

SPEECH BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS, DR. ALBINA CHUWA, AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE AFRICAN STATISTICS DAY, 23RD NOVEMBER 2015 AT THE EASTERN AFRICA STATISTICAL TRAINING CENTRE, – DAR ES SALAAM

Permanent Secretary, Dr. Servacius Likwelile – Ministry Of Finance

Chairperson, Prof. Milline Mbonile, NBS Ministerial Advisory Board,

Permanent Secretaries,

High Commissioners and Ambassadors,

Development Partners,

Government Officials,

Management of the National Bureau of Statistics and Eastern Africa Statistical Training Centre,

Candidates from Eastern Statistical Training Centre,

Members of Press,

Invited Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Guest of Honour, On behalf of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), and the African Statistics Day Organizing Committee, I would like to thank you for taking your time and joining us today to officiate this year's African Statistics Day. Your presence here

today shows the extent to which the Government values and understands the importance of official statistics in preparation of development plans for formulation of policies for sustainable development of the country. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome you all invited guest to this important event.

Guest of Honor, the African Statistics Day (ASD) is celebrated every year on the 18th of November. This event was initiated in 1990 by the Subsidiary Body of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the Joint African Conference of Planners, Statisticians and Demographers. The day is celebrated each year in order to increase awareness about the important role statistics plays in all aspects of social and economic development in Africa. The day also provides the opportunity for each country to evaluate its achievements and in monitoring the progress in its development and international development programmes.

Guest of Honor, over the years the celebrations have focused on issues related to the importance of statistics in development planning and policy formulation. Number of contemporary topics including gender, environment, open data have been covered and been discussed throughout the continent. For 2015 the selected theme is “**Better data for better lives: Harnessing modern technology to enhance national statistical systems**”. This

year's theme focuses on data quality and enhancing the capacity-building of national statistical systems in Africa. The topic aligns with that of the World Statistics Day, which was held on 20th October 2015 and celebrated on 23rd October, 2015 in Tanzania.

Guest of Honour, the year 2015 marks the end of the Millenium Goals and beginning of the implementation of new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The goals are at the core of discussions in international communities and thus placing statistics at the centre of sustainable development. Better official statistics will play a crucial role in monitoring implementation of these goals and other national and international development goals as well. As one dictum says "*whoever controls the statistics, controls the development agenda*". African Governments must control statistics if we really want to control the SDGs and other national and international development agenda.

Guest of Honour, the main responsibilities of the NBS is to produce official statistics that are used by the Government and other stakeholders to formulate policies and preparation of strategic plans to ensure sustainable development. However, this noble task cannot be done by the NBS alone and that is why collaboration with different stakeholders both local and international is important. Nevertheless, for produced statistics to meet the required intention of making lives better, overall

management of production, analysis and dissemination must be coordinated. The introduction of NBS New Statistics Act of 2015 is geared towards this objective, where NBS will oversee policy related issues regarding statistics, set standards and methods and generally coordinate statistical activities in the country. A strengthened and well-coordinated National Statistical System, equipped with modern technologies, will help to improve data collection, processing, analysis and dissemination. In turn, policymakers will be able to develop informed policies which will lead to an improvement in peoples' welfare and better lives.

Guest of Honor, as I have said before, one of the major objectives of this day is to create awareness among data users and the public in general on the importance of statistics in social-economic and development planning. We also understand that, it is the right of every Tanzanian to obtain quality and reliable data timely and in a user friendly manner. In order to achieve this goal, increased investment in the generation, processing, analysis and dissemination of statistics is required.

Guest of Honour, in this event today there will be a presentation on "better data for better lives" followed by a panel discussion on the subject. During the presentation we will hear on the importance of better statistics and how they can contribute in improving the quality of lives. For the panel discussion,

professional statisticians and students of EASTC will discuss and share ideas on how statistics can make change to the society. The discussion is also part of capacity building for young statisticians at the NBS and students of EASTC.

Guest of Honour, every one of us here is aware that it is the responsibility of the NBS to disseminate official statistics in all levels of the Government as these data are used for the formulation of different development plans and strategies. In fulfilling these responsibilities NBS work closely with both local and international stakeholders, knowing that better strategies are formed upon availability of reliable and timely data. Therefore I urge all Government Ministries, Departments and Agents; the private sector; development partners; and the general public at large to use statistics in planning, monitoring and evaluation of different social and economic development policies in their respective areas and fields.

To my fellow statisticians, today we remind each other of our responsibilities and duty to the development of our country and African continent in general. Today we remind each other on the power of statistics in every aspect of life and a strong National Statistical System (NSS) that will ensure production of quality data for sustainable development. Let us use this opportunity to send a message to policy makers, planners, the media, and all

stakeholders that sustainable socio-economic development is impossible without better statistics.

Guest of Honour, lastly, let me take this opportunity to thank you and other participants for sparing their time and joining us today on this important commemoration. My sincere gratitude to my colleagues at the NBS and EASCT for organizing this event.

Thank you for your attention.