

## ADVANCING STATISTICS FOR DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA-PACIFIC

### **Welcome Statement by Noeleen Heyzer, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP *Delivered by Deputy Executive Secretary Nagesh Kumar***

#### **Second session of the Committee on Statistics 15-17 December 2010, Bangkok, Thailand**

*Your Excellency, Mr Juti Krairiksh, Minister of Information,  
Communication and Technology of the Royal Thai Government,  
Distinguished Representatives,  
Ladies and Gentlemen;*

- I am delighted to welcome all of you to the Second Session of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics. This session presents a great opportunity for us to advance statistics for inclusive and sustainable development in Asia-Pacific.
- Timely and comprehensive statistics are necessary to inform about current development trends and their impact on the everyday life of people. This has been demonstrated time and again, not least during the recent economic and financial crisis from which the world and the region are still recovering. Statistics that cover the quality as well as the quantity of growth enables political leaders to send credible messages about the importance of inclusive and sustainable development paths. Credit goes to the statistics profession for providing the basis for the emerging understanding that the Millennium Development Goals are not an isolated social welfare scheme but that their achievement is an essential part of a comprehensive growth strategy.
- Under my Leadership, ESCAP is taking a lead role in enhancing statistical analyses to capture the inclusiveness and sustainability of economic and social development in Asia-Pacific. ESCAP works to increase the availability and improve the dissemination of statistics and

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analysis to capture social and environmental costs and opportunities linked to the current economic growth patterns and paradigms. Recognizing that statistics are produced at the national level and that the National Statistical Offices form the backbone of the region's statistical systems, ESCAP also offers training for personnel from National Statistical Offices. The newly established subregional offices will place ESCAP in an even better position to identify and meet the diverse statistical capacity development needs across the region.

- Statistics is critical to national governments navigating in the context of demographic transition, financial volatility, social change and environmental challenges. Timely and reliable data are necessary for making the right policy choices and for designing policy interventions for maximum development effectiveness and fairness.
- In this context, the ESCAP Committee on Statistics is a unique and essential forum for the Region's Leaders in Statistics. No forum is better placed to identify statistical issues of urgency, importance and strategic value to Asia-Pacific nations and to formulate regional positions on those issues to ensure that the region's needs influence the global, statistical agenda. No forum presents similar opportunities for Asia-Pacific governments and development partners to build on each others' strengths for the common good.
- Given the expansion of the economy of the region, relative to other regions of the world, the Committee's deliberations on a proposed regional programme to improve economic statistics are pertinent and timely. Strengthening support for improved vital statistics is a strategic and long-term move that will ensure that the basic building blocks are in place. I am confident that your decisions on these and other important issues will receive attention and support at the highest political level, including by the ESCAP Commission at its 67<sup>th</sup> session in May 2011.
- Considering the importance of the work of the Committee, I am delighted to note that all five ESCAP subregions are well represented this week. Representatives from the capitals of 34 member States have travelled to attend this session. I am particularly delighted to see the high level of

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participation from the Pacific subregion, which is higher than ever with 7 Pacific island developing States attending.

- Yesterday, the regional development community came together at the First Meeting of Partners for Statistics Development in Asia-Pacific to ensure that the international community is working as one at the regional level, facilitating the implementation of the Committee's decisions. In that context, I am pleased to see that international partners in statistical development are well-represented with 17 organizations, governmental and non-governmental, participating in this session.

*Minister, Distinguished Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen;*

- With a shared sense of purpose, a collaborative approach to deliberation and decision-making, this Committee session presents a unique opportunity for the region's Leaders to advance the statistical agenda for the benefit of the people of the Asia-Pacific region.
- I wish you a successful session with vibrant deliberations and solid outcomes.
- I thank you.

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