

**Representative of the Environment and the Statistics offices of
government of Nigeria**

Mr Yahaya XXXXX, ECOWAS Commission

**Ms Eszter Horvath, United Nations Statistics Division
(UNSD).**

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Executive Director of UNEP, the Director of UNEP's Division of Early Warning and Assessment (UNEP/DEWA), and the Regional Coordinator, Africa, I would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to the Government of Nigeria and ECOWAS Commission for the opportunity to hold this workshop here in Abuja and for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to those of us who come from outside Nigeria.

I commend the immense efforts that have gone into the organization of this workshop which I feel will strengthen collaboration between UNEP, UNSD, ECOWAS on one hand, and environment and Statistics departments and

institutions from African countries from the ECOWAS countries. The support and participation of UNEP, UNSD, ECOWAS and the countries attending this workshop shows commitment to this process and I believe will go along way in strengthening collection of environmental statistics in Africa.

I wish to also thank the ECOWAS Commission for their professional and efficient way in which they have accomplished all the necessary logistical and technical arrangements for the workshop.

Last but not least, let me extend a word of appreciation to the distinguished delegates for the efforts they have put into their own preparations for this workshop and also for sacrificing their busy schedules to attend this workshop. It is great pleasure for me to be here today, at this workshop.

This workshop is yet another milestone in the implementation of the Africa Environment Information Network's (AEIN), UNEP-DEWA capacity building programme, whose goal is to enhance accessibility to more reliable environmental data and information at national, sub-regional and regional levels to support the Africa Environment Outlook, the Global Environment Outlook reporting process and Sustainable Development in Africa. This

workshop therefore presents a good opportunity to share experiences and learn from experts, the methodologies for selecting and developing environmental indicators and statistics to support environmental monitoring, assessment and reporting at national, sub-regional and regional levels. This workshop also provides an excellent opportunity to agree on a corset of environmental indicators that will also respond to and support UNEP's six priority areas that will be focused on in the Medium Term Strategy, 2010-2013. The six priority areas are Climate Change, Ecosystem Management, Environmental Governance, Hazardous Substances, Natural disasters and post conflict response and Resource efficiency.

On this note, I would like to wish you all an enjoyable workshop, which I am sure and confident you will find very useful, and will make every effort to participate in fully.

Ladies, and Gentlemen

Thank you.