Remarks

by

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Under-Secretary-General

High Representative

for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries

and Small Island Developing States

at a side event organized by Bangladesh

"Fast Tracking Poverty Eradication and SDGs Through Data Revolution"

6:15 - 07:30 PM, Conference Room 0
17 July 2017, New York

Honorable Minister of Planning, Mr. Kamal,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank the mission of Bangladesh for taking the initiative to organize this very important and timely event. I would also like to thank Bangladesh for successfully chairing the LDC group and their close collaboration with my office.

Strong national statistical offices and cross-governmental statistical systems are essential to monitor the implementation of the SDGs. Stronger data that is widely and easily accessible to the public, increases transparency and accountability and can increase the quality of policy making by facilitating evidence-based decision making, as was mentioned by many LDCs at a recent meeting my Office has organised. National statistical offices thus should be furnished with adequate financial and technical resources and should be granted autonomy to discharge their duties. A reliable civil registration can also go a long way to improve data availability on the poorest part of the population.

The data revolution, which includes improvements in how data is produced and used, thereby closing data gaps to prevent discrimination promises to make more and more timely data available. However, the quality of these data needs to be ensured and capacity building (including data literacy), is crucial in this respect. Furthermore, universal broadband access would help to collect and disseminate information in rural areas.

Data collection and processing is a very dynamic field that has seen remarkable progress in recent years. To give an example, decreasing costs of satellite imaginery combined with image processing support by artificial intelligence opens up many possibilities for harvest prediction, disaster response, health, food security and other issues of great importance for the poorest and most vulnerable. Innovative survey solutions based on mobile phones can also reduce time and costs of data collection.

Monitoring is an essential precondition for accountability. As is often said: what is not counted doesn't count. While new and big data can be useful complements, the generation of traditional

data, for example through household surveys in the case of poverty in its various dimensions, is still crucial to provide a solid basis for policies that leave no one behind. Thus enhancing support for statistical capacity building in the most vulnerable countries in line with SDG target 17.18 is urgently needed.

Let me use this opportunity to invite you to the presentation of a report on The State of the LDCs 2017 – Financing the IPoA and SDGs, which will take place on Wednesday, 19 July at 3.30 at the Mission of Bhutan.

Thank you.