

49th Session of the
Commission on Population and Development

**Remarks by Ms. Wasmália Bivar
Chair of the Statistical Commission**

12 April 2016

Madame Chairperson,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to address the Commission on Population and Development in my capacity as Chairperson of the Statistical Commission. I thank you for the opportunity to summarize the most recent outcomes of the Statistical Commission as well as update you on the work ahead.

The Statistical Commission held its 47th session from 8-11 March 2016 in New York. The session was attended by an unprecedented number of close to 800 delegates, including representatives from about 135 countries, as well as representatives from over 50 international and regional agencies.

The key topic of the Commission was “Data and indicators for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. As mandated in the 2030 Agenda, the Statistical Commission considered a proposal for the global indicator framework developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs), a subsidiary body of the Statistical Commission.

Over the last year, the Commission has worked very intensively on the development of the global indicator framework through its IAEG-SDGs. Much like the process of developing the 17 SDGs, the process to develop this initial set of indicators was inclusive and transparent and involved, through many consultations, a large number of stakeholders.

Distinguished Delegates,

I am proud to announce that the Commission agreed, as a practical starting point, with the proposed global indicator framework, containing 230 indicators for the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. However, the Commission recognized that the development of a robust and high-quality indicator framework is a technical process that will need to continue over time.

The Commission also emphasized that the 230 global indicators are intended for global follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and are not necessarily applicable in all national contexts.

National ownership remains key to achieving sustainable development and the Commission reiterated that national reviews are voluntary and country-led. These reviews will take into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development, and will respect the policy space and priorities of the country.

The Commission stressed that the implementation of the indicator framework will present a challenge in almost all the countries and that appropriate efforts to strengthen national statistical capacities will be needed.

It is important to highlight that population will be the denominator for many indicators. Moreover, the Commission also agreed that improving data disaggregation is fundamental for the full implementation of the indicator framework and to respect fully the principle of leaving no one behind. In this regard, the importance of demographic data for the global indicator framework cannot be overstated, and for this reason I am very pleased that the Commission on Population and Development is a key partner of the Statistical Commission in the follow-up and review of the agenda.

Moving forward, countries will have the primary responsibility for follow-up and review of progress made in implementing the SDGs, which will require high-quality, accessible and timely data.

As mentioned before, the implementation of the indicator framework will present a challenge in many countries and appropriate efforts to strengthen national statistical capacities – especially of developing countries, including African countries, the least developed countries, the landlocked developing countries, the small island developing states and other countries in special situations – will have to be significantly increased and effectively coordinated between the various actors to have maximum impact and be effective.

As for the Statistical Commission, the work of the IAEG-SDGs will continue in order to ensure that all goals and targets are appropriately reviewed and that the necessary indicators are fully implemented, so that we can be sure that no individual or group will be left behind.

Distinguished Delegates,

In addition to the global indicator framework, the 2020 Census round of population and housing censuses, spanning the period from 2015- 2024, represents one of the critical components in the process of building national statistical capacities and generating reliable, accurate and regular population statistics.

I am taking this opportunity to report that the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations officially launched the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme in June 2015 by adopting a resolution on the matter.

The 2020 World Programme urges each country to conduct at least one population and housing census in the 2020 census decade. It underscores the importance of maintaining internationally recommended quality standards and compliance with fundamental principles of official statistics; it emphasizes the centrality of population and housing censuses to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda and, finally, requests the United Nations to develop standards, methods and guidelines and to monitor the implementation of the 2020 World Programme.

I am also taking this opportunity to assure you that the Statistical Commission will employ all its capacities to ensure full implementation of the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme. As the first step, it has already adopted and launched the full set of revised principles and recommendations for population and housing censuses for the 2020 round and mandated the development of accompanying handbooks and manuals.

Distinguished Delegates,

It is clear from the ambition of the 2030 Agenda that we all have an important role to play to ensure that no one is left behind.

We share ambitions as sister Commissions, as Member States, as representatives of the United Nations, and as stakeholders from around the world. By working together, we can translate those ambitions into concrete results on the ground, making the Agenda a living reality for all.

I understand that this year, your Commission is focusing on the demographic evidence base for the 2030 Agenda. The reports prepared by the Secretary-General for your session underscore that achieving the SDGs depends critically on having reliable, accessible and timely evidence about demographic patterns and trends for all countries of the world. The reports on this topic are an important resource for Member States and the international community, and I encourage all of you to pay close attention to them.

I understand also that you are debating how your Commission can contribute to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda, while continuing to follow up on the full implementation of the Programme of Action of the 1994 Cairo conference.

The Commission on Population and Development is known for its emphasis on technical rigour and for its policy advice based on solid evidence about demographic levels and trends, and about the causes and consequences of population change. Again, I call on you, the Member States, to engage in technical discussions on this topic and to help the international community understand the data needs and the necessary actions that the

statisticians and population experts can undertake together to contribute to the full implementation of the 2030 sustainable development agenda.

I value your contribution in this regard, and I hope that we, as sister commissions, will continue our close collaboration as we carry forward our work in support of the 2030 Agenda.

In conclusion, I look forward to working with this Commission for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and I wish you all the best in your deliberations this week.

Thank you.