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6TH GLOBAL FORUM ON GENDER STATISTICS

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Opening Remarks

Stefan Schweinfest

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Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Ms. Brunn, Director General, Statistics Finland,

Ms. Anne Lammila, Ambassador for Global Women issues and Gender Equality,

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to welcome you to the 6th Global Forum on Gender Statistics and to address such a group of high-level experts on gender issues and gender statistics.

I would like to start by expressing our sincere gratitude to the Government of Finland for kindly hosting this event and for its financial contribution and expert participation in the Forum. In particular, we would like to thank the Ministry of Finance; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Gender Equality Unit of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health; the Council for Gender Equality (TANE); the City of Helsinki; Minna – the Centre for Gender Equality Information; and our friends and colleagues at Statistics Finland, who under the leadership of the Director General Ms. Marjo Bruun, have made this Forum possible!

Policy context and progress towards gender equality:

Let me first discuss briefly the policy context behind the need for gender statistics. Our latest flagship report, “The World’s Women 2015” reveals that while the lives of women and girls around the world have improved in a number of areas over the last 20 years, progress has been uneven and not fast enough. And as stated by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon “We cannot achieve our 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development without full and equal rights for half of the world’s population, in law and in practice”.

Persistent obstacles to women's and girls' human rights and to their full potential bring into sharp perspective the need for gender equality as outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the need for data to monitor progress towards the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

Indeed, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has raised the profile and importance of data and statistics for the follow-up and review of its implementation. With the stand-alone Goal 5 on gender equality and almost a third of the 230 indicators relevant for gender analysis, it has also put significant pressure on countries' statistical capacity to fulfil new SDGs gender data requirements. It is expected that this will translate into an increased demand for high-quality gender statistics that are regularly produced and that provide solid and objective evidence on the status of women compared to men.

However, countries' capacity to produce gender statistics is still insufficient, particularly in less traditional areas of official statistics. Countries are facing many challenges in mainstreaming gender into the production, analysis and dissemination of statistics and in addressing gender equality and women's rights for different demographic and social groups, including the most vulnerable.

For instance, an analysis carried out by my team, reveals that out of 80 global indicators identified as relevant for gender analysis, only 43 have data currently available for global monitoring and of these only 22 have data disaggregated by sex. Furthermore, even data provided separately for women and for men, may not capture the full gender gap.

Initiatives to develop statistical standards and national capacity, particularly on integrating a gender dimension into official statistics, should therefore be undertaken on a priority basis.

Work programme of UNSD in the area of gender statistics

Dear Colleagues,

It is in this context that I am happy to restate UNSD's firm commitment to bringing gender statistics programmes forward and leading the development of gender statistics globally. This commitment finds its strongest expression in our work on the ground-breaking regular publication of the World's Women, published every 5 years since 1991 and easily the most widely circulated and noted publication on the status of women compared to men and on available gender statistics, worldwide.

As many of you already know, UNSD has been actively working on gender statistics, and monitoring progress towards gender equality, since the early 1980s. UNSD has also been the secretariat of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics (IAEG-GS) since its creation, in 2006. This is a group of subject-matter experts, from national and international statistical offices and other stakeholder agencies, who just held their 10th meeting and most

of whom are with us at the Forum. They are tasked with guiding the Global Gender Statistics Programme, mandated by the UN Statistical Commission, and “coordinating” gender statistics initiatives across agencies.

Of particular importance for the advancement of gender statistics is our normative work, including the recent finalization of ICATUS, the international classification of activities for time use statistics that will lead our future methodological work on measuring unpaid work. We are also proud of our methodological work under the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality- the EDGE project implemented in collaboration with UN-Women, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, FAO and OECD, whose aim is to develop and test methodologies to measure asset ownership and entrepreneurship from a gender perspective. We believe this is a critical step towards filling important gender data gaps and the harmonization of gender statistics across countries.

6th Global Forum

Dear Colleagues,

Global Forums are critical to raise awareness of the importance of high-quality and relevant data to inform gender policies. In particular, this Forum, the 6th since 2007, will serve as an ideal platform to take stock of challenges faced by statistical offices in terms of measuring/monitoring SDG indicators in general, and for tracking gender equality, in particular. Through reviewing methodological development for better gender statistics in many areas and sharing national current practices and strategies for measuring and monitoring gender concerns, we trust that together we will identify ways to improve official statistics on women and men and highlight critical gender data gaps.

The 2016 Global Forum will review innovative approaches, methods and initiatives to produce, analyse, disseminate and use data in the following areas of concern: women’s economic empowerment; women in international migration; violence against women; measuring and valuing unpaid work; women’s political participation including at the local level; and women’s health.

Finally,

We, at the United Nations Statistics Division, are honoured to serve the global statistical community and remain committed to foster the development of gender statistics, promote collaboration among national, regional and international statistical agencies and to assist national statistical systems to fully integrate a gender perspective in their work.

We look forward to working with you All to promote the advancement of gender statistics!

THANK YOU