Seventh Session of ESCAP Committee on Statistics
Country Intervention/Statement of JAPAN on Agenda Item 4 (c)

Agenda Item 4(c)

Transforming human resource management to build statistical institutions in Asia and the Pacific for the future

Documentation

Regional and national efforts to transform human resource management to build statistical institutions in Asia and the Pacific for the future (ESCAP/CST/2020/5)

Country Intervention/Statement

<With regard to the issue of statistical institution building through the support of training networks, both GIST and NCSTAP as a discussant>

As Mr. CHINO said in the webinar on Monday, a combination of face-to-face and e-learning is still important for future courses at statistical training institutions. Although the United Nations has developed a portal site for e-learning on the SDGs, most of the courses are basically self-paced learning courses. In this difficult situation with COVID-19, I believe that interactive e-learning courses are what governments need. Although there are some issues to overcome, such as time differences, internet connection gaps, and variances in initial level, I hope that GIST and the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific will cooperate to coordinate lecturers and participants for interactive courses.

As a member of the GIST advisory group, Japan previously suggested that it would be effective to enhance introductory e-learning courses on the SDG Indicators and their framework. However, considering the impact of COVID-19 and the complicated situation, there is a need to provide more segmented courses with interactive dialogue between lecturers and participants. Although various distance-learning initiatives are being undertaken by many universities these days, statistical training institutions are required to deliver more than what universities offer. Statistical training institutes should cultivate practical knowledge and flexible thinking skills. To this end, it is desirable for GIST and the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific to cooperatively support new initiatives.

Furthermore, it is also important to give officials an awareness that they belong to a professional community. The deeper we become involved in issues that are likely to be on the political agenda, such as the SDGs, the more pressure there is to obtain the desired results. While involvement in a prestigious agenda is an honor as an official, it is important to be careful not to create meaningless reports with conclusions beyond the scope of the data, no matter how much those at the top may request such conclusions. In addition, unreliable data, sometimes including misinterpreted official statistics, are circulating on the internet every day. We need to learn how to disseminate official statistics so that their results do not mislead the world. While it is desirable to eradicate incorrect information and replace it with correct information, the risk of conflict with freedom of speech makes it necessary to take careful measures. I think that the wisdom of the statistical community and awareness of their own membership within it will help officials in this difficult situation.

I believe that face-to-face courses are the best way to strengthen the unity of the statistical community. However, until face-to-face courses can be resumed, I hope that interactive e-learning courses will offer better experiences to strengthen the statistical community than self-paced learning courses, and that GIST and the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific will support the development of these courses.

<With regard to government's need for statistical capacity-building institution>

We have the network meeting for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific every year with governing council for the SIAP, so we have the opportunity to arrange those needing of the governments, I believe.

And GIST can offer other opportunities for arrangements for especially about different languages so probably those networks can work.