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**MR. WU HONGBO
UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

Remarks

Opening Session of the United Nations World Data Forum

Cape Town, South Africa, 15 January 2017

Minister Radebe,

Mr. Lehohla,

Ms. Lindbergh, Representative of the Mayor of Cape Town,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests and colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

[OPENING]

It is my great pleasure to be here representing the United Nations at the opening of the first ever United Nations World Data Forum. This is an exciting and historic opportunity. I would like to begin by thanking the Government of South Africa, Statistics South Africa and the city of Cape Town for hosting this event.

In particular, I would like to thank Minister Radebe and the Mayor of Cape Town, Ms. Patricia de Lille and Mr. Pali Lehohla, Secretary-General of Statistics South Africa for all of their efforts in ensuring that this Forum is a success. I am of course particularly pleased that this first global Forum is taking place in Africa.

Distinguished guests,

I sincerely appreciate the numerous partners, international agencies and other donors who have supported the participation of many speakers and delegates in this Forum. Allow me to highlight the generous support of the Government of China, which enabled Chief Statisticians from 40 developing countries to be part of this Forum.

My department, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) has supported global development since the inception of the United Nations. In particular, through its Statistics Division and the Statistical Commission it has for the last 70 years taken the lead in building the global

statistical system. We celebrated this, just over a year ago when the global official statistical community came together for World Statistics Day 2015.

We have with us over 1,500 participants, representing governments, national statistics offices, international and regional organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector. This is a testimony to increasing levels of collaboration and the unprecedented number of new initiatives and approaches for the improvement of data production and utilization.

In my view, this is the United Nations at its best – using its convening power to invite people to come together and work jointly on global solutions. I would like to take this moment to thank all of you for having heard this call and for joining us here in the spirit of true cooperation.

[2030 AGENDA AND OTHER MAJOR AGREEMENTS]

The United Nations World Data Forum is a milestone among the important United Nations’ events that seeks to ensure the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to improve the lives of all people and ensure the future of our planet.

The United Nations Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia set out a roadmap for financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The United Nations Conference of Parties agreed to a landmark accord to combat climate change in Paris, France, which serves as a “health insurance policy for the planet”.

The Third United Nations Conference on Small Island Developing States in Samoa agreed upon the Samoa Pathway, which captures a broad range of challenges facing SIDS and sets forth in a concise and focused manner the priorities of SIDS and the commitments to specific actions.

[ROLE OF DATA IN IMPLEMENTATION]

In order for the World to be able to follow these new paths and ensure that progress reaches all people, everywhere, we need high quality, relevant, timely and fully disaggregated data and statistics. For example, the disaggregated data will be essential for national governments to better

respond to sustainable issues including eradication of poverty and come up with more focused and targeted solutions.

Since the adoption of the new development agenda, we have already seen an unprecedented mobilization to promote better data for all, with all stakeholders contributing new tools and ideas and national statistical systems embarking in an important process of modernization in order to address the new challenges.

A lot remains to be done. Data gaps remain significant in all countries, and in particular in those with fewer resources. The share of official development assistance dedicated to data collection hovered around a mere 0.3 per cent between 2010 and 2013. The births of nearly one fourth of children

under the age of 5 worldwide have never been recorded. We need to do more and we need to do better.

[DATA FORUM PLAN AND OUTCOME]

The next three days present a unique opportunity for experts from different fields to:

- **discuss ways to strengthen the interlinkages across different data ecosystems;**
- **launch new partnerships and initiatives for innovation;**
- **identify solutions to harness the power of data for the public good**

- and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; and**
- **promote consensus on strategies to address data governance and other policy issues.**

We expect important outcomes from this first UN World Data Forum, including the Launch of a Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data and an increased political and resource support for statistical capacity building.

I look forward to the coming three days and to furthering the discussion on how we can ensure that the data and statistics needed are available to see the goals of the 2030 Agenda become a reality for all.

Thank you.
