

**Congratulatory Message by Mr. Kazuhiro Haraguchi,
Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications
40th Anniversary Ceremony of the
Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific**

Dr. Paul Cheung, Director of the United Nations Statistics Division,
Dr. Davaasuren Chultemjamts , Director of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific,
Dr. Adelheid Burgi-Schmelz, Director of the Statistics Department of the International
Monetary Fund,
Ladies and gentlemen:

The United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) was established in 1970 in Tokyo for the purpose of training official statisticians. As the Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications of the host country, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to SIAP on its 40th anniversary.

Since its foundation, SIAP has provided training to approximately 12,000 government statisticians from 124 countries and has made a very significant contribution to developing statistical capacity primarily in the countries of the ESCAP region. Its achievements are highly appreciated by the entire international society as well as the countries of the region. For the government of Japan, this has been a source of great pleasure.

SIAP's history of excellence is a reflection of the outstanding leadership of Director Davaasuren Chultemjamts and her distinguished predecessors. This success also owes much to the untiring efforts of SIAP lecturers and staff members, as well as to the unfailing support and cooperation of ESCAP, its members and associate members, and other related organizations. I take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude for their efforts.

My home province of Saga Prefecture in Kyushu area is the birthplace of Shigenobu Okuma, one of the great statesmen in the building of modern Japan. Marquess Okuma served as the first Director-General of Government Department of Statistics (about 130 years ago). In his "Purpose of the Establishment of the Department of Statistics" written in 1881, Marquess Okuma makes the following statement. "The government cannot properly perform its public policies if it does not make clear the current state of the nation. Furthermore, the government cannot judge the proprieties of its policies unless it can compare the outcome of its policies with those implemented in the past." This is an essential insight, which remains important to this day in the conduct of government administration.

In Japan, we enacted the new Statistics Act in 2009 to promote the systematic development of governmental statistics. One of the important features of the new Statistics Act is that it explicitly states that official statistics provide “critical information that serves as the infrastructure in order to carry out national decision-making.” In the international society, the United Nations General Assembly has resolved for the first time to make October 20 World Statistics Day under the theme of “service, integrity and professionalism.” We believe that this closely parallels the direction that we have set for ourselves in Japan. Statisticians and government officials have congregated here today from throughout the world. I wish to take this opportunity to appeal to everyone for their support in the realization of “official statistics for the people” through international cooperative framework.

We would be very happy to see SIAP take advantage of its location in Japan and continue to make good use of the experiences of the reforms that are being made in our official statistics system and our various statistics related activities.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications is well aware of the importance of the functions performed by SIAP, and we are fully informed of the appreciation that the United Nations Statistical Commission and other related organizations have for SIAP. We sincerely look forward to the continued development of SIAP. As the host country, it is our earnest intention to enlist the cooperation of various organizations in Japan and to actively support the operation of this unique institute in the world. I would also like to take this opportunity to appeal to all countries for their understanding, strong supports and cooperation with SIAP.

In closing, I wish you all the greatest success in your future activities.

Thank you.