



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

South Africa

30 November 2009

Dear Mr. Lehohla,

I wish to thank you for your thoughtful letter of 21 September 2009 in which you raise a number of concerns about the new Global Impact and Vulnerability Alert System (GIVAS). I am grateful for your engagement on this matter and your reflection on specific elements of this initiative.

I would like to underscore that GIVAS is not envisaged as a “new global data collection system” as you suggest in your letter. Instead, GIVAS will work through existing systems to collect, collate and highlight data. It will draw on data already prepared under extant bilateral and multilateral institutions and monitoring efforts. In some cases, these efforts may need to increase their frequency and reduce the lag with which they report in order to provide the kind of information that will allow GIVAS to add value to our early-warning systems on emerging vulnerabilities. This may necessitate innovative data collection methodologies, new technologies and advanced screening protocols. In other cases, existing systems may need to collect new information that has not been previously reported. But in all cases, existing data collection systems will be used to provide input to GIVAS.

We are in the process of hiring the Project Director and supporting staff for the GIVAS team. Once he or she is appointed, I would encourage you to engage with him or her at your earliest convenience. In the meantime, I would encourage you to raise any further concerns you may have with the Deputy Secretary-General, who is leading the GIVAS effort on my behalf.

I would like to take this opportunity to renew my thanks and express my highest consideration for the good work that you do as the Chair of the United Nations Statistical Commission.

Yours sincerely,

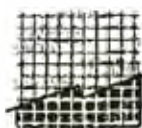
Ki Moon Ban
BAN Ki-moon

Mr. Pali Lehohla
Chair of the United Nations
Statistical Commission
Pretoria



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**Statistics
South Africa**

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Pali Lehohla
Statistician-General

21 September 2009

Secretary-General of United Nations
His Excellency Ban Ki-moon
United Nations
New York
NY 10017

His Excellency, Ban Ki-moon

As the Chair of the United Nations Statistical Commission, I wish to draw his Excellency's attention to a matter of serious concern for Government Statisticians of UN member states: Your initiative to launch a Global Impact and Vulnerability Alert System (GIVAS) includes elements that amount to what could be termed a new 'global data collection system'.

As you are aware, matters of global data collection fall under the mandate of the UN Statistical Commission. In fact, the Commission has been working hard over the last decade to improve the availability of data for decision makers at national and global levels to base their policy decision making on facts. In particular, with respect to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) progress has been made, thanks to extensive methodological work and focused technical assistance programmes, under the guidance of the Statistical Commission. To give only one specific example, I am pleased to inform you that a significantly increased number of African countries are committed to conduct a census in the 2010 round of Population and Housing Censuses.

We, as professional statistician, certainly agree with your assessment, that to address burning world problems such as global warming and climate change, financial and economic crises, gender equality and empowerment, better and more timely information is needed and we are grateful for your focus on measurement. We stand ready to provide you with our full professional support. However, in our view, his Excellency's terms of reference on the course for GIVAS, unfortunately has the potential to undermine statistical progress made so far. Creating another instrument for a complex task, especially hurriedly, can only create duplication that is ultimately very expensive and less productive. At best it would create conflict of numbers at the global level. We have been through this with the Human Development Index and continue with this difficulty regarding the MDGs. Indeed, GIVAS would not lighten our burden.

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May I suggest that the UN Statistical Commission engages these concerns from a professional measurement point of view and be given the space to do so, before any data collection activities are launched under the GIVAS initiative. I am confident that the meeting of Chief Government Statisticians of UN member states, will be the adequate forum to advise you, how existing information around the globe, can be better harvested and used to meet your policy needs.

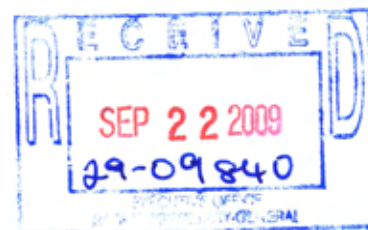
I trust that His Excellency, the Secretary-General of the United Nations will take a moment to ponder the gravity of the points I have presented before him.

Pali Lehohla



Statistician-General South Africa
Chair of the United Nations Statistics Commission.

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Note No: 246/2009

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of South Africa to the United Nations **presents** its compliments to the Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to forward the attached letter from Mr. Pali Lehohla, Statistician-General of the Republic of South Africa, in his capacity as the Chair of the United Nation Statistics Commission.

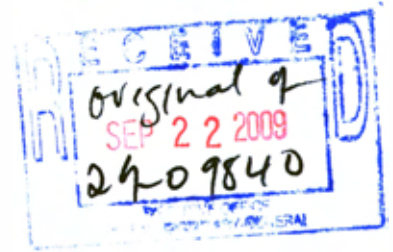
The Permanent Mission of the Republic of South Africa to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations the assurances of its highest considerations.

New York
22 September 2009

Office of the Secretary-General
Of the United Nations
New York



South Africa



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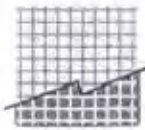
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**New York
22 September 2009**

Office of the Secretary-General
Of the United Nations
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**Statistics
South Africa**



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Pali Lchobha
Chairman of the Board

21 September 2009

Secretary-General of United Nations
His Excellency Ban Ki-moon
United Nations
New York
NY 10017

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