

Second Forum on African Statistical Development (FASDEV)

Opening Statement

By **Abdoulie** **Janneh**
UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa

Addis Ababa, 9 February 2006

Dr Maxwell M. MKWEZALAMBA, Commissioner for Economic Affairs, African Union
Mr. Richard MANNING, Chairman of the OECD-DAC and PARIS21 Co-Chair
Mr. Janvier KPOUROU, Director, Planning and Budgeting Department,
African Development Bank
Ms. Shaida BADIEE, Director, Development Data Group, The World Bank
Distinguished partners in African Statistical Development,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am most pleased to welcome you to this second Forum on African Statistical Development (FASDEV) and to Addis Ababa, the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

FASDEV, in the few years since its creation, has developed into a credible consultative platform and is playing a lead role in the coordination and harmonization of efforts towards enhancing statistical capacity in the region.

It is also a Forum which showcases a strong collaboration between several influential development partners: the ADB, PARIS 21, the World Bank and ECA, who are all committed to advancing Africa's statistical agenda.

On behalf of ECA, I therefore want to also take this opportunity to thank all our partners for their commitment to the development of statistics in Africa and their commitment to working so closely with us to realize a joint vision.

Our collaboration truly enhances the comparative advantage of each of us and provides an opportunity for robust concentration on the major issues and challenges.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Given the daunting development challenges faced by African states, I also passionately believe that a close working relationship between Africa's leading regional institutions, the African Union, the ADB, and the ECA, is key to making a difference in this and other important endeavours.

I am therefore delighted that the AU Commissioner MKWEZALAMBA is here with us today.

One of the key outcomes of the UN Conference on Financing for Development held in Monterrey, Mexico in 2002, was the broad consensus that development has to be country-driven, country-owned, and country-specific.

Moreover, it was affirmed that good results require good policies and institutions.

Following Monterrey, at the second international Roundtable on Managing for Development Results

in Morocco in 2004, the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics (MAPS) was developed. The Action Plan sets out what is needed worldwide to meet the data challenges of global development agenda and the MDGs.

As a follow-up to the agreements reached in Marrakech, several efforts are being made at the international, regional, sub-regional and national levels to develop National Statistics Strategies in Africa.

However, despite these efforts, the majority of African countries still do not have statistical systems that can provide the sound statistical data required for evidence-based planning and policy formulation, as well as political decision-making, in a sustainable manner.

In our view, at ECA, efforts to build statistical capacity in Africa were in the recent past limited by several factors. These included the lack of coordination and sustainability on the part of national and international partners alike, in developing the field.

The fact that we are all now here, as members of FASDEV, is a clear sign of the new international willingness to rectify this problem.

Distinguish
Ladies and Gentlemen,

participants,

This second meeting of FASDEV is held under the driving theme of the “Regional Reference Strategic Framework for statistical development in Africa”.

The main objective is to adopt this proposed Framework as the common reference for all statistical development activities in the region.

The framework aims to chart strategic directions and appropriate mechanisms for improving all aspects of the coordination of statistical development activities.

It is envisaged that national statistical institutions will use it as a guide to their statistical capacity building efforts, and that development partners will be able to use it as guide to their selection of statistical development initiatives.

Above all, it is also expected that this new framework, once adopted by all stakeholders, will help create much needed synergies and promote the build-up of sustainable statistical capacity in the African region.

As some of you know, I was recently in Cape Town, South Africa in order to attend the 2006 African Symposium on Statistical development.

In concluding, I would like to reiterate today what I said at that meeting.

The challenges facing stakeholders in statistical development in Africa are evidently numerous.

ECA is therefore committed to taking actions, in close collaboration with regional and sub-regional organizations and other stakeholders, as well as international development partners, which will help establish reliable National Statistical Systems across the continent. We take this as a priority as reliable statistics are absolutely critical to the implementation of national development programmes and monitoring progress.

In Cape Town, I announced a series of actions to be taken by ECA with regards to the 2010 World

Programme of Population and Housing Censuses. In the same vein ECA will also embark in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the reference regional strategic framework in close collaboration with all partners involved in this endeavour.

ECA is honoured to be a strategic partner in the implementation of the RRSF and will continue to render its contribution in this regard.

Thank you for your attention. I wish you fruitful deliberations.
