

**Welcome Note: Opening of PASGR's Building Capacity for African Development Data Design Shop, January 19<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup> 2015, Nairobi, Kenya.**

Good morning, distinguished guests, co-participants, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Tade Aina and I am the Executive Director of Partnership for African Social and Governance Research – PASGR – your hosts and partners for this meeting.

It is my pleasure to welcome you all warmly to PASGR's Design Shop on "Building Capacity for Development Data". For our participants and guests from outside Kenya and Nairobi, welcome to Kenya and to the beautiful and green city of Nairobi that is also laying its claims to not only the status of an African ICT and tech hub but also one of the rising stars of technological and technology-based business innovations. Indeed in Nairobi, we find the seeds of many opportunities and challenges that the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals demand that we turn our attention to.

This Design Shop (and we have intentionally chosen this notion because we want to focus as much as possible on getting out products and concrete next steps and actions from this event) is part of a larger process across the world and across sectors that has sharpened, is sharpening and accompanying the emergence of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Data Revolution.

As we all know after many years of crafting consensus and working on the Millennium Development Goals, the world has entered both the phase and moment of the Post-MDGs and the negotiation and construction of the Sustainable Development Goals. The SDGs interestingly are emerging in a world shaped by what has been called the data revolution, a world in which incredibly powerful technologies have combined with new methods to gather, process, store, analyze, combine and retrieve massive data across all sectors and all aspects of our human life.

This has brought into being the beginnings of a brave new world, a world of the data revolution. We are fortunate to have with us those who know and have invested considerable time and resources on this amongst us. An important element in the shaping of the Sustainable Development Agenda is the recognition and affirmation of the centrality of data as we move forward. Data is central not only in framing the agenda but also in measuring and monitoring progress at the local, national, regional and global levels. Implicit in this recognition is of course the need for investment in human and institutional capacity and talent. This is especially acute in Africa, although we are beginning to have examples of African innovation and engagement with data that have potential lessons for actors within and outside of Africa.

Africa is thus engaged with the Data Revolution and we have a variety of organizations and groups such as the work led by the Centre for Global Development (CGD) and the African

Population and Health Research Centre (APHRC). We have the set of interventions led by the African Centre for Technological Studies (ACTS) and the various country level works focused on aspects such as the system of national statistics; the testing of data availability against indicative Post-2015 goals; and the potential of open data to affect governance accountability and resource allocation for poverty eradication.

For us at PASGR, our activities related the Post-2015 agenda have focused on development data with the recognition that in Africa, all data is virtually development data as African governments, business and civil society strive to build inclusive economies, accountable governments and just societies. We had reported at the 2014 UNDP “Dialogue on Data and Accountability for the Post-2015 Development Framework”, the outcomes of the African Forum on Data Revolution which we convened in 2013. PASGR has earlier pointed out that engaging the Data Revolution has three key strands – capacity issues, contextual elements and the process. The key goal of this Design Shop is to generate analyses and ideas that will be used to form a Working Group on African Capacity for Development Data as we engage the era of the SDGs.

We will spend the rest of our interaction here around the different elements of this and the generation of concrete actions and plans for capacity building for development data across specific sectors and areas of our interest. We have therefore deliberately tried to bring players from the academy, think tanks, civil society, government, international NGOs and foundations, business and international development agencies. We have also tried to make it not too large a meeting, so that we can have active participation and attentive engagement of all of us. Once again, you are welcome and thank you for coming.

The rest of the agenda for this opening plenary will take us straight to the journeys so far. We start with the global arena, an excursion in which we are guided across the immense work done by the UN and the Report of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals by Ms. Jenna Slotin, Deputy Director of the United Nations Foundation. The second contribution will be around the Report of the UN Secretary General’s Independent Advisory Group on Data Revolution for Sustainable Development. It will be by Dr. Claire Melamed, IEAG/Overseas Development Institute.

We are indeed very privileged to have our two distinguished presenters who are not only experts committed to the process but have lived and breathed it over the past few years.

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