A total of 28 journalists from various media houses across Rwanda participated in a five-day training workshop aimed at enhancing their capacity in statistical literacy and data-driven reporting.

The training, organized by the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR), took place from June 6 to 14, 2025, at Centre Pastorale Fatima in Musanze District.

Claudette Kayitesi, Director of Statistical Methods, Research, and Publication at NISR, thanked the journalists for their participation. She emphasized that the training served two key purposes: first, to provide journalists updated and accurate statistical data to journalists and, second, to strengthen their ability to interpret and communicate data effectively in their reporting.

Kayitesi also highlighted the importance of health-related reporting, where accurate use of statistics is essential for public awareness and informed decision-making. “Since we started organizing these trainings “ she added, “we have observed changes in the way the media are reporting on statistics. Expectations were achieved. We hope to see improvement in data -based articles that are being produced.”

The training was organized around five major topics which include: Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Poverty, Labour Force Survey, Field Visit and regional perspective.

“One of the most important roles journalists should focus on when reporting about GDP is to provide clarity,” said Fabien Mpayimana, a National Accounts Statistician at NISR. “You need to first understand these statistical reports on GDP before reporting.”

GDP includes all economic activities within the country regardless of ownership, for example foreign companies operating locally are included. An illegal economic activity, unpaid work like caregiving at home is excluded from GDP. The approaches used in Rwanda include production and expenditure approaches.

Muhoza Didier, Poverty Statistician Specialist at- NISR explained that the Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey (EICV 7) the EICV (Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey) was traditionally conducted every five years. However, starting in 2010 with EICV3, the survey shifted to a three-year cycle. Now, Rwanda has adopted a 12-month continuous data collection methodology, aligning with

international best practices and standards.

“In the last 7 years, poverty in Rwanda reduced, with 1.5 million people lifted out of poverty between 2017 and 2024.” He explained, “The national poverty rate dropped from 39.8% —a 12.4% point decrease,” Using visual data from the poverty survey, he explained why some districts had lagged behind and why some had dropped in the poverty rate.

The training tackled the labor force, where Rwanda is to reduce the national unemployment rate to 12 per cent in the next five years. “Currently, the unemployment rate is at 14.9 per cent.” Pacific Uwamahoro , a Labour Force Survey Specialist at NISR said, he added “Rwanda has set an ambitious target to create 1.25 million productive jobs by 2029.”

Doreen Nakure Statistician – Communication and Advocacy Expert East Africa Secretariat told journalists that journalists play a role in strengthening data and translating it into meaning public narratives.

Ikwiyishimwe Abel Moses, a journalist from Royal FM Radio said, “ This training came at the perfect time. I used to struggle with understanding terms like GDP AND EICV, but now I have a clear grasp of them. It will definitely be easier for me to work on stories that involve statistics,”

On her side, Mukanyandwi Marie Louise from Ubumwe online media house said that the training will help her to effectively utilize research findings from NISR to enrich and support diverse news stories besides that, helping audiences better understand complex issues.

The official closing of the training featured presentations by journalists, showcasing their field investigations from Thursday’s visits. NISR encouraged participants to pitch their story ideas, promising support for the best journalist to further develop and publish their article.