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**ELEVENTH MEETING OF THE ADVISORY EXPERT GROUP
ON NATIONAL ACCOUNTS**

New York, 5-7 December 2017

Introductory Remarks

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Director

United Nations Statistics Division

Dear Colleagues,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to the United Nations Headquarters for the Eleventh Meeting of the Advisory Expert Group (AEG) on National Accounts. In particular, I would like to welcome the new members of the AEG who are participating for the first time in the AEG meeting: Erich Strassner from the US Bureau of Economic Analysis, Sanjiv Mahajan from the UK Office for National Statistics, Tjeerd Jellema from the European Central Bank. Another new member is Naoki Takayama from the Economic and Social Research Institute in Japan who unfortunately could not join us for this meeting.

Dear Colleagues,

You have joined a very special group of experts and we count on your active participation and involvement in advancing issues relevant to the System of National Accounts (SNA).

At the upcoming session of the United Nations Statistical Commission in March 2018, it will be 10 years since the adoption of the 2008 SNA. This calls for celebration but, also reflection on the progress with the implementation of the 2008 SNA at the country level and whether the 2008 SNA remains relevant for measuring new developments in the economy as well as the new socio-economic phenomena relevant for the policy framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The AEG has been, and continues to be, an important body of experts in the overall development and implementation of the SNA. It was initially formed in 2002 to assist the ISWGNA with the update of the 1993 SNA and by design, the composition of the AEG reflects the global community of internationally-recognized national accounts experts. Following the

publication of the 2008 SNA, the Commission supported the active involvement of the AEG to assist the ISWGNA in developing the elements of the implementation programme of the 2008 SNA and in taking forward issues in the research agenda of the 2008 SNA and newly emerging research issues.

As we will be celebrating 10 years of the 2008 SNA we need to take stock of the scope, detail and quality of the implementation of the SNA by countries. Although there was a marked improvement in the implementation of the SNA over the past 10 years there are too many countries that still need to improve their regular reporting of national accounts data in a timely manner. In addition, more than a quarter of United Nations Member States are not able to compile the Minimum Required Data set by the Commission as the lowest benchmark for implementing the SNA. We should use this celebration to promote the implementation of the 2008 SNA by all Member States and hold ourselves accountable so that no country is left behind. For this purpose, we may need to take a critical look at the SNA implementation programme adopted by the Commission in 2010 and where relevant adjust it.

Since 2012, the AEG has met almost yearly and has discussed and resolved numerous implementation issues. The discussions that took place at the AEG contributed substantially to the implementation of the 2008 SNA by clarifying and resolving practical issues with implementing the recommendations of the 2008 SNA. However, as we are confronted with an ever-increasing world of globalization and digitalization of the economy, some issues have emerged that go beyond the recommendations of the 2008 SNA. These issues reflect the fast transformation of many economies around the world in the past 10 years and certainly encourage all us to reflect on how to maintain the SNA framework to be relevant to account for these issues.

The agenda of this meeting of the AEG reflects very closely these new topics and will likely dominate discussions in the next few years. It is therefore important to express your expert opinions on these issues and come up with recommendations to facilitate the implementation of the 2008 SNA and to provide guidance on how best to address the issues that go beyond the 2008 SNA.

It is inevitable that the SNA will need to be updated at some point in the future to ensure its relevance. It is therefore important to advance the research agenda of the 2008 SNA based on a broad consultation of key stakeholders such as statisticians, policy makers, academia; statistical groupings, data users and accounting standard boards.

You have an intensive programme over the next three days to discuss the many stimulating and challenging issues. We need your expert knowledge and experience in advancing the SNA research agenda. Foremost, in advancing the implementation of the 2008 SNA and leaving no country behind. Secondly, in setting priorities in advancing the research agenda on issues beyond the 2008 SNA. I am keen to learn about your views, priorities and recommendations to the ISWGNA for reporting to the upcoming Statistical Commission.

I wish everyone a successful meeting and a pleasant stay in New York.

Thank you.