harmonizing and Improving Statistics in West Africa Project  
(P169265 – IDA Grant – D588-3W) and  
Harmonizing and Improving Statistics in Western and Central Africa  
(P178497 – SOP1 - IDA Grant - E1740)  
Eastern Africa Regional Statistics Program for Results (EARSP) Project  
(P176371 - IDA Grant D999-3A)***

**November 3-8, 2025 – Tunis, Tunisia**

Your Excellency,

Following our letter dated October 7, 2025, a World Bank team carried out an Implementation Support Mission from November 3-8, 2025, at STATAFRIC in Tunis, Tunisia. The mission's objective was to review progress on the implementation of the HISWA (P169265), HISWACA-SOP1 (P178497), and EARSP (P176371) projects. Specifically, it focused on: (i) assessing implementation progress and identifying bottlenecks; (ii) reviewing the status of Procurement, Financial Management, and Environmental and Social Safeguards activities; and (iii) recommending actions to strengthen overall project performance.

We wish to express our sincere gratitude to the AUC-STATAFRIC officials for the hospitality extended to the World Bank team and for the constructive, insightful, and engaging discussions that enriched the mission.

The mission's findings and proposed actions are detailed in the attached aide-memoire covering the three projects. We would like to underscore the principal challenges identified across the HISWA, HISWACA-SOP1, and EARSP projects, together with the corresponding recommendations proposed to effectively address them.

- **HISWA project (P169265) Closing Date Extension:** Implementation of project activities was delayed due to late approval of the supplementary budget, which significantly shortened the timeframe for completing planned activities. In response,

the AUC component's closing date has been exceptionally extended by six months from December 31, 2025, to June 30, 2026, following the AUC request dated November 4, 2025. This extension aims to allow sufficient time to: (i) finalize outstanding procurement processes, (ii) complete contractual commitments, and (iii) achieve the intended project objectives. Management attention is critical to ensure all remaining activities are completed by the new closing date, as no further extensions are expected.

- **Low Budget Utilization:** Budget execution remains well below target for both HISWACA-SOP1 and EARSP projects. Accelerating disbursement and fast-tracking the implementation of planned activities is essential to achieve the intended development objectives within the remaining implementation period for both projects.
- **Delays in Procurement Processes:** The three projects have faced procurement, and implementation delays due to AUC internal procedures. To improve procurement performance, AUC-STATAFRIC should: (i) timely submit Terms of Reference to the World Bank for review; (ii) provide a comprehensive procurement plan with clear timelines and assigned responsibilities; (iii) maintain close coordination with the AUC-HQ Legal Team to expedite contract reviews; and (iv) ensure the transfer of the Procurement Assistant from AUC-HQ to STATAFRIC as soon as possible or, alternatively, hire a Procurement Assistant.
- **External Audit Report for calendar year 2025:** Ensure the timely submission of annual audit reports to comply with World Bank requirements.
- **Proposed consolidation of EARSP with HISWACA-SOP1 Project:** The ongoing joint AUC–World Bank Portfolio Deep Dive recommended merging the remaining EARSP (P176371) activities with HISWACA-SOP1 (P178497) by December 2025. However, AUC budget rules restricting fund reallocation make immediate consolidation unfeasible. The mission team advised continuing EARSP activities already approved for the 2026 calendar year, and the World Bank will soon consult STATAFRIC on the next steps.

We look forward to continued collaboration and support from African Union management for the timely implementation of these recommendations to accelerate progress and enhance the quality of implementation across the three Statistics Projects.

Yours Sincerely,



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