

Regional Workshop for the CIS countries and Georgia  
Developing National Systems of Tourism Statistics: Challenges and Good Practices  
29 June – 2 July 2010, Chisinau, Moldova

## **Opening statement**

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Dear Colleagues,

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to the regional workshop on tourism statistics: “Developing National Systems of Tourism Statistics: Challenges and Good Practices”. The workshop is organized by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) jointly with World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and hosted by the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova. Both the UNWTO and UNSD see the workshop as an important part of their efforts to assist countries in the implementation of the *International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics 2008* (IRTS 2008), which were adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission at its 39<sup>th</sup> session in February 2008. The workshop will also help countries to exchange experience and identify good practices in building reliable tourism statistics.

People’s desire to visit places beyond their usual environment, be it in their own country or in foreign lands, results in travel and in the increased demand for goods and services thus generating additional employment and income. The fast growth in the domestic and international travel in the last decades made tourism industries the key contributors to the national income and employment in many countries. Nowadays, more than 700 million tourists visit foreign destinations and this number is expected to increase substantially in future. For many countries, tourism is one of the key components of their GNI – which was achieved after a lot of investment in the tourism industry: building infrastructures and providing services for foreign tourists as well as domestic tourists. It is understandable, therefore, that countries have a keen interest in better measuring tourism related activities. At the same time, tourism may have some adverse environmental and social consequences. Also, a heavy reliance on tourism may make a country’s economy more vulnerable during the difficult economic times as we are experiencing it now.

In this context the availability of high quality tourism statistics is very important for an effective fact based policy making. The task of providing the policy makers and society at large with the necessary and reliable information squarely falls on the compilers of tourism statistics both in national statistical offices and in national tourism administrations. This makes the strengthening of a strategic alliance between these institutions as well as between them and the central banks a crucial precondition for the success of national tourism statistics programmes. I sincerely hope that this workshop will contribute to the sense of importance and urgency of making more progress in this direction.

Alongside with IRTS 2008 the Commission adopted an updated version of “Tourism Satellite Account: Recommended Methodological Framework” which provides recommendations for compilation of data on all the aspects of the supply and demand for goods and services which might be associated with tourism within an economy. One of the objectives of the workshop is to discuss good practices in linking the compilation of basic tourism statistics with the compilation of tourism satellite account and their applicability in the region

IRTS 2008 was drafted by UNWTO in close collaboration with UNSD, ILO and other members of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Tourism Statistics, provide a comprehensive methodological framework for collection and compilation of tourism statistics. The manual, containing 9 chapters, covers all the aspects of tourism statistics for the aim of helping countries to implement or to develop their statistical system. The workshop will be useful not just for country participants but it will be a valuable experience for the UNWTO and UNSD as these organizations will further develop their technical assistance programmes in tourism statistics in years to come.

In conclusion, I would like to wish you fruitful deliberations and to express my appreciation of your professional contribution to this important meeting.