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## **High Level Seminar**

**Vientiane, 19 October 2017**

Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished guests and colleagues from the Lao Statistic Bureau,

It is a great pleasure for me to address you today from the United Nations Headquarters in New York, and to congratulate you on this special occasion. I wish to put on record my gratitude to Vice Minister Dr. Samaychanh Boupha for providing me with this opportunity. I have very fond memories of a recent private visit to your beautiful country and I certainly recognize the leadership of Lao in the context of ASEAN in the past year.

On this day of celebration, I would like to use this short greeting address to share with you two simple messages: (i) I am grateful for the close cooperation between my office, the United Nations Statistics Division and Lao Statistics Bureau in the past and (ii) I look forward to working with you on the challenges of the future, especially in addressing the new data demands of the 2030 development agenda.

There are many challenges for us statisticians, due to the comprehensive and ambitious national and global development agendas, which need to be supported by solid and integrated information systems. We, the professional statistical community, will have to continuously transform and modernize our statistical systems in order to satisfy these new demands. The first United Nations World Data Forum held in January this year concluded with the launch of the Cape Town Global Action Plan which strives for better data to improve people's lives. The UN World Data Forum is an important international gathering of users and producers of statistics and data for sustainable development. The second UN World Data Forum will be held in October 2018 in Dubai.

Guided by this Global Action Plan, we will continue to build strong National Statistical Systems under the leadership of the National Statistical Offices. The Cape Town Global Action

Plan offers a strategic framework for the discussion, planning and implementation of capacity building necessary to achieve the scope and intent of the 2030 Agenda. The Action Plan explicitly recognises the importance of partnerships across various government offices and beyond with academia and the private sector. It is a call to action for policy leaders about the necessary resources needed to fund solid national statistical systems to be able to achieve the 2030 Agenda. This can only be successful if the statistical community has strong support and full political backing from the highest national authorities.

I am confident, that through the adoption of the General Assembly resolution on the data and statistics for the 2030 Agenda in July of this year, governments around the world have officially put on record their commitment to supporting national statistical systems. They have recognized the centrality of data and statistics for the implementation of the 2030 development agenda.

Distinguished guests,

Celebrating a national statistics day is an important opportunity to remind ourselves of the key role of data and statistics in society and in improving people's life. Our statistical communities can only fulfill their many tasks if there is sufficient support and recognition of their crucial mandate.

Let me conclude by congratulating you once again and thanking you very much for your attention.

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