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16th Session of the Meeting of the Committee
of Directors General of National Statistical Institutes

Opening remarks

Mrs. Leila Ben Ali

Head of Statistics-African Union Commission (STATAFRIC)

December 6-8, 2022

Malabo, Equatorial Guinea

Honorable Minister of Finance, Economy and Planning, Republic of Equatorial Guinea;

The Chair of the 15th CoDGs (DG of Benin);

Directors General of the National Statistical Offices of AU Member States;

Regional Economic Communities Representatives;

Représentants du Gouvernement ;

Representatives of AfDB, UNECA, EB, FAO, UNWOMEN, UE, OECD, ATAF, Statistics Sweden, Statistics Norway, Expertise France;

Representatives of Development partners ;

Honorables invitees;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

On behalf of His Excellency Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, I would like to welcome you to this statutory meeting of the Committee of Directors General of National Statistical Offices (CoDGs) of the African Union, which will be held from 6 to 8 December, 2022 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea.

It is also a pleasure for STATAFRIC to deliver these welcoming remarks to this statutory meeting and thank all of you for sparing no effort to join us at this very important meeting, especially those who have traveled long distances, to be with us here in Malabo this week.

First of all, allow me to express the very sincere thanks and deep gratitude of the African Union Commission, to **H.E. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo**, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, to his Government, and his People, for the excellent facilities made available to the Commission and the participants for the success of this important continental meeting for the development of statistics in Africa.

This annual meeting of the authority of African statistics allows us to have a platform to discuss the challenges that hinder the development of statistics in Africa. This year, the theme of the meeting is : “***Strengthening Resilience in Nutrition and Food Security on African Continent: Strengthening Agri-Food Systems, Health and Social Protection Systems for Acceleration of Human, Social and Economic Capital Development***”, the theme that the Heads of State and Government of the African Union adopted for the year 2022. This calls us to reflect on the ways and means to follow to have quality statistics on food security and nutrition in Africa.

Honorable Minister, DGs, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Statistics is at the heart of the political will of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union. This resulted in the adoption of the African Charter on Statistics in 2009 and the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA) in 2010. These two documents constitute the barometers for the development of statistics in Africa.

With the adoption of Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030, Africa needs quality statistics more than ever for its development. In order to meet this growing demand for quality statistics in Africa, for planning, monitoring and evaluation of the two Agendas, in addition to the various national and regional development plans, the Conference of Heads of State and Government of African Union adopted in January 2018, the second Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA 2) as the continental strategy for the development of statistics in Africa.

The African Union Commission is working with other actors in the African statistical system, in particular the African Development Bank and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, for the proper implementation of SHaSA 2.

The Revised Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA 2) has 18 Specialized Technical Groups whose mandate is to ensure the harmonization of standards, definitions and methodologies in the different statistical domains. The African Union Commission recognizes that these standards and methods must be in line with those defined at international level, but taking into account the African realities and context.

Since its effective start in 2018, the African Union Institute for Statistics (STATAFRIC) has been working to provide the necessary support to AU Member States in production of quality, harmonized and updated statistics through the implementation of SHaSA 2.

STATAFRIC, providing the secretariat for some STG, has developed a roadmap and has mobilized resources for the operationalization of these Specialized Technical Groups (STG) of SHaSA 2, six of them are already operational.

Honorable Minister, DGs, ladies and Gentlemen ;

Since its entry into force in 2015, the African Charter on Statistics, which constitutes the legal framework for the production of statistics in Africa, has been signed by only 35 AU Member States and has been ratified and deposited to the African Union by 25 Member States.

From this rostrum, I once again launch a solemn appeal for the ratification of the Charter by the 55 AU Member States. This will allow the various stakeholders of the African statistical system to have an adequate legal instrument for the production and dissemination of quality statistics for Africa.

Honorable Minister, DGs, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Allow me to express my sincere thanks to our partners for their unwavering support for the development of statistics in Africa. This is the place to express our sincere thanks to the World Bank which made available to STATAFRIC an envelope of 15 million dollars for the strengthening of the implementation of SHaSA2 for the ECOWAS region and the East African Community region. The two projects are implemented in collaboration with RECs and AU Member States beneficiaries of this project.

As you know, the second phase of the pan-African program for the development of statistics called "PAS2", financed by the European Union and with the technical support of Eurostat, started in February 2022 for the period 2022-2024, will enable capacity building of the African statistical system in the following areas: national accounts, foreign trade, agricultural statistics and climate change. The Commission would like to express its sincere thanks to European Union which has made available to STATAFRIC an envelope of around 8 million euros for the SAP2 implementation programme.

As you know, migration is at the heart of all current debates. Thus, in January 2015, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union adopted the Joint AU/ILO/IOM/ECA Program on Labor

Migration in Africa (JLMP). The first component developed under this JLMP program is the availability of statistical data on migration. In an effort to implement the JLMP, the African Union Commission has published three reports on labor migration statistics in Africa. The fourth edition is currently in progress, and will be published in early 2023.

I would like to express the very sincere thanks of the African Union Commission to Swedish cooperation, which will make available to the African Union Commission an envelope of more than 6 million US dollars for a second phase of the capacity building project for STATAFRIC and 6 RECs for the development of harmonized and quality migration statistics in Africa.

Allow me also to express my sincere gratitude to all strategic partners such as IOM, OIM GMDAC, Statistics Norway, Paris 21, OECD, UNICEF, ILO, UNWomen, FAO for their support unfailing to the African Union and especially to STATAFRIC for the development and harmonization of quality statistics in Africa.

The AUC is committed to provide the necessary support, technical and financial, to AU Member States, if needed, in collaboration with RECs to strengthen their capacities for the production and dissemination of harmonized, quality and updated statistics.

I will end my remarks by welcoming the new Directors General, who have just joined us. I wish them all the success in their new functions.

I wish you fruitful deliberations and success for your meeting.

Thank you for your kind attention