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**Third Meeting of the High-level Group
for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building
for the Post-2015 Monitoring**

14 January 2016, New York

Excellency, Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the 70th session of the General Assembly,
Madame Gabriella Vukovich and Mister Ibrahima Ba, Co-Chairpersons of the High-level group for post-2015 monitoring
Distinguished Experts and Colleagues,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you here to the first physical meeting of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your professional dedication manifested by your willingness to serve on this important new High-level Group.

This past year has been monumental. Not only did the United Nations celebrate its 70th anniversary, but we also saw the culmination of the Millennium Development Goals and the launch of a new development agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals. After a consultation process with unprecedented levels of participation from multiple stakeholders, the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015 marks the beginning of a truly global action toward inclusion and universality of sustainable development for all individuals, countries, and regions.

The Agenda outlines important priorities for the coming 15 years to achieve sustainable development, emphasizing national ownership and national accountability. Inspired by the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals, the new Sustainable Development Goals systematically address all dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

Member States also made a clear commitment to provide for systematic follow-up and review of progress at all levels. They recognized that quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data are not only needed to monitor progress, but data and statistics are actually an important tool to take decisions and to achieve the goals.

In this context, Member States tasked the Statistical Commission with overseeing the development and implementation of global indicators for the SDGs. The data to support the global indicators will have to be sufficiently disaggregated in order to adequately address inequality and exclusion and ensure that everyone and every group are visible

and counted, irrespective of age, sex, income, residence, disability, migrant status or any other characteristic.

The Statistical Commission, in its last session, established that this important statistical work is to be carried out through the Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) and a new High-Level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for the Post-2015 Monitoring.

The IAEG-SDGs focuses on the development of the SDG indicators and the technical aspects of harmonization and rationalization of statistical work related to SDG indicators. This High-level Group, on the other hand, is tasked with providing strategic leadership to promote national ownership and foster statistical capacity building, partnership and coordination.

The IAEG-SDGs has over the past year worked intensively to develop the indicators for the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda. These indicators will be presented to the Statistical Commission and then submitted to ECOSOC and the General Assembly for adoption later this year. The indicators will help review progress at the global level and will inform the annual report of the Secretary-General on the SDGs, to be produced in cooperation with the UN system.

Global indicators will have to be complemented by regional and national and more detailed thematic indicators. For this global architecture of indicators to be effective in addressing all elements of the new development agenda, data will need to be available on a wide range of topics, including in areas where statistical development is still needed. For many countries, meeting the new monitoring requirements will be a challenge and large additional resources will be needed to foster the necessary methodological developments and data collection efforts. Therefore, this High-Level Group has a crucial role to play, spearheading the strategic thinking needed to meet the demands of the global indicator framework as well as to identify priority actions for national statistical capacity building programmes. In this context, the High-Level Group can build on the work already undertaken by the UN Statistics Division to promote a ‘transformative agenda for official statistics’ to help modernize statistical systems by addressing comprehensively technical, managerial and institutional issues.

The High Level Group will also need to advise the Statistical Commission on how to best follow-up on the recommendations contained in the report “A World that Counts: Mobilising the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development”, which was prepared last year by the Secretary-General’s Independent Expert Advisory Group (IEAG) on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development. Two of you were actually members of this advisory group.

The ‘data revolution report’ contained a number of concrete proposals which fall squarely within the scope of work of this High-Level Group, and which you will surely examine, such as:

- Develop a proposal on a new funding stream and innovative financing mechanisms,

- Develop a proposal on how to leverage the resources and creativity of the private sector,
- Upgrade national strategies for the development of statistics to improve coordinated and long-term planning,
- Develop a proposal for a special investment to increase global data literacy,
- And many more....

Most importantly, your discussions over the coming two days will launch the holding of a United Nations World Forum on Sustainable Development Data by the end of this year. This Forum will provide a unique platform for discussion on data and statistics to support the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In concluding, I want to emphasize the important role of this High-Level Group in representing the voice of official statistics and in leading effectively statistical capacity building efforts to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The statistical community has already made an important contribution by advising the General Assembly on the selection of indicators, based on technical and professional criteria. The Statistical Commission has always functioned best when it maintained its technical focus. This is in the spirit of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, which were adopted by the General Assembly in 2014.

As we now move towards implementation of our ambitious agenda, we need to continue this technical focus and ensure that the data reporting and the underlying capacity building efforts are fully based on the expertise from National Statistical Systems. Through this meeting and your leadership I am confident, that we will move towards greater availability of relevant high-quality statistical data in support of the 2030 Agenda: “Better data. Better Lives” – as you so adequately and succinctly encapsulated it in the theme of your recent successful World Statistics Day 2015.

I want to thank you all again for engaging in this important work and wish you a very productive discussion.