

## **The Challenge African Development Statistics: Comparability, Reliability and Validity**

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What do we know about income and growth in Sub-Saharan Africa? The answer is: much less than we like to think. This paper reviews the methodology and basic data underlying the currently available GDP statistics from African economies. It is argued that with the current uneven application of methods and availability of data, any ranking of countries according to GDP levels is misleading. This uncertainty in the validity of income level estimates leaves the reliability of the reported growth rates shrouded in uncertainty. The paper reviews the measurement challenges faced by African statistical offices since independence and analyses how these interventions have influenced the currently available database for development. The paper evaluates the current challenges for statistical offices, and it is argued that currently, neither data users nor data producers are getting the assistance they need.