

Synopsis of the Status of Key Development Statistics in Africa

Well-Being Statistics

Motivation and Objectives

Growing interest in moving beyond GDP has expanded the range of measures used to understand how people live, the deprivations they experience and whether development is improving their lives, including monetary poverty, multidimensional poverty, human development, per capita income and happiness. However, these measures differ in their concepts, methodologies, data sources, frequency and policy purposes, while uneven country coverage, long intervals between surveys and inconsistencies between national and international estimates complicate their comparison and use, encourage discretionary indicator choices and can produce conflicting narratives for policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation across African countries.

The objectives behind the brief are to: (i) assess the comparability of different well-being measures in Africa; (ii) identify gaps within and across the production and dissemination of well-being statistics; and (iii) advocate for national and regional commitment to defining well-being measures that reflect Africa's development priorities.

Highlights of the Status of Statistics

1. Africa's monetary and multidimensional poverty aggregates mask wide differences in the timing of the underlying data. The latest monetary-poverty statistics across countries range from 2011 to 2024, while the latest Global MPI statistics range from 2018 to 2025.
2. Surveys used to produce well-being statistics are conducted infrequently. African countries have an average inter-survey period of about four years for the Global MPI and six years for monetary poverty, with 12 countries recording gaps of ten years or more between monetary-poverty estimates.
3. Country coverage of the Global MPI is not exhaustive. It covers 49 African countries, leaving five without estimates.
4. Libya, Eritrea and Somalia have no monetary-poverty data points over the period 1980-2024, while Equatorial Guinea has only one, compared with an African average of five.
5. National and Global MPI measures differ in their construction, surveys and timing, complicating their comparison and use. Seychelles records a difference of 11.0 percentage points, partly reflecting different survey years, while Malawi records a difference of about 9.0 percentage points from different surveys conducted and published in the same respective years.
6. For comparable years, monetary poverty is higher than the multidimensional poverty headcount ratio in 17 African countries, while the reverse is observed in 13 countries. Guinea records the largest difference, at 54.5 percentage points, more than 20 times the regional gap of 2.5 percentage points.
7. Countries do not necessarily perform similarly across different measures of well-being. Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, Angola and Eswatini are among Africa's top 20 countries by GDP per capita but do not rank among the top 20 based on monetary poverty.