

Preface

Producing statistics on the information society is becoming an important component of the work programme of national statistical organizations. The demand for ICT statistics has increased tremendously as countries seek to design, monitor and review national policies and strategies to take advantage of the rapid advances in information technology. In addition, business communities require information about access to, and use of, ICTs by various consumer groups, as well as information about the impact of ICTs. This is particularly important for the developing countries, many of which are just starting their statistical work on the information society. At the international level, comparable ICT indicators are critical to cross-country comparisons of ICT development and to monitoring the global digital divide.

The global Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development (see <http://measuring-ict.unctad.org>), of which the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) is a member, has been active in promoting the measurement of the information society at the international level. One of the key achievements of the Partnership is the development of a core list of ICT indicators, which was endorsed by the United Nations Statistical Commission at its 38th session in March 2007. The Commission encouraged countries to use that list in their data collection programme.

Within the United Nations system, UNCTAD has actively promoted the production of internationally comparable ICT statistics as part of its work programme on ICT and the information economy. Indeed, it was instrumental in initiating the Partnership. A key component of UNCTAD's work is the provision of technical assistance to developing countries wishing to produce statistics on ICT use in business and on the ICT-producing sector. This *Manual for the Production of Statistics on the Information Economy* was prepared by UNCTAD to guide statisticians from developing countries in all steps involved in the production and dissemination of business ICT statistics. The Manual is thus a practical tool for staff of national statistical organizations responsible for measuring the information economy. It is a valuable contribution by UNCTAD to the Partnership in its efforts to promote the measurement of the information society.



Paul Cheung

Director

United Nations Statistical Division