

## **OPENING REMARKS BY TOM ALWEENDO AT WORLD STATISTICS DAY 20 OCT 2010**

On behalf of the National Planning Commission, I welcome you to the celebration of World Statistics Day. The World Statistics day is the initiative of the UN that is meant to promote statistics in its member countries. It is not by coincidence that the UN decided to promote statistics internationally.

You will agree with me that statistics plays a vital role in every fields of known human activity. For example, statistics has important role in determining the existing position of per capita income; we will not know what the levels of unemployment or population growth rate without the necessary statistics; without statistics we cannot know what the needs are in relation to housing, education and health.

Let us take business as another example. To be successful in business a business woman must be in a position to make not only quick but also accurate decisions. She must know the needs of her customers in order to know what to produce and in what quantities. Good statistics help business people to plan their business activities, be it production, marketing or distribution.

In economics we largely depend upon statistics. Think of the importance of the inflation indicator in our planning process; the national accounts; the macroeconomic framework upon which we base our budgeting process; the projections of demand and supply. These are all important planning tools that need the application of statistics.

Without statistics governments are not able to function properly either. Government budget, for example, relies on estimation of revenue and expenditure that is expected to occur in the future. For this you need statistics to make your estimation. Statistics help in visualising the target of planning quantitatively and make it possible to evaluate the achievements.

However, for all these to happen we need to have reliable statistics that is produced and disseminated in a timely manner. Unreliable statistics is as good as not having any or even worse since you may base your planning on dubious statistics with deadly consequences. Reliable statistics that is made available too late is not helpful either, because by then the environment would have changed in such a manner that new statistics is required. For example, if you are planning to build a school or hospital in a particular area basing your decision on demographic data pertaining to that area fifteen years earlier, you

are likely to make serious mistakes in your execution.

As a Government, we are making steady progress in building sufficient capacity to produce reliable and timely statistics. We hope that in the not too distant future we will be among the nations that have managed to have good statistics.