

## **Opening remarks CoDG, Chief Ilboudo Joseph**

**Malabo, 06 December 2022**

[Civilities d'usage]

- Honorable Minister of Finance, Economy and Planning, Equatorial Guinea.
- Chair of the 15th CoDGs Bureau (Benin)
- Host Country Representative (Equatorial Guinea)
- AUC Representative
- AfDB Representative

**Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,**

I am pleased to deliver the opening remarks on behalf of Oliver Chinganya, the Director of the African Centre for Statistics, who couldn't travel here because of several commitments as the current OIC of the Commission.

It is a renewed pleasure for me to meet you here in Malabo at the occasion of this meeting of the Committee of Director-General of national statistical offices. This meeting is organized under the theme Strengthening Resilience in Nutrition and Food Security on the African Continent.

The choice of the theme for this year is closely linked to the global situation with its impact on the continent and, more particularly, on food security. We have seen the impact of the crisis in Ukraine, which has increased the vulnerability of our very import-dependent African economies. In agriculture, for example, most of the wheat used in Africa comes from Ukraine and Russia. The conflict currently taking place in this region is affecting grain imports. It goes well beyond it, with the explosion in the price of maritime transport, petroleum and its derivatives, etc. The immediate consequence is the rise in final consumer prices for households everywhere. This situation plunges many people into poverty and extreme poverty.

Our governments need to take appropriate short, medium- and long-term actions. NSSs are called to provide statistical information and data to

guide decision-making at this stage. However, are our NSSs in the capacity to produce quality statistics in this area?

**Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,**

Several countries have, over the years, trained statisticians specialized in agriculture statistics. AGROST phase 1 has contributed considerably to this [scholarship and short-term trainings]. The second phase, recently launched by ECA and FAO, strengthens this initiative. [50 scholarships covering 25 countries and two regional training workshops].

However, responses from several countries are still limited. Arrived less than three years from the end of the World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2020 round, which covers agricultural censuses to be undertaken between 2016 and 2025, it is worth to notice that only a few African countries have conducted an agricultural census, while the census of agriculture continues to play a key role in the collection of structural data on the agriculture sector. How can we provide reliable data to guide decision-making without structural quality data?

Several reasons may explain this situation. Nevertheless, this situation, added to the status in several other sectors, calls us to rethink our approach to statistics and data generation and use. It invites all of us to transform and modernize our operations with the ultimate goal of adequately responding to current and future needs.

We recognized that the African statistical system is already in this process with the creation of the African Group on the transformation and modernization of official statistics in 2020 and the validation of the road map for the transformation and modernization of official statistics in Africa approved by the statistical Commission for Africa in October 2022. The draft road map takes stock of the challenges and opportunities for transforming and modernizing official statistics in Africa. It sets out principles and priorities for transformation and modernization to guide national planning and the design of national strategies for the development of statistics. It is also a framework to guide members of the African statistical system in helping to create and sustain virtuous cycles for official statistics, ensuring that digital technology is used most

appropriately and tailored to each country's needs, and facilitating the design of national road maps.

**Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,**

We must now move forward in a concerted way, as one team, within the SHaSA framework, in transforming and modernizing official statistics in Africa. We have a lot to do, and we also have a lot to share.

The dual role of ECA as a Pan-African and a UN institution allows the Commission to bring Africa's agenda to the global level. In this role, ECA sits here in the CoDG and in three key global bodies, namely the UN Statistical Commission, the global coordination committee of statistical activities and the global committee of chief statisticians in the UN. All these functions make ECA the link between our region and the world. It also allows the Commission to share the global experience at the regional level. In this context, ECA will present the recent statistical developments in Africa at the 54<sup>th</sup> Session UN Statistical Commission, scheduled for 28 February to 3 March 2023. During the 54<sup>th</sup> Session of UNSC, ECA in collaboration with UNSD will organize a side event on Modernization and Transformation of Official Statistics. It will be the occasion to share information on trends and directions at the global statistical level with Africa. We will support you in raising the African voice and mobilizing partners to support our transformation and modernization journey.

We will be able to inform the global statistical community about the place we are giving to Young statisticians with the creation of Takwimu Young African Statisticians Programme, to support transformation, modernization, and harmonization in the continent. We will talk about the integration of geospatial and statistical information and also progress on digital census undertaking in Africa.

**Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,**

We are at the last straight line of SHaSA 2 implementation. The Executive committee hold its annual meeting over the weekend. The strategy implementation report shows that we still have a lot to do. I want to call all upon us to multiply our efforts to accelerate the implementation of our strategy. It is our data plan, our agenda. Let's give it more consideration for its last four remaining implementation years.

I wish us fruitful discussions and deliberations. I thank you.