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Contribution by Germany

**to the CSTD 2026-2027 priority theme on
“Data Governance for Development: From Asymmetry to Equitable Stewardship”**

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Input CSTD Priority Theme – Data Governance for Development: From Asymmetry to Equitable Stewardship

6. What major bilateral, regional, or international partnership has your country engaged in to foster equitable and interoperable data governance? (Please describe the benefits of participating in these partnerships, as well as any challenges related to coordination, capacity, trust, interoperability or benefit-sharing)

Germany and the **African Union (AU)** maintain a long-standing and trusted partnership, that aims to unlock the potential of Africa's data economy within the strategic framework of the AU Digital Transformation Strategy, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and the AU Data Policy Framework. This partnership is advanced through the following three initiatives, commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and implemented by or in cooperation with GIZ:

Germany supports the AU's efforts to strengthen institutional capacity for data governance and digital innovation across Africa through the **"Citizen Engagement and Innovative Data Use for Africa's Development (Data Cipation)" programme**. The programme facilitates regulatory peer learning among AU member states and encourages youth-led innovation in its institutions.

To foster equitable and interoperable data governance, Germany engages in a Team Europe Approach. For instance, through the **"Data Governance in Africa" initiative**, Germany and further EU Member States, as well as the EU Commission collaborate with the AU, its Regional Economic Communities and Member States. Additional key partnerships have been established with the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) and national data protection authorities, such as Kenya's Office of the Data Protection Commissioner (ODPC).

Through the **"Data Economy" initiative**, Germany further partners with the Smart Africa Secretariat, the Network of African Data Protection Authorities, national regulators, and private sector and civil society actors. The aims of the initiative are to foster data-driven solutions with local partners, strengthen data capacities of local stakeholders and develop and support the implementation of a regulatory data framework in Africa.

7. How can international cooperation strengthen equitable and interoperable data governance to ensure that data contributes to shared prosperity and sustainable development? In what ways can the UN CSTD contribute to this effort?

Across the globe, countries are developing and adopting data policies and providing digital public services. This digital transformation frequently outpaces the institutional capacity of the responsible authorities. But good data governance relies on capable institutions and skilled people. Without them, even well-designed policies cannot translate into shared prosperity and sustainable development.

International cooperation should therefore:

- prioritize **capacity building** by strengthening digital skills, institutional capacities, and regulatory expertise
- foster **interoperable and rights-based regulatory frameworks** are essential to enable safe, secure and trustworthy cross-border data flows while safeguarding human rights and
- help build the **trust** that people, companies and governments need to use data confidently.

The programmes mentioned above contribute directly to these efforts by supporting the development and implementation of harmonised frameworks for data policy, strengthening institutional capacity for data governance and helping ensure the public trust needed for the responsible use of data. They do so by facilitating the exchange of good practices and promoting policy dialogue.

UN CSTD and the **Working Group on Data Governance at All Levels**, in particular, can contribute to this effort by providing timely and relevant policy recommendations, for instance on safe, secure and trustworthy data and cross-border data flows - thereby strengthening equitable and interoperable data governance that promotes sustainable development.