

**REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON DATA DISSEMINATION AND
COMMUNICATION
Niamey, 13-15 May 2014**

**STATEMENT OF MR. STEFAN SCHWEINFEST,
ACTING DIRECTOR OF THE
UNITED NATIONS STATISTICS DIVISION / DESA**

Delivered by
Ms. Aida Diawara (UN Statistics Division)

Excellency Minister of finance of the Republic of Niger,

Mr. the Director of the Sub-Regional Office for West Africa of the United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa (ECA),

Distinguished Participants,

On behalf of Mr. Stefan Schweinfest, Acting Director of the United Nations
Statistics Division, I would like to welcome all of you to this Regional Workshop on Data
Dissemination and Communication. The United Nations Statistics Division is very
pleased to be a partner in this workshop and we would like to congratulate the Economic
Commission for Africa, sub-regional office for Western Africa, for an excellent job in
hosting this event. Also, we would like to thank our other partners, particularly the
National Institute of Statistics of Niger for helping with this event that brings together
data managers and experts from many African countries.

We consider it very timely that attention is given to the important issue of data
dissemination and communication. The global development challenges, such as those

discussed in the context of the post-2015 development agenda, have increased the focus on delivering high-quality data and delivering them fast and effectively. In order to do so, national statistical systems have to improve their data dissemination capacities.

Permit me therefore, first, to reflect a moment, why this issue of dissemination and communication is of such significance.

While the international community has devoted considerable attention and resources to assisting countries in the collection and production of data, in developing appropriate methodological tools and in agreeing on international “production standards”, relatively little attention has been paid to the challenges countries face in effectively getting the data out to the manifold users.

However, the ultimate test of a good statistical system must be its ability to satisfy the needs of its clients. The basic product lines produced by national statistical systems should evolve in response to the changing needs of society and should meet the particular requirements of different client groups. Users of official statistics have multiplied over the years. Official statistics were traditionally supplied to ministries of industry and finance; to planning commissions and to other sectoral ministries and government departments. Today, national data are also widely used by researchers, the business community, the general public as well as by the international community. The ability to map out the changing preferences of the users, to develop an operating system to meet these needs, and to promote free and accessible data systems is a hallmark of an effective statistical system.

There is a general consensus around the need for countries to better target their various user groups through the formulation of comprehensive “data dissemination strategies”. Furthermore, countries need technical support in using modern communication technologies, especially the Internet, to improve the accessibility to their statistics and to be able to quickly move their various statistical products to the users. This is even more crucial given the ongoing Data Revolution, which affects not only the way large amounts of data are compiled, including from non-traditional sources, but also how statistics derived from this data are disseminated effectively.

I believe we, therefore, can all agree that data dissemination and communication are at the core of a strong statistical system: Because the job of a good statistician is not done, until his or her data are being appropriately and effectively used.

This workshop will cover the issues mentioned above. We are pleased that this workshop brings together such a large variety of data managers and other experts. These three days will present an excellent opportunity to make a better assessment of the status of statistical data dissemination and communication in African countries, to share country experiences and good practices, and to identify a proper strategy to strengthen this area in the region. We are convinced that by doing so, we will improve the way statistics are being communicated and used in the region.

Finally, I’d like to thank once again our colleagues from the ECA sub-regional office for Western Africa and the National Institute of Statistics of Niger for the excellent work done in preparation of the meeting. We are looking forward to working with you, the representatives of national statistical offices and regional and international agencies,

not only here during the workshop, but also in the future in the context of our various planned endeavors, in an effort to better serve our statistical clients around the world.

Thank you and I trust we'll have a very fruitful meeting.

Merci et je vous souhaite une réunion très productive.....