**Technical dialogue for the launch of the MPI and MODA reports**

**Opening remarks for the Resident Representative**

***January 30th, 2019 – Marriott Hotel, Kigali***

Dear XXX

Dear XXX

Dear XXX

Fellow UN Agencies representatives and…

Ladies and gentlemen, all protocols observed

Murakaza neza, welcome!

Allow me to first thank the National Institute of Statistics (NISR) and its Director-General, Yusuf Murangwa for their hard work in bringing forward this important statistical report on poverty focusing on Multi-dimensional Poverty. It is a matter of great pride for me, and for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to have supported NISR since 2016 in building the analytical capacity which led to production of this publication and to see it become an integral part of poverty analytics in Rwanda.

At the end of last year, NISR realized the latest trends in income poverty using the Fifth Integrated Household Living Survey (EICV5). The report indicated that Rwanda continues to make progress in reducing income poverty, though in a much slower pace. While income poverty is one way of measuring of wellbeing of a population, it only tells part of the story. It does not indicate deprivations in education, health, housing, empowerment, employment, personal security and more. Appreciating this fact, UNDP in 2010 introduced Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), a cutting-age measure of poverty that allows us to understand the multiple deprivations that people suffer. Since then, the United Nations development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) annually published MPI covering over 105 countries.

Following the global measure, countries are adapting this measure and constructing their own national Multidimensional Poverty Index to assess progress towards reducing poverty in its multidimensional form. National multidimensional poverty measures provide a more comprehensive picture of – who - how - and to what degree - people suffering deprivations within their national context. I should once again thank the Rwandan government (GoR) for taking this giant step to introduce national MPI, that has made Rwanda to become the second country in Africa to officially adapt national multi-dimensional poverty index, next to Mozambique.

Today, we are gathered here to discuss the key findings of the first National Multidirectional Poverty Report produced using 2016/17 data. The report provides important results that will inform our action in medium and long term.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me take this opportunity to highlight three issues:

1. **While the first National Multidimensional poverty report of Rwanda reaffirms Rwanda’s progress towards reducing poverty in all its forms, it also highlights the urgent need to pursuing multidimensional approaches**: by adopting Agenda 2030, Rwanda together with other 192 countries pledged to leave no one behind, endeavouring to reach the furthest behind first, and end poverty in all its forms. Rwanda’s first measure of MPI which has four dimensions, namely education, housing, public service and social services and economic activity as well as over 14 indicators, shows that Multidimensional poverty declined in Rwanda from 33% in 2013/14 to 29% in 2016/17; while Income Poverty levels dropped by 0.9 percentage point from 39.1 per cent in the 2013/14 fiscal year to 38.2 per cent in 2016/17.

Furthermore, the report highlights that deprivations in education, housing, access to clean drinking water and waste disposal within the public service contributed significantly for being multidimensionally poor. This means if Rwanda is to end poverty by 2030 in all its forms; we must enhance our effort towards addressing these issues and tackle poverty in a multidimensional and multisectoral way.

1. **The achievements in reducing multidimensional poverty is uneven across areas** **despite the broader gains**:The incidence of multidimensional poverty is the highest in rural area, with over 32.1% of the population being poor compared to only 13.4% in urban areas. Furthermore, the rate at which multidimensional poverty is declining is the highest in rural areas averaging 17% compared to 2.9% for urban. In the case of Kigali, moreover, we witnessed slight increase in Poverty, though it still is the city with the lowest level of multidimensional poverty. What does this mean to policy makers? It means while the concentration of multidimensionally poor in Rural areas warrants our continued strategic focus; the slow pace of decline in multidimensional poverty in urban areas demands greater understanding, considering the huge importance cities over the medium and long term.
2. **Poverty eradication demands sustaining gains and building resilience of households and communities:** The Rwandan government and its partners are committed to pulling people out of poverty. This indeed is a commendable effort. Yet, UNDP report shows that two in every seven who escaped since 1990 fall back to poverty. Such findings highlight the fragility of our gains and puts in question our broader goal of eradicating poverty by 2030. Further to this important insight, UNDP recent report highlights that while exiting poverty mostly correlates with labour markets and educational achievement, the factors which prevent people from falling back into poverty are mostly correlated with social protection, through both social transfers and pensions, as well as access to systems of care, physical and financial assets, and labour skill upgrading.  Therefore, if Rwanda is to sustain its gains, it should strengthen social and economic safety nets and address the impact of shocks on the poorest and most vulnerable.

**Conclusion**

Having drawn its long-term vision, and designing its medium-term Plan, the National Strategy for Transformation, Rwanda is ahead of the curve in implementing Agenda 2030, which represents a unique opportunity to rethink and implement integrated approaches to eradicate poverty and reduce inequalities through the principle of ‘**Leaving no one behind**’. I wish to conclude by a bold call for action to all stakeholders to support the NST and its supporting programmes over the next seven years, which avails us significant opportunity to address the last mile challenges, hard exclusions, pockets of poverty in specific locations and by specific groups of population, as well as building fiscal space and preparedness to prevent downward mobility.

 Murakoze cyane, thank you!