



UNITED NATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
STATISTICS DIVISION

**Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics
4-6 October 2011, New York**

Opening Statement

Paul Cheung, Director
United Nations Statistics Division

Dear Colleagues,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to this fifth meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics. I am very glad to see so many colleagues from the wide range of national and international institutions represented in this inter-agency group.

This group was created in 2006 and has, since then, helped foster the development of gender statistics around the world, by promoting training activities, data compilation and dissemination and exchange of experiences and best practices, and by improving international coordination and a dialogue with countries in all activities related to gender statistics.

Since then, we have organized 5 meetings of the Inter-agency and Expert Group and 3 Global Forum on Gender Statistics, where we had the opportunities to share experiences, review methodological developments and effectively coordinate our work. We have also engaged in a number of initiatives and programmes to foster the production of gender statistics and improve their use in policy making and monitoring:

- Last year, we launched *The World's Women: Trends and Statistics*, an example of how gender statistics can be made widely available and help advance gender equality worldwide;
- We have produced methodological materials and manuals, including the recently developed guidelines on the measurement of violence against women;
- We have organized training workshops at the regional and sub-regional levels and provided technical assistance to countries;
- And we have undertaken international data compilation on user-friendly database for wide dissemination, most recently with GenderInfo, of which we produced two versions, in 2008 and 2010.

This year, the United Nations Statistical Commission has given this group an even stronger mandate. In its deliberations, the commission acknowledged the strategic role of the IAEG and requested that the scope of its work be expanded. In particular, our work will have to focus on establishing a minimum set of gender indicators, guiding the development of manuals and methodological guidelines for the production and use of gender statistics, and serving as the coordination mechanism for the global programme on gender statistics.

Based on the request of the commission, in collaboration with the regional commissions, we have also initiated work to review gender statistics programmes around the world. This will provide us with the necessary assessment of what elements are critical for a successful integration of gender into statistical production. This will allow us to formulate guidelines and provide examples of best practices enabling countries to continue to improve their national statistical systems' capacity to fully reflect the realities of women and men's lives.

This meeting is an important opportunity to review the work done so far and define our common programme of work moving forward, to ensure that the priority actions highlighted by the statistical commission are adequately implemented. This will require our continuous commitment to devoting the necessary attention and resources to this fundamental area of statistical work.

The commission explicitly requested that our Division strengthened its leadership role in charting the path for the development of gender statistics globally. In this context, we remain firmly committed to bringing this programme forward and ready to facilitate the international agreement on the necessary standards and guidelines for gender statistics, through our continuous dialogue with national statistical offices.

Member states have also requested that we collectively work to develop appropriate in-country support to assist countries in establishing a sound national programme on gender statistics. It will be our joint responsibility to ensure that the

necessary mechanisms are in place to provide the technical support to national government agencies for a full integration of a gender perspective into national statistical systems.

Gender equality and women's empowerment continue to be global policy concerns. Development can be greatly facilitated by empowering women and girls and eliminating gender inequalities in education, access to economic opportunities and in political decision making. All statistical information should fully reflect gender-based differences and address issues related to women and men's roles in society. Also, specific data collection instruments will need to be developed or strengthened to fill in the data gaps.

We look forward to collaborating with all of you from both national and international organizations in these efforts.

I wish you a successful meeting.