

**International Workshop on
From Data to Accounts: Measuring Production in National Accounting
8-10 June 2009, Beijing, China**

Opening Statement
Paul Cheung, Director
United Nations Statistics Division

Commissioner Ma Jian Tang

Thank you very much for your kind words and recognition. It is a great honour for me to be appointed the Senior Advisor on Statistics by the National Bureau of Statistics. I look forward to working with the National Bureau of Statistics to further strengthen the national statistical system of China which has seen tremendous improvements over the years. The successful conduct of the economic, agricultural, and population censuses; the development of a respected statistical organization with a group of dedicated professional staff, and the aspiration for the highest professional standard in your work are excellent examples of your recent achievements. On the strength of a strong Chinese national statistical system, and together with other partners and national statistical systems, I hope to work with you to build a dynamic and effective global statistical system.

Commissioner Ma, Colleagues

I would like to add my welcome to all of you to the International Workshop on From Data to Accounts: Measuring Production in National Accounting. This workshop is the first of a series of events under the project on strengthening statistical capacity development in China and other developing countries in Asia, funded by the Chinese Government. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Chinese Government for its support to the advancement of global statistical system and the National Bureau of Statistics for hosting this event. I am particularly grateful to the NBS staff for their hard work in preparing for the workshop.

The promotion of international statistical standards and, specifically, work on national accounts has always been high on the agenda of the Statistical Commission and UNSD. It gives particular significance to this workshop that it is conducted after the official endorsement by the Commission of a number of such standards related to the compilation of national accounts and particularly to the compilation of GDP by the production approach.

During two subsequent sessions – the thirty-ninth session in February 2008 and the fortieth session in February 2009, the Commission considered and approved in principle Volume 1 and Volume 2 of the updated *System of National Accounts 2008* (2008 SNA). This was the third major update of the national accounts methodology since its first release in 1952. For practical reasons, for the first time 2008 SNA has been produced in two separate volumes. Volume 1 contains details about the broad framework covering the concepts, accounting rules, the accounts and tables, and their integration. Volume 2 elaborates various aspects of the accounts, provides details about their presentation and describes some possible extensions to improve the usefulness of the accounts for a wide range of purposes. Pre-edited white cover versions of Volume 1 and Volume 2 have been released by UNSD in print and online.

During its thirty-ninth session in February 2008 the Commission also adopted the *International Recommendations for Industrial Statistics 2008* (IRIS 2008) and the *International Recommendations for Distributive Trade Statistics 2008* (IRDTS 2008) as the new international standards for industrial and distributive trade statistics respectively. The preparation of these recommendations has been part of efforts by the Statistics Division to strengthen countries' methodological and operational foundations for basic economic statistics in an integrated manner, including enhancement of their coherence across different sectors of an economy and conceptual consistency with respect to macroeconomic statistics. Unlike their previous versions, IRIS 2008 and IRDTS 2008 are mutually consistent and fully harmonized with 2008 SNA. I would like also to refer to the most recent revisions of the *International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) Rev.4* and the *Central Product Classification (CPC) Ver.2* and

changes in definitions of units and treatment of goods sent abroad for processing introduced by them.

It is my belief that this workshop provides a good opportunity to present the requirements of these updated statistical standards and that our future work on national accounts will be guided by the need for implementing them and improving the consistency across countries so that the international comparability of GDP estimates is ensured and fostered.

Our objective for the workshop is through a comprehensive training on concepts and compilation methods and exchange of experience to enhance the capacity of National Statistical Offices of Asian countries to produce reliable and high quality national accounts estimates from appropriate basic economic data sources. Due to the fundamental importance of the activity of production in the System of National Accounts, priority is given to the production approach for GDP compilation. The workshop will give a thorough overview on the compilation of value added by industry and address the data and measurement issues of the agricultural, manufacturing and services sectors. Since many economic activities in Asian countries are still carried out in the informal sector, a special attention will be devoted to the conceptual framework and data collection for value added measurement of the informal sector.

I hope this workshop will further improve and ensure the harmonization of national accounts compilation in Asia, thus contributing to the production of consistent and comparable data. I wish you a successful and fruitful workshop and a pleasant stay in Beijing.

Thank you.