

Fourth Session of the Committee on Statistics

09.00 hours, Wednesday, 25 March 2015

KEYNOTE SPEECH by

Mr. Somboon Mekpaiboonwattana

Vice Minister of Information and Communication Technology

The Government of Thailand

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Dr. Shamshad Akhtar Secretary-General, United Nations and Executive Secretary,
ESCAP

Mr. Stefan Schweinfest Director, United Nations Statistics Division, Department of
Economic and Social Affairs,

Ms. Lisa Grace Bersales Chair of the third Session of the Committee on Statistics,

Mr. Anis Chowdhury, Director, Statistics Division, ESCAP,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Very good morning to all of you.

First of all, on behalf of the Royal Thai Government, and His Excellency Mr. Pornchai Rujiprapa, Minister of Information and Communication Technology, who could not come this morning due to an urgent mission at the parliament, I wish to extend a warm welcome to all distinguished delegates and participants to Thailand and to the Fourth Session of the Committee on Statistics.

I would also like to convey my sincere congratulations to ESCAP for organizing the Fourth Session of the Committee on Statistics, for leaders of national statistical systems and development partners to discuss matters of strategic

importance to statistics development in the region, to promote cooperation aimed at supporting national efforts, and to formulate regional positions on major issues that influence global initiatives.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

A prominent priority of the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology or MICT, which is responsible for the Thai National Statistical Office, is to manage the country's statistical system to promote evidence-based planning and policy at both local and national levels.

I am happy to share with you some details of our achievement. The role of the NSO in the National Statistical System, as mandated by the Statistical Act, is to make statistics relevant, useful, and timely for policy-making and decision making at both local and national levels. One important tool for the NSO is the first National Statistical System Master Plan (2011-2015) which was endorsed by the Cabinet.

The implementation of the Master Plan requires a close working relationship between the NSO and all the Ministries.

In 2014, the first implementing priority on the Statistical Data System Development was put into practice, in order to promote the Provincial Development Strategy Plan through the cooperation between the Ministry of Interior and the Office of the Public Sector Development Commission in terms of extending and expanding the Project on Data Sharing and Exchanging.

Nowadays, all parts of societies are aware of the importance of statistical data and information for decision making. Therefore, NSO has geared itself to effectively manage the National Statistical System of the country, which will support the determination of country development strategies and contribute to achieving sustainable development. To this end, the NSO has conducted the Statistical Data and Information Development Project in all 76 provinces and 18 clusters which is the operation of data sharing and exchange for decision making at provincial and local

levels. The outcome of this project is a data set supporting decision making in three sectors, which are (1) Economic sector, (2) Social sector and (3) National Resources and Environment sector. This data set is also related to the indicators of the provinces and the clusters according to the Eleventh National Economic and Social Development Plan of Thailand (2012-2016).

Another important outcome of this project is the administrative tool for management of all levels, which can be used for monitoring projects, plans and activities, leading to more efficient use of budgetary resources. The project is also focused on improving coordination across agencies in which the targets fall within at least two ministries, in order to serve the needs of people of each area.

Through this initiative, it has been obviously win-win cooperation between the Ministry of ICT and the Ministry of Interior. The achievements are of building the culture and innovation for use of data, specifying the responsible agency for providing data, avoiding the duplication of data production, and unifying working mechanisms, which are all led to the beneficial to people.

NSO under the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology has played a leading role in producing data to serve the needs of users and supporting decision making at all levels, as well as to substantially support data for Thailand's competitiveness ranking carried out by the International Management Development (IMD).

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am extremely delighted to learn that the Committee will discuss and decide on regional solutions to strengthen economic, population and social, agricultural and environment statistics, as well as improved coordination of statistical capacity-building. These are certainly priorities for Thailand, but in my view they are priorities for the Asia-Pacific region as well. So you have an important and challenge task ahead of you over the next three days. I am, however, confident that through

exchange of views and the sharing experiences and lessons, the Committee will come up with recommendations of concrete steps that we collectively can take to promote evidence-based planning and policies, with the ultimate goal of improving the lives of our peoples. I look forward to hearing the outcomes of your deliberations.

I wish you all a fruitful discussion and have a pleasant stay in Bangkok.

Thank you very much.