

**OPENING REMARKS FOR MR. ANIL ARORA, CHIEF STATISTICIAN,
STATISTICS CANADA**

5TH MEETING OF THE IAEG-SDGS, PLENARY SESSION

9:00 am 30 MARCH 2017

Good morning - It is my pleasure to welcome you all to Ottawa!

Springtime in Ottawa is very temperamental. One day it can be -15 degrees Celsius and the next day it may be +20. It is during this early spring period, where we can experience 3 seasons in a single day! This can be challenging but we hope that you will make the most of your Canadian experience.

Statistics Canada is happy to host this 5th meeting of the inter-agency expert group on sustainable development goal indicators. We are playing a key role within Canada on the SDGs. We have built new relationships with other Government of Canada departments, the private sector and international organizations, while also strengthening existing relationships with key partners both domestically and internationally.

Given a constantly changing environment in which both the demand and the supply of data have grown, we believe we must foster these new types of relationships and become a more agile institution whereby we move from not only being a data producer, but also support quality assurance, either through validation or certification of information coming from outside the National Statistical Office.

To that effect, over the last 2 years, Statistics Canada has been working hard to consult on proposed indicators, and examine Canada's data holdings, both within our national statistical office as well as across our government to ensure we can meet the data challenges of the SDGs. We are also looking at the data gaps to determine areas of focus for data development and new partnerships and developing efficient data reporting systems.

We are hosting this meeting for 2 principle reasons. First, to demonstrate our commitment to the process set up by the Statistical Commission for the development of the Global Indicator Framework. Secondly we want to

promote the notion that National Statistical Offices have a fundamental leadership role to play in the reporting on SDGs.

We feel this meeting is particularly timely given the recent United Nations Statistical Commission Meetings where the resolution to adopt the the Global indicator framework and the Cape Town global action plan was endorsed by the members to go forward to ECOSOC for adoption.

This is an important step in the SDGS process. However, the endorsement of the Global Indicator Framework is only one of many steps. For as we all know, what gets measured gets monitored. The Sustainable Development Goals and targets provide the map, while the indicators can be considered as the road signs along the way that let us know how far we have come and how much farther we need to travel.

Although the development of the indicator framework is a great global achievement, we cannot rest on our laurels. In order to ensure that we leave no one behind, we must continue this important work. This meeting will help us to continue down this path.

Over the next 2 days you will discuss: the tier 3 indicator work plans, the plan for the disaggregation strategy, and the information flows between National Statistical Offices, International Agencies and the United Nations Statistical Division. You will also get updates from the various IAEG-SDG subgroups.

I encourage all of you to continue to work in the spirit of collaboration during this session. One of the lessons we have learned along this path is that although we ultimately share a common goal, we may at times see the path to achieving the objectives quite differently depending on our individual experiences. In previous meetings we have been able to discuss ideas and perspectives openly, while recognizing that we all have different roles to play in the process. The upcoming sessions provide an excellent opportunity for collective learning from each other.

The key to success will be to keep our focus on how to measure the aspirational nature of the SDGs, which can be summarized as:

- building a world that respects and uses the resources of the planet in a sustainable way,

- building partnerships that recognize we must work together in order to move ahead,
- working towards ending inequalities in income, health and education
- focusing on equality of women and men

Left unaddressed, these issues will remain some of the primary drivers of conflict in the world.

We recognize that the way to global peace and prosperity is through sustainable growth for all, as well as understanding and building upon our interconnectedness, which I have just highlighted. Our particularly important role in this process is to provide unbiased, high quality measures which will provide policy makers with the information necessary to make informed decisions.

It is fitting that Canada hosts this 5th meeting during the 150 anniversary of Canada's confederation. Like most countries, Canada has social, economic and environmental issues that we must address. And we are also a young country built on the idea of hope, a country that celebrates and embraces our different heritages and a country that is intrinsically tied to the resources of the planet.

Canada is also a nation that believes good governance is the cornerstone upon which we build a strong, equitable and sustainable future.

With that, I shall close as I know you have a very full agenda. Again, on behalf of Statistics Canada - Welcome! I hope this plenary session of the IAEG-SDG is a success and provides a venue for a very fruitful and productive discussion.

Thank you!