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MR. LIU ZHENMIN

UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

**WELCOME MESSAGE
at the 2nd World Data Forum
High-Level Panel on Migration Statistics – The Way Forward**

22 October 2018, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Distinguished guests,
Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this the High-level panel on “Migration statistics – the way forward”. I thank the panellists for your participation to this important discussion. I also thank the numerous partners, international agencies and regional commissions for their contribution in formulating the programme. My sincere appreciation also goes to the Swiss government for their generous support to this the panel.

Distinguished guests,

Let me reiterate the reason we are all gathering here in Dubai this week – to foster technical and political discussions on the opportunities and challenges in producing and using data, to facilitate global sustainable development.

International migration as a source of prosperity, innovation and sustainable development has long been recognised. Globally, the number of international migrants reached an estimated figure of 258 million in 2017, up from 173 million in 2000.

In 2017, remittance flows to low- and middle-income countries reached \$466 billion, more than three times the amount of ODA they received that year. Remittances constitute a significant source of household income in countries of origin of migrants, improving the situation of their families and communities. Countries of destination also benefit, since migrants often fill critical labour gaps, create jobs as entrepreneurs, and pay taxes and social security contributions.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by world leaders in 2015, recognizes the important contribution of migration to development. The 2030 Agenda not only sets 10 migration-relevant targets, but also calls for the more overarching goal that “no one is left behind”, including migrants.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Three years after the adoption of the 2030 agenda, the picture for accurate and disaggregated migration data is not optimistic. There is a paucity of basic data on international migration, and existing data are not fully utilized or shared. For example, 17 per cent of countries in Africa and 12 per cent in Asia have not produced official statistics on the number of international migrants since 2005.

Producing disaggregated data by migratory status and other important dimensions, poses new challenges to the traditional data systems in countries. This calls for the development of new methodologies and data tools.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the final draft of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, to be adopted in December this year in Marrakech, lists as its first objective, the “Collection and utilization of accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies”.

I welcome the importance of migration data that was given by the Global Compact. I also welcome the important role given to the United Nations Statistical Commission in harmonizing methodologies, and in reviewing regularly, a global programme to strengthen national capacities to collect, analyse and disseminate migration data.

I am especially impressed with the openness of the Global Compact negotiation process. Member States repeatedly reached out to the global statistical community for its advice on matters related to migration data.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour for the global statistical community to be given such an important task - to help generate data for evidence-based policies to achieve safe, orderly and regular migration.

But it is a challenging task. No one party is able to achieve the data objective alone – I see this challenge as an opportunity for all of us to move forward together.

I hereby call upon all of you, colleagues from the national statistical systems, policymakers, technology experts from the private sector, researchers, civil society, the donor community, and the regional and global organisations to join this process. Let us move forward together in producing migration data that informs better policy and making migration work for all.

I thank you very much for your active participation and wish you a fruitful discussion.
