

## **Closing Statement**

### **6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Big Data for official statistics**

**Ms. Gemma Van Halderen**  
**Director, United Nations ESCAP Statistics Division**

Dear Commissioner Shin-Wook Kang,

Dear Statistician General Mr. Risenga Maluleke

Dear Claire all my fellow panelists in this closing session

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my sincere pleasure to thank you for being at the 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Big Data for official statistics.

My office, the Statistics Division of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific is very pleased to partner with Statistics Korea, the Statistics Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the UN Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics in the organization and delivery of this event and to be sharing the forefront of recognizing the potential of Big Data for Official Statistics.

While the COVID-19 pandemic did not made it possible for all of us to gather in Seoul at this time, our colleagues from Statistics Korea have shown to be excellent hosts in this new world of virtual communication by actively helping in the development of the Conference programme and by providing the technical solutions.

I would like to thank Statistics Korea for all their support to make this Conference successful.

I would also like to thank our panellists, our moderators, our support staff monitoring chat boxes and our programme committee for not only developing the programme but also delivering on it.

And I would finally like to thank you, our audience, for being with us. For your insightful and challenging questions. And for joining us wherever you may be, at whatever time of the day or night. It has been a pleasure to have you join us in Asia and the Pacific via Seoul, Korea.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Over the last three days we have traversed the globe, virtually. From our friends in Scandinavia and North America, to Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Europe, Arab nations and Asia and the Pacific. We heard from New Zealand in the South and Denmark in the North. We heard from countries large and small, developed and developing.

We have also traversed topics dear to all of us. Official statistics compiled using big data sources. National Statistical Offices experimenting with big data for official statistics and using new data sources and new standards in response to COVID-19. Development partners sharing the potential of big data for SDG indicators. The immense potential and power of a global statistical community uniting to develop the Global Platform of data, methods, experiences and opportunity. A Global Platform that is ready for you globally and through regional hubs.

The COVID-19 pandemic is with us. For how long we do not know. But what we do know is the COVID-19 is an opportunity. The statistical community is rich. Rich

with ideas. Rich with solutions. It is bold and courageous, ready to innovate and rise to whatever challenges we are presented with.

This Conference has given us all the opportunity to connect, to hear from each other, to learn, to be inspired. I have been inspired by all of the speakers and by the questions posed by our audience.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

As we heard from Mr. Stefan Schweinfest at the opening of this session, under the umbrella of the UN Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics, many experts from all stakeholder communities are already working together. Several collaborative data projects are currently being executed on the UN Global Platform. You are all invited to join this work. We need in-kind contributions of experts in statistics, computer science, machine learning and data engineering. We also need support from the donor community, so we will be able to undertake more projects, especially for the benefit of statistical institutes from developing countries.

Please, if you have been inspired as I have during these last three days, I urge you to get involved.

Dear colleagues,

In closing, let me once again thank Commissioner Shin-Wook Kang for your leadership and for hosting this conference. Your team have done an excellent job and deserve much praise and a good rest.

Statistician General Mr. Risenga Maluleke, thank you and the entire Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics for your leadership. Your inspiration and all your hard work and collaboration. It is important and valued.

To the secretariat, the programme committee, UN DESA and my own team at UN ESCAP, a wonderful job. A wonderful conference.

And to Mr. Tom Smith, thank you for encouraging us to get beyond the word big in big data. Its just data. Use it.

All the wishes from day one for a very enjoyable and fruitful discussions at the 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Big Data for Official Statistics have come true.

Thank you.