



**Remarks by H.E. Mr. Masud Bin Momen,
Ambassador & Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to UN at the seminar on
“Towards Better Information Systems for the 2030 Agenda”
Conference Room 4, UNHQ, 4 March 2016**

Thank you Mr. Schweinfest.

Ambassador & Permanent Representative of Denmark,
Director of the Statistics Division of UN-DESA,
Excellencies,
Dear Heads of Statistical Offices of Member States,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Good morning.

Let me first thank the UN Statistics Division for inviting me to make remarks at this important event.

2. The topic of today’s seminar – towards better information systems for the 2030 agenda – is of key importance for all Member States, more so for the vulnerable countries like the least developed countries. As probably all of you are aware, the 48 least developed countries that are Members of the United Nations are the UN recognized most vulnerable group of countries with severe structural and capacity related weaknesses. It is imperative to ensure that the every single country in special situation, including LDCs and Small Island Developing States will be able to achieve the goals and targets set in the 2030 Agenda, and this commitment was manifested by the global leaders last September, when they reiterated the pledge to leave no one behind.

3. Agreeing on the 17 goals and 169 targets took us more than two years. However, it is altogether different challenge to convert these targets into measurable indicators, and we must commend the Statistical Commission and the Inter Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) for the efforts they have put in during the last nine months or so for producing the 231 indicators.

4. While deeply appreciating the IAEG’s contribution, we also need to remember that this is not the end of the complex process, rather an early stage. The multi-

dimensionality of our challenges will need innovation as well as tenacity. Since Bangladesh is the Chair of the LDCs, we gathered views of LDCs on the indicators, and it is clear that there is room for improvement. In the SDGs, there were several LDC specific targets, which seem to have been lost in the process of preparing the indicators.

5. Allow me to provide you with a couple of examples. Target 17.8 of 2030 Agenda is about operationalization of a technology bank for the LDCs, which will help them in strengthening their science, technology and innovation capacity. Interestingly, the proposed indicator is “Proportion of individuals using the Internet”, which, I hope you will agree with me, does not capture the main idea behind the target.

6. On the indicators for target 1.a on eradication of poverty, the IAEG has proposed two indicators, which are realistic. At the same time, having only these two indicators may result in missing out one important element of the target – the issue of enhanced development cooperation. The development partners are appreciated for their support to developing countries, including to LDCs and SIDS, in the efforts to eradicate poverty. An indicator in this regard, as identified in the target, would definitely help the national governments as well as the international development community to focus their attention and interventions in appropriate manner.

7. The LDCs will be flagging some of their issues in the coming days, so that their concerns are addressed in different forums. Their concerns are not only about indicators, but also about how to collect, collate and compute data for this vast number of indicators. National statistics offices of almost all vulnerable countries like LDCs and SIDS suffer from inadequate resources – both financial and manpower related, and have capacity constraints. Therefore, one of the first tasks that we have to do in the course of implementing the 2030 Agenda is to strengthen the national statistics offices. This is true for Bangladesh, and most probably for almost all developing countries. In case of Bangladesh, its huge population poses a major challenge for the data collection process. Our National Statistics Office, with its limited resources, strives hard to produce useful information for the policy makers. We have to admit that with the new indicators, some of which we believe should be modified and extended, it will be a major challenge for the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics to fulfill the indicators.

8. Another possible challenge that I foresee is how to ensure that the universality of the 2030 Agenda is appropriately adjusted and accounted for in generating the statistics. In case of MDGs, we did not face this particular issue, as Millennium Development Goals were for developing countries. Now that the SDGs are to be implemented by all UN Member States, the developed countries, with their strong statistical backbone, will be able to monitor and present their performance with less

difficulties compared to the developing countries. As I mentioned, the small and vulnerable economies do not have statistical capacities, which will probably result, at least in the initial phase, in presentation of reports that will not match with their performance. We will probably see major differences in performances, whereas in reality, and in terms of relative analysis, the differences may be less in performance, but more in terms of statistical capacities for monitoring and measurement.

9. I believe these are issues and areas where international cooperation will be important for the developing countries, particularly for LDCs and SIDS. The development partners may come forward to help the vulnerable countries with capacity constraints by helping to strengthen the capacities of the statistics offices. These supports can be in various forms, which I am sure can be discussed in details multilaterally and bilaterally.

10. Finally, I would like congratulate all the Chief Statisticians assembled here for their strong support to the international community. They are doing an invaluable service, and I would encourage them to consider the concerns of the vulnerable countries with capacity constraints in their deliberations and works ahead.

11. I wish you all a very productive week ahead.

Thank you.
