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19th Session of the Committee of Directors General of National Statistics Offices (CoDGs)

Date: 3-5 December 2025

Opening Remarks

by

H.E. SELMA MALIKA HADDADI

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE AU COMMISSION

It is a great honour and privilege for me to welcome you all at the HQ of the AUC for this 19th annual meeting of the Committee of Directors-General of National Statistical Offices. I am delighted to see so many of you gathered here today, demonstrating your continued commitment to the development of statistics in Africa.

Let me begin by extending a warm welcome to the Deputy Prime Minister of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, **H.E. Temesgen Tiruneh**, and all African Directors-General of the NSOs, the custodians of official statistics on our continent.

Your leadership and dedication are at the heart of Africa's data and evidence-driven development.

I also warmly welcome representatives of Pan-African Institutions, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Statistical Training Schools, and our Development Partners, whose collaboration and technical expertise have been indispensable to our collective progress.

Allow me also to express our sincere gratitude to the Government and people of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia for hosting this meeting and for their warm hospitality. Addis Ababa, as the home of the African Union, continues to provide a meaningful space for Africa's integration and progress.

Excellency Deputy Prime Minister
Distinguished guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

Over the past ten years, Africa has made remarkable progress in the development of statistics. We have witnessed significant improvements in statistical coordination, capacity building, and the production of reliable data to guide our development policies.

The elaboration and implementation of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA 2) remain key milestones in this journey.

Through Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (**SHaSA 2**), Africa is strengthening its ability to generate harmonized, comparable, and high-quality statistics to support Agenda 2063, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and other continental and global frameworks.

In this respect, I would like to acknowledge the important work done by the Executive Committee of SHaSA 2, under the leadership of its Chair and the guidance of the coordinators at the national, regional, and continental levels.

Their efforts have ensured that SHaSA 2 remains a living framework that evolves with Africa's development priorities.

The Committee continues to provide strategic direction and oversight into the harmonization and modernization of statistical systems across the continent.

We welcome the Mid-Term-Report of SHaSA 2, We know that we are late, but we are also on the right direction because we do not want to miss any step.

**Excellency,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

The African Charter on Statistics, which serves as the legal foundation for the African Statistical System, continues to be a critical instrument in promoting the principles of professional independence, coordination, and quality assurance.

We welcome the ongoing process of revision of the Charter, which will ensure that it remains relevant to new realities, such as digital transformation, data innovation, and the growing demand for real-time statistics.

I take this opportunity to encourage all Member States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the African Charter on Statistics before the revision of this document be finalized, thereby reinforcing our shared commitment to sound statistical governance in Africa.

As we move forward, the modernization of National Statistical Systems is no longer an option but a necessity. The digital revolution, coupled with the rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI), presents both opportunities and challenges for our work.

AI can significantly enhance data collection, processing, and analysis, allowing NSOs to produce faster and more granular statistics. Yet, it also requires careful regulation, capacity building, and ethical considerations to ensure data privacy and quality.

Together, we must embrace these new technologies to make our statistical systems smarter, more agile, and more responsive to policy needs.

In this regard, the implementation of the Second Ten-Year Plan of Agenda 2063 and the continued pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) demand accurate, timely, and disaggregated data. Statistics are not only essential for reporting progress but also for evidence-based decision-making.

The role of NSOs is therefore central in ensuring that policymakers, researchers, and citizens have access to reliable data that drives Africa's transformation.

Excellency Deputy Prime Minister
Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me to express our sincere appreciation to all our development partners for their steadfast support and cooperation with AU STATAFRIC in advancing the statistical agenda of the continent.

A special word of thanks goes to:

- **The World Bank** for its continuous financial support in strengthening statistical capacity across Africa by implementing the SHaSA2.
- **The European Union**, for its financial and technical support through the Pan-African Statistics Programme (PASII).

And

- **Statistics Sweden**, for its contribution on migration statistics, an important area for Africa, especially in relation to understanding internal migration within African.

Your contributions are invaluable in ensuring that Africa's statistical systems remain strong, modern, and fit for purpose.

In conclusion, as we deliberate over the coming days, let us keep in mind the theme of the year and let us also reaffirm our collective commitment to the goals of SHaSA 2 and to the broader vision of the African Union, Agenda 2063.

AU STATAFRIC remains firmly committed to achieving all the goals set for the development of statistics in Africa, for our policymakers, for our citizens, and for the sustainable future of our continent.

Together, through collaboration, innovation, and shared responsibility, we will continue to build a robust African Statistical System that supports the Africa we want.

I wish you a fruitful deliberation.

I Thank you for your kind attention.