First SDGs Data Innovation Forum
Statistical Research Institute of Statistics Korea
25 May 2022

Dear Commissioner Mr. Ryu,

Dear Director-General Mr. Chun,

Dear colleagues,

I am very pleased and honored to say a few words at the occasion of the first Sustainable Development Goals Data Innovation Forum, organized by the Statistical Research Institute of Statistics Korea.

My office, the United Nations Statistics Division, is responsible for the maintenance and dissemination of the Global Database on the Sustainable Development Goals Indicators. We have invested a lot of effort to make sure that this SDG database serves the purposes of many users. Last year we launched a new version of the SDG Global Database, which provides information on more than 210 indicators. It also provides SDG profiles for 132 countries (including the SDG profile of the Republic of Korea) and it gives users the option to do their own online comparative trend analyses on SDG indicators and countries of their choice.

I read with great pleasure that Statistics Korea established the Data Center for SDGs at the Statistical Research Institute in February 2020 with the aim of serving as a SDGs data hub in Korea. Your Data Center for SDGs has the important task to meet a wide range of statistical demands at home and abroad, and strengthen the oversight and coordination of domestic SDG indicators. I am very grateful for the efforts of your center to monitor the Korean data that go into the United Nations SDG databases and to publish your SDG progress reports in English for users abroad.

The topic of the forum today is SDG Data Innovation. It is very encouraging that your Data Center for SDGs is also trying to increase the availability and detail of SDG indicators through innovative methodological improvements beyond traditional survey methods, and through the
use of big data, linkage of multi-source data, and improvement of estimation methods. This is very much in line with what we are doing at the UN Statistics Division here in New York.

In 2018, I established a Data Innovation team in my office, which supports the UN Committee of Experts for Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics. One of the main objectives of this committee is to find new solutions for the use of big data and other non-tradition data to improve the availability, timeliness and detail of the SDG indicators. So, I hope that your Data Center will collaborate with the UN Committee on these innovative solutions.

Innovation is not just about technology. Innovation is also about finding new ways of working together. Partnerships with other government agencies, with private sector and with the research community are crucial for achieving new solutions on producing more and better SDG indicators. The K-Statistics system, which was recently initiated by Statistics Korea, has at its core the sharing of all available data and meta data across government as well as with private sector institutions. The innovation of the K-Statistics system is both the new way in which Statistics Korea engages with the broader data community as well as the use of advanced privacy preserving techniques.

At the UN Statistical Commission, the statistical community has embraced the expanding role of official statistics within the new data eco-system in society. This means that we innovate by working with more partners in our societies and by using more data sources, new methods and new technologies.

In closing, I congratulate the Statistical Research Institute and its Data Center for SDGs with the achievements already made regarding the establishment of the Korean SDG data hub and the just released 2022 progress report on the SDGs. I also wish you all the best for this first SDGs Data Innovation Forum, which will help in innovating our delivery of the SDG indicators, and which will ultimately help policy makers and society in making better decisions towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Thank you.