MEMORANDUM OF INTENT
ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE
UNITED NATIONS – NATIONAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS OF CHINA
INSTITUTE ON BIG DATA

A COLLABORATION BETWEEN
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS OF CHINA AND
UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The representatives of the National Bureau of Statistics of China and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) are committed towards strengthening international cooperation in economic and social affairs, and particularly in the use of Big Data for official statistics and SDGs. Close ties have been built upon mutual professional respect and support that have developed over the years between the Government of China and DESA through the cooperation to advance the use of Big Data for official statistical purposes in countries. This cooperation is well recognized by the United Nations Statistical Commission representing the global system of official statistics.

Within this spirit of cooperation, the National Bureau of Statistics of China and the DESA convened the first and highly successful Global International Conference on Big Data for Official Statistics from 28 to 30 October 2014 in Beijing, China. This First Global Conference advanced early on the work of the Global Working Group (GWG) on Big Data for Official Statistics, which was mandated by the United Nations Statistical Commission to provide strategic vision, direction and coordination of a global programme on Big Data. The use of new data sources and new technologies is essential for national statistical systems to remain relevant in a fast-moving data landscape. Big Data can fill data gaps, make statistical operations more cost effective, enable the replacement of surveys and provide more granularities in outputs e.g. in support of the monitoring of the SDG goal of 'leaving no one behind'. The GWG built the UN Global Platform as a collaborative environment to work together as a global statistical community and to learn together sharing knowledge, data and methods for all countries in the world.

The UN Global Platform is the global collaborative environment to develop and test new data sources, methods and algorithms for the global statistical system. The Global Platform will support capacity-building through a library of trusted training materials, methods and software applications. The platform currently contains several alpha services such as access to Alibaba Cloud, Amazon Web Services, Google Cloud Platform and Microsoft's Azure cloud, combined with several other services for code collaboration, methods publishing and

Earth observation and location data analysis. Users of the platform can search, build, deploy and consume algorithms and statistical methods and can further develop methods using the main programming languages used by the community (R, Python, Java and Scala).

On the UN Global Platform, the statistical community can work together with its public and private sector partners on new methods. Examples are the compilation of agricultural crop statistics using satellite data, the measurement of human mobility (migration and tourism statistics) using mobile phone data and calculation CPIs using global data sets on scanner and other transaction data. Many more projects can be initiated on the platform involving not only the statistical community and related public sector but also stakeholders from private sector, academia and civil society.

To scale the work on the UN Global Platform, the Government of China and DESA have expressed their intention to establish the United Nations – National Bureau of Statistics Institute of Big Data in Hangzhou China for further collaboration on capacity development in China and other developing countries in the world in collaboration with the public and private sector in China. As a globally recognized collaborative and action-oriented knowledge, technology and innovation hub for bringing contemporary methods in Big Data together, the UN NBS Institute on Big Data will provide a much-needed platform to access and use of Big Data and its related, technology, applications and services for users in China and other developing countries. In addition to access to trusted data and methods, the institute will also support international capacity-building programs in data science as well as support such trusted learning to meet the needs of national development priorities and national implementations of official statistics and the SDGs.

It is anticipated that the UN-NBS Institute on Big Data will focus initially on three thematic priorities:

Technical assistance and capacity building

- Provide technical assistance and capacity building in the use of Big Data for official statistics and SDG indicators

- Develop and disseminate methods, applications and services in the use of Big Data for official statistics and SDG indicators.

- Leverage China's technical expertise, capabilities, technologies and experiences to assist developing countries in the region and globally to build their own capacity and capabilities in the use of Big Data to support sustainable development.

- Become a leading establishment for capacity development and strengthening the capabilities of countries to develop effective strategies and policies in the use of Big Data for official statistics and SDGs, including the access to methods, applications, services and technologies.

Knowledge centre

- Build upon, scale, resource and implement the research exercise initiated by the GWG on Big Data to develop a global federated network of interoperable national, regional and global hubs.

- Foster communities of practice for exploring and sharing information and transferring capacities and specialized knowledge through training and materials.

- Link and promote collaborative modalities of actions within the global GWG community.

Technology and innovation hub

- Leverage enabling technologies towards the implementation of a federated network approach to assist countries in monitoring and reporting on the official statistics and SDGs within reliable, secure and scalable platforms.

- Establish links with appropriate research institutes, think tanks and the GWG network of Task Teams to advance the critical role of Big Data in global development.

- Convene international technical seminars, symposia and fora to develop specific innovation projects on selected topics in collaboration with partner countries to trial new concepts and methods in the use of Big Data for official statistics and SDGs, including in the disaggregation of data by geographic location – integrating geography and statistics.

The concept and understanding of the UN-NBS Institute on Big Data has gained considerable support, momentum, and commitment by the GWG community. This Memorandum of Intent commits the parties to consider and progress in more detail the arrangements and modalities towards a Memorandum of Understanding that will establish the UN-NBS Institute on Big Data, and continue the support, international commitment and leadership to the combined and ongoing mutually beneficial cooperation of the parties over the next years.

The National Bureau of Statistics of China and DESA will be working together to expedite the consideration process and modalities to have an early conclusion of a formal project document, containing the above elements, between the National Bureau of Statistics of China and the United Nations DESA, and to advance the critical role of Big Data in the implementation of global development objectives for a better world.

For the National Bureau   For the United Nations
of Statistics of China   Department of Economic
                                           and Social Affairs

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Date   2019   **Date   2019**