

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



THE PRIME MINISTER

Remarks by the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister

Dr. Edouard Ngirente

**At the official opening of the 5th International Conference on Big
Data for Official Statistics**

Kigali, May 2nd, 2019

- **Honourable Ministers,**
- **Distinguished representatives of institutions, here present,**
- **Our distinguished guests and delegates,**

Good morning.

1. It is my pleasure today to join you at this official opening of the 5th International conference on Big Data. Let me start by welcoming to Rwanda, all participants to this conference.

2. The Government of Rwanda wishes to sincerely thank the United Nations Statistics Division and other members of the UN Global Working Group (GWG) on Big Data for Official Statistics for having selected Rwanda to host this year's conference. Their close partnership with the Government of Rwanda, the African Development Bank and other international partners in statistics has made this conference a success.

- **Distinguished guests,**
- **Ladies and gentlemen,**

3. This conference is a good opportunity to discuss global statistical development issues. In this regard, I am informed that since April 29th, 2019, technical sessions on New Global Trends and technologies have been taking place. I am also informed that from today to tomorrow, you will have the chance to follow several high-level panel discussions. I am confident that you will take home how new data sources and new technologies can play a key role in the development journey.

4. Statistics and data for informed decisions are very important. That is why the Rwandan Government, in partnership with development partners, has consistently invested in official statistics development, production, analysis and dissemination. We value a lot the use of statistics in informing policies and evaluating government programs.

5. As of today, our investment in statistics is yielding good results. We are seeing a growing culture and practice of using statistics across the public and private sector in Rwanda for decision making. As an example, both our National Strategy for Transformation that we launched in September 2017 and our Vision 2050 were inspired, among others, by statistics. I believe also that this is evident both at regional and global levels as it is outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

6. Despite this progress, we all still see a growing demand for more details and timely information. Therefore, we are convinced that Big Data holds significant potential to unlock the challenges to more detailed and timely data and statistics for decision making.

7. Currently, it is possible that the ever-increasing use of ICT, and the big data it creates, can enrich the supply of official statistics. Thus, it is now the right moment for all of us, policymakers, private sector, civil society, statistics offices, international organizations, academicians and others, to work together and leverage these big data sources to expand access to information and promote public good.

8. However, it has to be noted that the management of big data requires appropriate technologies and skills. We are consequently called to invest in necessary infrastructure and capacity building initiatives that will allow statistics offices and other stakeholders to benefit from the growing supply of big data.

9. In this regard, to guide national initiatives to leverage big data, in April 2017, the Government of Rwanda approved the Data Revolution Policy. This policy focuses on building big data and analytics capabilities to derive insights that contribute to social-economic benefits including informed policy decision making, enhancing transparency and promoting citizen participation, GDP contribution, and SDGs.

10. Though big data play a key role in countries' development, we all have to always remember that some dimensions of big data are sensitive. Their misuse may harm individuals, institutions, and even national development. I therefore call upon all National Statistical Systems to invest in strengthening legal and policy frameworks that ease data sharing while building strong standards for data ethics and protection, to expand data access and ensure appropriate use.

11. Let me conclude by wishing you a most successful and productive conference. On this note, I am now pleased to declare the High Level Policy Session of the 5th International Conference on Big Data for Official Statistics officially open.

I thank you for your attention.