

## **Opening Remarks from Mr. Joakim Symne, Director-General of Statistics Sweden:**

Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues,

It is a pleasure for me to be able to welcome you to Sweden and to the eighth meeting of the Inter Agency and Expert Group on SDG indicators.

Many of you have traveled far in order to be here. That serves as a reminder to us all just how important our work is. I have been told we are over 190 people in this room today. It is an honour to be in the company of such a distinguished group of leaders and experts in this field.

The follow-up of the global goals is an enormous - and an enormously challenging - task. But it is also an opportunity. An opportunity to reach beyond our usual comfort zone. An opportunity to work together with those that know other things than we do. I firmly believe that this great challenge will strengthen the global statistical community's ability to produce statistics of high quality that meet the demands of the users. The fact that we have to work outside of our usual silos - in the follow-up as well as in the implementation of the Agenda - is what will drive the change our world so desperately needs.

Every one of you brings knowledge and insight that is indispensable for the success of the task ahead that has been given to us. Together, you have the knowledge and capabilities that is required to understand how phenomena in society can be measured. I want to encourage you all to really take the opportunity to work together to arrive at the absolute best we can do.

Statistics Sweden has been commissioned by the Swedish government to co-ordinate the statistical follow-up of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Sweden. The Swedish statistical system is highly decentralised, as is the global statistical system. It is our experience that in a decentralised system it takes hard work, co-ordination and not least a strong spirit of cooperation and trust to arrive at the best outcomes.

Sweden is also active internationally in the development of the global statistical system. We are engaged in capacity development projects throughout the world. Following the establishment of the global goals, the Swedish government has developed a strategy to support implementation of the Agenda globally. One of the priorities in the strategy is to strengthen democracy and good governance. Capacity development in the field of data and statistics is seen as an important part of this work. It is also through this

instrument that we have been given the opportunity to host this important meeting.

I have been asked to convey, on behalf of the director general of Sida, who unfortunately could not attend this morning, her warm regards and wishes for great success in the deliberations this week.

Stockholm in November might not be the most welcoming environment. It is the darkest and wettest month of the year. But in this warm and open space, and in the great company of each other, I hope that you will experience an atmosphere of cooperation and a common goal.

To conclude, a heartfelt welcome and the very best of luck to you all.

Thank you