

Opening Remarks by Anis Chowdhury, Director ESCAP-Statistics Division

Good Morning Once Again

Having read the message from our Executive Secretary, let me now also welcome you and congratulate you. You are the torch-bearers of some internationally renowned and leading statisticians such as P.C. Mahalanobis who was the chair of the 2nd Session in 1952 of the Regional Conference of Statisticians of Asia and the Far East (RCOS), the predecessor of the current ESCAP Committee on Statistics. We also had leading statisticians as Chairs, such as Mr K.M. Archer (Australia), Mr V.R. Rao (India), Mr Yuzo Mortia (Japan), Mr B. Kantabutra (Thailand) and Mr A.K.M. Rabbani (Bangladesh).

You have truly been ahead of the curve in setting norms and standards not only for the region, but also globally. This is reflected even during the on-going discussions about the sustainable development agenda beyond 2015. For example, the two of the targets under the proposed Goal 17 on means of implementation and global partnership that relate to statistics:

17.18 by 2020, enhance capacity building support to developing countries, including for LDCs and SIDS, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts

17.19 by 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement GDP, and support statistical capacity building in developing countries

are remarkably similar to the two strategic goals that CST has set at its 2nd Session in 2010.

Your leadership also led to the first Ministerial Conference on CRVS which has declared the 2015-2024 as the decade of CRVS by when the countries are expected to improve the coverage of CRVS to 100%. Hopefully, you will be endorsing the outcome document and the regional action programme for CRVS. This would mean, this region would be ahead of the one of targets, i.e. *by 2030 provide legal identity for all including birth registration* under the proposed goal 16.

Thus, I strongly believe, this session, which takes place at a critical juncture, will also decide on issues that will be crucial for statistics development not only in the region, but also globally.

I wish you all the success.

Closing remarks by Anis Chowdhury, Director ESCAP-Statistics Division

As we come to the closing of a very successful 4th Session of the Committee on Statistics, I would like to congratulate you on your achievements. In particular, I congratulate the Bureau Members for their election and look forward to working together during this exciting time for Statistics development.

The Committee reaffirmed its two strategic goals which remain highly relevant and considered 19 proposals in the context of emerging post-2015 sustainable development agenda. Among other things, the Committee has also endorsed a core set of gender statistics, endorsed a regional strategy for population and social statistics, strengthened the regional programme for economic statistics, and provided crucial guidance in other areas including modernization, CRVS, environment statistics, and statistical training.

Your dedication and commitments to the development of statistics for the betterment of the people in our region are highly commendable. You have truly risen to the occasion, and as a result we are better prepared to tackle the challenges ahead by strengthening cooperation for norm setting, implementing various regional programmes and capacity building.

It is heartening to see durable commitments of partners for statistics development in the region; and I particularly thank ADB, ILO, UN-Women and UNDP for organizing very interesting side-events, and FAO for co-hosting the cocktail reception for the delegations.

My special thanks to the Vice-Minister of ICT of the Royal Thai Government for gracing the opening of this session. My sincere gratitude to my close colleague Stefan Schweinfest, Director of UNSD for his continued support.

I would also like to recognize the Chair, Ms Aishath Shahuda, for efficiently guiding the Session and the rapporteur, Ms Teresa Dickinson, for guiding the preparation of the Report of this Session and its adoption.

My heart-felt appreciations are for my wonderful and energetic team at the Statistics Division. They have all worked tirelessly over the past few months to ensure that the 4th Session of the Committee achieved all of its objectives, and they have provided all the necessary support to the Committee and its various working, steering and advisory groups to make this week possible.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the contributions of all who remain generally invisible. They include the fine people in the Conference services unit – editors, interpreters, translators – and in the facilities management unit. Without their hard work we could not run this meeting so smoothly and make your presence here comfortable and welcoming. A Big thanks to all of them.

I hope you had a pleasant stay in Bangkok and had an opportunity to see some beautiful places, despite your engagement in the Session. I wish you all a safe journey home.