

STATISTICAL INSTITUTE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Ninth Management Seminar for the Heads of  
National Statistical Offices in Asia and the Pacific  
31 August – 2 September 2010, Tokyo, Japan

**"Developing Professional Capability for National Statistical Systems"**

Opening address of Ms. Davaasuren Chultemjamts,  
Director, Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP)

**Mr. Hiroshi Ikegawa**, Director-General for Policy Planning (Statistical Standards),

Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Government of Japan,

**Mr. Paul Cheung**, Director, United Nations Statistics Division,

**Ms. Adelheid Burgi-Schmelz**, Director, Statistics Department, International

Monetary Fund,

**Ms. He Qi**, Assistant Director, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, International

Monetary Fund,

Friends, Colleagues and Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Afternoon,

It is my great pleasure to extend my warmest welcome you all to the Ninth Management Seminar for Heads of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) in Asia and the Pacific. This three days seminar from 31 August to 2 September 2010 is organized by the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific in collaboration with the Statistics Division of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific , United Nations Statistics Division, the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific of the International Monetary Fund and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications of Government of Japan.

As you are already aware, this seminar is organized as part of SIAP's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. We consider your presence today a privilege to mark the event since being with friends from different parts of the world is the most honorable way to celebrate a great event such as this. On 20 October, we will also celebrate the World Statistics day for the first time in the history. I hope that the same spirit will be with us in identifying ourselves as official statisticians who can be proud of being true partners of world development.

This seminar is the ninth in the series of management seminars that SIAP and the Statistics Division of ESCAP launched in 2003 to strengthen leadership and management capabilities of the head of national statistical offices in Asia and the Pacific. The theme of this seminar is "Developing Professional Capability for National Statistical Systems". We eagerly look forward to your thoughtful contributions during the deliberations on key issues of managing national statistical development efficiently, particularly on issues of giving priority to strengthening professional capability in official statistics.

I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to all for accepting our invitation and coming to Tokyo, some of you traveling a long distance. You have preferred to join the seminar, despite your schedules that I know must be most demanding now, as many of you are either preparing for, or conducting, or have just completed the 2010 round Population and Housing Census. Thus, to us, your presence here is a clear manifestation of your personal dedication as well as your governments support to development of national statistical system and its professional capability.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Rapid changes in world economy and advancing information and communications technology have made NSOs liable to produce high quality and

timely statistics for their users. The challenges facing the NSOs are to provide data right away, to do more with less, to manage their increasing workload and to take responsibility for what is happening today as well as what is in store for the future. We have just seen the devastation caused by the unfortunate catastrophe that struck Pakistan recently. While we all join extending our heartfelt sympathies and support to Pakistan, we should ponder as statisticians how well we have been able to reinforce the information network in the country to face the challenges in assessing the extent and nature of the devastation and loss of human lives, and at the same time in supporting the rebuilding and reconstruction efforts and programmes of the country by many national and international stakeholders.

NSOs must invest resources to ensure that their staff have sufficient knowledge, skills, and competencies they need in order to respond effectively to such demands. Hence, heads of NSOs need to understand the changing environment and priorities of their organizations, be able to look beyond “now” and take more active leadership in paving the way to the future development of official statistics.

We are very pleased and proud to have Ms. Adelheid Burgi-Schmelz, Director of the Statistics Department of IMF, who has graciously accepted our invitation to be the keynote speaker. SIAP has been receiving support from IMF in organizing TMA-based courses as well as outreach training programme, in particular in integrated economic statistics, including 2008 SNA, and the workshop on statistical quality management and fundamental principles of official statistics for deputy heads and middle level managers of NSOs. I think the progress made in introducing international standards is indeed remarkable. We look forward to working hand-in-hand with IMF and other international agencies in furthering the adoption of international standards and implementation of strategies in the future.

We are honored to have three distinguished guests as panelists: Ms. Wan Ramlah Wan Abd Raof, Chief Statistician, Department of Statistics, Malaysia;

Mr. Geoff Bascand, Government Statistician and Chief Executive, Statistics New Zealand and Mr. Shigeru Kawasaki, Director-General, Statistics Bureau of Japan.

I have no doubt that Adelheid and three panelists together with Mr. Russman Heriewan, Director General, BPS-Statistics Indonesia will bring all the dynamism and energy to the seminar and discuss ways of promoting statistical capability in Asia and the Pacific.

We look forward to the country experiences, in particular, Australia; Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, New Zealand, Philippines, and Singapore.

We are very fortunate to have Ms. Nancy McBeth, former General Manager of Statistics New Zealand as a Consultant. We have another consultant, Mr. John Cornish, former Deputy Government Statistician of New Zealand and senior executive for many years of Australian Bureau of Statistics. These two people, who carry with them extensive experience on the subject of the seminar, will provide direction to a structured discussion, John will direct from Australia, and Nancy will be with us, make presentations and facilitate the seminar.

Dear participants,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Hiroshi Ikegawa, Director-General for Policy Planning (Statistical Standards), Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Government of Japan, Ms. Haishan Fu, Chief of the Statistics Division of ESCAP, Ms. He Qi, Assistant Director of the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific of IMF; and Mr. Paul Cheung, Director of UNSD for their strong and generous support towards the joint organization of the seminar in Tokyo. My special thanks also go to Ms. Adelheid Burgi-Schmelz, Director of the Statistics Department

of IMF, Ms Wan Ramlah Wan Abd Raof, Chief Statistician, Department of Statistics, Malaysia;

Mr. Geoff Bascand, Government Statistician and Chief Executive, Statistics New Zealand and Mr. Shigeru Kawasaki, Director-General, Statistics Bureau of Japan for accepting our invitation and being with us for this seminar.

I sincerely appreciate the presence of our friends from several international organizations, namely ADB, PARIS 21, SESRIC, and SPC. We are also grateful to have with us Ms. Margarita Guerro, regional advisor of the SD-ESCAP and former lecturer of SIAP.

I should thank all the participants for their contribution of country papers, their presence, and most of all, for their readiness to participate in the deliberations. I am sure that experience of all countries on the topic will find place in the deliberations and group works.

I hope that the seminar would contribute in shaping up and making our vision more clear and concrete in creating strong statistical basis that would lay foundation for inclusive and sustainable development in each of our countries. I wish the seminar a great success and, to you all, a pleasant time and stay in Tokyo, with its wonderful people and rich culture.

I thank you for your attention!