

**Governing Council of SIAP held in Phuket, Thailand
16-17 November 2009.**

Fifth Session of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) was held from 16 to 17 November in Phuket, Thailand. The Thai National Statistical Office hosted the session, which was attended by all Governing Council Members, including SIAP's host country Japan, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Pakistan, Republic of Korea and Thailand including representatives of ESCAP. Seven representatives of Governments that are not members of the Council and five observers from United Nations entities and international bodies also attended the meeting. Director of SIAP served as Secretary of the Council.

Noeleen Heyzer, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP, recognized in her opening statement the important role that SIAP plays in Asia and the Pacific by providing training in practical skills and contributing to national statistical capacity building in the region. In her remarks, delivered by Haishan Fu, Director of ESCAP's Statistics Division Dr. Heyzer also urged the Governing Council to assist SIAP to become an even stronger and more effective organization by advising the Institute on its strategic direction, programme structure, resource mobilization and management. She asked the Governing Council Members to review and comment on the Institute's long-term work plan, including efforts by SIAP to shift towards a "core skills framework" for structuring its training programme.

The Governing Council Members endorsed in principle the long-term plan of the Institute for the academic years 2010 to 2014. The long-term plan was developed on the basis of the strategic plan endorsed by the Governing Council last year during its fourth session. The long-term plan will permit SIAP to become a stronger and more effective organization which in turn will lead to stronger national statistical capacity and improved official statistics in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Governing Council Members also supported SIAP's efforts to extend its distance training and e-learning courses by taking advantage of advanced communication technology, and stressed the importance of placing more emphasis on the training of trainers to support national statistical offices in building sustainable capacity.

Finally, the Governing Council Members stressed the need for continuing support of the Institute by the Member States and in particular during 2010, which marks the Institute's 40th anniversary.