



UNITED NATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
STATISTICS DIVISION

**Advisory Committee Meeting
of the China International Statistical Training Centre
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Opening Statement

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Commissioner Ma Jian Tang,
Distinguished Guests and Colleagues,

I would like to add my warm welcome to all of you to the First Advisory Committee Meeting of the China International Statistical Training Centre in collaboration with UN Statistics Division. Let me first express my gratitude to the Government of the People's Republic of China and, in particular, to the National Bureau of Statistics of China, for their continuous support to building a strong global statistical system through capacity development efforts.

We have witnessed in the past decade a trend towards the globalization of economic and social activities. Associated with this process is the growing global demand for official statistics at national, regional, and global level. The continuing global financial crisis, the call for a new green economy and food security, the renewed emphasis on new measures of social progress, and the new thrust on the use of geospatial information have now emerged as new major challenges on the global agenda. The global statistical system has to respond to this call for new data and new methodology. At the same time, 'old' topics still remain relevant as a key topic among them is of course the Millennium Development Goals. We all know that the high-quality official statistics to support the well-informed policy decisions are not readily available in the developing countries. The outcome document adopted by the 2010 High-level Plenary Meeting on MDGs, held exactly a year ago, explicitly makes a reference to two main inputs on the road to production of better data: national statistical capacity building and the importance of partnership.

The initiative of this China International Training Centre is indeed timely, as it meets an important and urgent need of the global statistical community: the need for more advanced training in statistical methodology and best practices in statistical applications. In providing technical support and statistical training to countries around the world, this new training centre can play a crucial role in statistical capacity building. More importantly, China International Training Centre represents also a new level of

partnership that is becoming increasingly important in today's global world. It is a strong partnership on all levels - national, regional and global, through which the best outcome can be achieved.

As many of you know, as part of the 5-year Trust Fund Project funded by the Chinese Government which aims at strengthening the statistical capacity in China and other developing countries in Asia, the NBS has organized in the past two and a half years a series of 7 training seminars to gain the necessary experience in conducting international training courses. These training activities were organized in collaboration with UNSD. The feedback from these training seminars has been extremely positive. They created forums for more than 460 professionals from 25 national statistical authorities, as well as for representatives from international organizations to exchange best practices in the different areas of official statistics.

Looking ahead, a lot more work needs to be done in order to transform the training centre into a leading body for statistical knowledge transfer and development. We need the advice of the leaders in official statistics. We hope with the launch of this Advisory Committee, the center could benefit from a continuing flow of sound advice and guidance. We also hope the international organizations could take advantage of this initiative and use this center as a platform to further the statistical capacity in the areas of statistics under their mandate.

I would like to reaffirm that the United Nations Statistics Division will be fully committed to do its utmost to support the functioning of the centre, as part of our mandate to build a strong statistical system. We will provide technical advisory services; consultancies and guidance as needed; mobilize international support and experts; disseminate the results of the joint activities through publications, information and Internet networking in the context of the global statistics system.

At the same time, UNSD will continue to work with other training centers around the world so that we can build a network of such centers with the shared objective of enhancing the global statistical system. The experience of China will be extremely valuable for other interested countries.

In conclusion, I hope that the Advisory Committee will offer its advice in today's meeting on programming and operational issues and put forward suggestions to guide the Centre's programme implementation. I hope that at the level of the international and regional organizations, as well as of the development partners, strong support could be given to this body so that it can fulfill its potentials.

Thank you.