



UNITED NATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
STATISTICS DIVISION

**International Forum on Monitoring National Development: Issues and Challenges
27-29 September 2011, Beijing, People's Republic of China**

Opening Statement

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Commissioner Ma Jiantang, National Bureau of Statistics, China
Distinguished Colleagues from National Statistics Offices and International Agencies,

Good morning.

It gives me great pleasure on behalf of the United Nations to welcome you to this important meeting: the International Forum on Monitoring National Development: Issues and Challenges.

I am particularly pleased that the Forum has been organized in conjunction with our colleagues from the National Bureau of Statistics of China and the World Bank. I would like to thank, Commissioner Ma for the support that the NBS has given to the United Nations Statistics Division, and to statistics development more generally, particularly here in the Asia region. I would also like to thank Shaida Badiie and her colleagues at the World Bank for the long-standing support that the Bank has given to statistical capacity building world-wide.

This is the eighth workshop or seminar that has been organized as a joint collaboration between NBS, China and the United Nations Statistics Division under a project, funded by the Chinese Government, on strengthening statistical capacity development in China and other developing countries in Asia. Other events have focused on statistical standards and classifications, national accounts issues, regional statistics, industrial statistics, social statistics and a Special Observance Ceremony at the United Nations Pavilion at the World EXPO in Shanghai 2010 to celebrate World Statistics Day on 20-10-2010.

National development, encompassing the three dimensions of the economy, the social circumstances of countries, and the environment, continues to be the focus of policy concern at both the international and the national levels. Monitoring these key dimensions is part of our core deliverables as official statisticians. The organization of this Forum is influenced by the following developments.

On 24 December 2009, the UN General Assembly adopted a Resolution agreeing to hold the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012

– also referred to as ‘Rio+20’ or ‘Rio 20’.The Conference seeks three objectives: securing renewed political commitment to sustainable development; assessing the progress and implementation gaps in meeting already agreed commitments; and addressing new and emerging challenges. The Member States have agreed on the following two themes for the Conference: a green economy within the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and an institutional framework for sustainable development. As official statisticians, we need to take on board these issues and examine our efforts in providing the monitoring platform.

Many of you are aware that the Millennium Development Goals have a set of time-bound targets. Urgent considerations are being given at the international and national levels to the MDG development agenda and their measurement, especially with respect to we are successful in implementing the MDGs. There is also interest to know what would replace the MDGs in the post-2015 period, that is, beyond the current time frame of the Millennium Declaration.

Policy concerns at the international level have been paralleled with developments at the country level. Many of you are deeply involved in tracking national development and reporting back to your government on the progress. There is a need to share your notes on how best to monitoring the many facets of the society.

It is in this context that the Forum will discuss priority issues in official statistics in monitoring national development and an action plan for the global statistical community. It will also identify training needs for capacity development. We envisage the following outcomes from the Forum:

- A framework or template for tracking socioeconomic development with a focus on changing economic structure, employment and education.
- A programme of work for capacity development on economic, social, and environment statistics.
- An initial consideration and endorsement of a Plan of Action on Statistics highlighting the important areas of statistics that the development community should focus on in the next 10 years. This

Plan will be submitted to the Ministerial Aid-Effectiveness Conference to be held in late November 2011 in Busan, Republic of Korea.

The Forum also provides a wonderful opportunity for the National Bureau of Statistics to formally launch the China International Statistical Training Centre, a very important initiative to further statistical capacity building here in China and globally. The United Nations Statistics Division very much welcomes this initiative; I will have more to say on this matter during the launch on Thursday morning.

Clearly the topic of statistics to support national development is seen by you as being of critical importance. We have many heads of national statistics offices in attendance, as well as other very senior officials from NSOs. Our list of speakers and panellists is very impressive and I am sure that they will set the scene for some lively discussions. I take this opportunity to thank all of the speakers for your strong commitment to the success of this Forum.

Distinguished colleagues,

Once again, welcome to this Forum. I hope you will find the discussions to be relevant to your circumstances and I look forward to your active participation in the Forum. And let me thank once again our hosts, NBS China, for your sponsorship of the Forum.

Thank you very much.