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**GREEN DEVELOPMENT STATISTICS FORUM**

Guiyang, China on 7 July 2018

Stefan Schweinfest  
Director  
United Nations Statistics Division

Dear participants, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to address you at this Green Development Statistics Forum. At the beginning of this important event, I would like to share with you some thoughts on developing national statistics for ecological civilization from my perspective as the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD).

The theme of the Forum “Serving Ecological Civilization, Innovation Green Development Statistics” is of high interest for my organization, as my Division is currently working on various initiatives to develop an integrated information system for the sustainable development agenda. I strongly believe that a strengthened statistical framework to measure the linkage and interdependence between nature, economy and society can play an important role in achieving the global agenda to end poverty, protect the planet, ensure prosperity for all and place all countries on the path towards sustainable development by 2030.

I am glad that China is attaching great importance to the development of innovative statistics for mainstreaming ecosystems in decision making. I would like to draw your attention to the work that the international statistical community has done in this regard: The development of the System of Environmental Ecosystem Accounting (SEEA) and the adoption of the SEEA Central Framework in 2012 as a statistical standard by the UN Statistical Commission marked a milestone. It brought environmental data and information into the realm of official statistics at the par with economic statistics allowing to go beyond GDP. Ecosystem Accounting builds on the Central framework to provide an integrated system to measure and value ecosystems assets and services and link them with measures of economic and other human activity.

The SEEA provides credible, reliable, comparable and integrated information that supports various global initiatives including the SDG indicators, the Aichi biodiversity targets, climate change, the World Bank Wealth Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services, the green economy/green growth initiatives, etc. The SEEA standard allow us to examine our dependence on ecosystems in both physical and monetary terms, thus providing key information for national and local planning and public policy making.

This is precisely why we are working with different partners and countries in advancing the implementation of the SEEA. Together with the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) of China, European Union (EU) and UN Environment, my Division has launched the EU-funded project on Natural Capital Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services project in China. The project will support China to strengthen the national compilation of natural resource balance sheet on land, water and forestry, and pilot ecosystem accounting in the Guizhou and Guangxi provinces using the SEEA framework. It is my hope that the project will not only contribute to the statistical development in China, but that the experiences that we will learn in China will contribute and provide a strong input to the global development process of ecosystem accounting.

As Guizhou is chosen as one of the provinces in China to pilot ecosystem accounting under the project, I look forward to our continued collaboration with the Guizhou Provincial Bureau of Statistics in advancing the project using the SEEA standard in Guizhou

In closing, this Forum is a unique opportunity to discuss the way forward to highlight the development of statistics in the context of the deliberation on the ecological civilization. I am encouraged by the high political support and broad reach and participation of representatives from the various disciplines and initiatives. I wish you a fruitful and thought provoking discussion in Guiyang.

Thank you. Xie Xie.