

Alessandra Alfieri, Statistics Division, DESA, United Nations

## **Welcome Remarks**

*To be delivered at the opening of the Regional Seminar  
“Developing a Programme for Implementing the SEEA 2012  
Central Framework and Supporting Statistics” hosted by UBOS  
in Kampala, Uganda, 12-14 December 2013.*

Distinguished representatives  
Ladies and gentlemen  
Good morning

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the regional Seminar “Developing Programme for Implementing the SEEA 2012 and supporting statistics”. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Government of Uganda and in particular UBOS for hosting this seminar and to our partners the World Bank, the AfDB, COMESA, EAC and UNEP and UNDP for co-organizing this event.

This seminar comes at an opportune time to hold a sub-regional seminar on environmental accounts and supporting statistics given the increasing demand for integrated economic and environment statistics in evidence-based policy making for advancing environmental sustainability, while maintaining macroeconomic growth and stability and strengthening social inclusion and reducing inequalities.

The decision of the government of Uganda and UBOS to implement modules of the SEEA 2012 in the coming years will allow us to review the statistical scope and detail and data gaps of the basic environment, economic and social statistics in populating the environmental-economic accounts. This should be done in connection with on-going activities such as the implementation of the 2008 SNA and the programmes to strengthen agriculture statistics.

The increasing policy demands for integrated environment and economic statistics will also require a review of the implications for the institutional coordination arrangements of the national statistical system to meet the new statistical demands.

In the context of developing sound statistics in support of environmental stewardship, allow me to make appropriate reference to the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 2012 20 years after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Fully in line with the vision of the African governments, it reconfirmed that “integrated social, economic, and environmental data and information ... is important to decision-making processes.” The paramount importance of sound statistics was also reiterated by the High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda in its report released on 30 May 2013. This report called for a data revolution to support evidence-based policy making, transparency and accountability in decision making in conjunction with the creation of a new partnership for statistics to improve the quality of statistics and information available to citizens.

There is strong political commitment to advance the statistical agenda and in particular the implementation of the SEEA and the SNA have been recognized as important statistical tools to monitor and evaluate sustainable development goals which will be developed at the UN in the context of the Post 2015 Development Agenda. It is important to capitalize on the strong political will which was reconfirmed last week at a Conference organized by UNEP in Nairobi on the Valuation and Accounting of Natural Capital for Green Economy in which several ministers and vice ministers of African countries, including from Uganda, participated. They also stressed the importance of statistics in the decision-making process.

It is clear that the implementation process of the SEEA 2012 has to take a bottom-up approach with countries taking ownership for the process. The national statistical agenda and priorities should be policy relevant and should remain policy relevant over time. The engagement of different stakeholders from the national policy and statistical community in this national seminar is key to foster the national partnership in working together in implementing the SEEA 2012 and supporting statistics for improved economic decision making with a sustainable development perspective.

I wish you a successful seminar.