

OFFICE OF THE REPRESENTATIVE

SPEECH

ANTONELLA SCOLAMIERO

UNICEF REPRESENTATIVE

WORKSHOP ON THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING THE OFFICIAL STATISTICS NATIONAL PROGRAMME 2017-2021

20 April 2016

“XHEKO Imperial” Hotel

Dear Director of INSTAT, Mrs. Muça (Mirela),

Dear colleagues,

I appreciate and fully support the initiative of the Institute of Statistics in holding today's workshop to mark the engagement and the collaboration of relevant actors in the process of developing the National Official Statistics Programme covering the next five years.

UNICEF worldwide works to promote the rights and to improve the lives of every child in all situations. Over 70 years, UNICEF has learned that problems that go unmeasured often remain unresolved. This is why, as a world-leading child rights organization, we strongly advocate for the improved availability and utilization of data for children.

To emphasize the role of data to drive the agenda of change in the best interest of the child, I would take the opportunity to highlight an important finding of a new UNICEF study on “Social Protection for Child Rights and Wellbeing” covering 30 countries and territories in Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The study highlights that children who are falling furthest behind in society benefit the most when countries invest in more effective social protection.

UNICEF in Albania has continuously raised its concerns about the needs to, and the challenges of, realistically measuring, assessing and reporting the situation of children and women in this country. These demands go hand-in-hand with the requirement to monitor progress towards the achievement of the established national and international goals (including, the Sustainable Development Goals) and commitments to promoting women and children's wellbeing. The lack of quality data, comparable over certain periods of time, has resulted in this challenge of measurability.

It is important to acknowledge that strategies for collecting and reporting data on children must take into account the child rights perspective. Data for, and about, children is cross-cutting and touches on so many dimensions of children's experiences. It must therefore be mainstreamed as a cross-cutting priority in all relevant chapters of Albania's Official Statistics Programme.

I congratulate INSTAT for aligning its upcoming Official Statistics Programme with the Eurostat statistical requirements compendium of 2015. I would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone to bring the Sustainable Development Goals agenda to the forefront of their work programmes and to commit to generating data about this. The child rights framework of indicators, under the custody of the State Agency of Protection of Child Rights, should guide the process as well.

Alongside the process of defining relevant data, we are confident that emphasis will be placed on the sound methodology, in line with the international practice, and in compliance with principles of statistical quality.

Whilst the *supply* of data has been the main focus of the national statistical agenda, attention must also be given to the *demand* for evidence in policy-making. The current Government should be commended for insisting on the culture of evidence-based and target-oriented planning. This is to be realised within the NSDI and all the sector-specific strategies due to be finalised - and accompanied by the monitoring plans and indicators - in 2016. However, the translation of good intentions into actual practice, and based on appropriate capacities in public service provision, will remain an ambitious task over the coming years.

Allow me to express UNICEF's support and engagement in advancing the collective work of all of us here that will follow in the coming months in order to develop a robust, strategic planning document of Albania's Official Statistics Programme.

Thank you.