

## Opening Remarks of the African Centre for Statistics of the UNECA at the 18<sup>th</sup> Committee of Directors General, 9 December 2024, Banjul – the Gambia

Your Excellency, The Vice President of the Republic of The Gambia,  
The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs  
Chairman, National Statistics Council, and former Chairman, National Statistics Council,  
Statistician General, Gambia Bureau of Statistics,  
The Chair of the CoDGs, Director General of Ethiopian Statistics Services, represented  
by his deputy.  
Directors General of the National Institutes of Statistics,  
Director of the AUC Office of Strategic Planning and Delivery and Acting Executive  
Director of STATAFRIC  
Director of the Statistics Department, AfDB,  
Representatives of the Regional Economic Communities,  
Heads of UN Agencies here present,  
Representatives of the Statistical Training Centres,  
Representatives of Development Partners,  
Distinguished Delegates, and honored guests, all protocol observed,

Good morning!

My name is Tinfissi-Joseph Ilboudo, Chief of the Statistical Development, Data Innovation and Outreach of the African Centre for Statistics at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. I bring you greetings from Mr. Oliver Chinganya, the Director of the African Centre for Statistics. I will be delivering the welcome remarks on his behalf.

Our gathering for the 18<sup>th</sup> Committee for Directors General of the National Statistical Offices (CoDG) in large numbers, is a clear indication of our continued commitment to statistical development in the continent. This year's theme focuses on the contribution of statistics to ***“Educate an African fit for the 21st Century: Building resilient education systems for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning in Africa.”*** This theme resonates deeply with the significant foundational role of education in advancing statistical development of the African Statistical System. The unprecedented role of education in the field of statistics for the African population groups at all levels cannot be understated considering the importance for the general awareness of statistics by producers, users and the citizenry at large.

The theme for the 18<sup>th</sup> CoDG is timely in the sense that beyond the standard education curriculum, more attention should be given to continuous learning to respond to the ever-evolving data landscape that demands a shift from the usual way of doing business to more innovative methods for better efficiency. Through the Takwimu Young African Statisticians Programme, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is mobilizing young statisticians to contribute to the transformation and modernization of Africa's National Statistical Systems (NSS) by developing innovative data solutions tailored to the African context. Furthermore, ECA is promoting intergenerational dialogues between statistical elders and young statisticians to build stronger partnerships between individuals of different age groups that will revolutionize policy, support sustainable development, and ultimately uplift our communities to a better life.

The African Statistical System has made remarkable strides over the past decade; however, we continue to face persistent challenges of gaps between the supply of and demand for quality statistical information that hinder our ability to inform public policies effectively and monitor the progress of our integration efforts. This CoDG meeting provides us with yet another vital opportunity to evaluate our progress in implementing the Continental Education Strategy for Africa, and the education-related targets and indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 4 and the Agenda 2063, Goal 2 on **“Well Educated Citizens and Skills revolution underpinned by Science, Technology and Innovation”**. We must work collaboratively to address the challenges we face in data production and utilization, ensuring that our statistics serve as a robust foundation for evidence-based policymaking. It should be noted that harmonization of statistics and adherence to international standards are crucial for producing reliable and comparable data that reflects our realities.

As we engage in discussions over the next few days, I encourage all of you to share your insights and experiences. Let us explore innovative strategies for building resilient education systems and other learning options that enhance statistical capabilities for the betterment of our African Statistical System. Together, we can develop actionable solutions that empower our member states to achieve these critical educational ambitions and fulfill our commitments to the African Union at large.

In closing, I want to express my gratitude to the African Union, the United Nations agencies, and all partners who have and continue to support statistical development on the continent. Your commitment is instrumental as we work together to strengthen the statistical landscape of Africa through continuous learning.

Thank you for your commitment. May this 18th CoDG serve as an opportunity to renew our pledge to spare no effort to produce quality, timely, and useful data and statistics to achieve our collective aspiration of “The Africa We Want”. I look forward to fruitful discussions and collaborative outcomes in the days ahead.