Mr. Seiji Takata,
Ms. Miho Saeki,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen

On behalf of the United Nations Statistics Division, it is my great pleasure to welcome all of you to the Regional Course on Statistical Business Registers, which has been jointly organized by the UN Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) and the United Nations Statistical Division.

Statistical Business Registers (SBRs) are often described as the backbone of economic statistics, as they are a fundamental element of the statistical infrastructure for economic statistics. They provide the population frame for conducting economic survey, they provide the basis for measuring business demography, they provide the frame for integrating data from different sources, including administrative sources.

Statistical business registers are generally maintained by the National Statistical Office and are part of infrastructure for official statistics, thus adhering to the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (such as confidentiality etc.).

At its forty-eighth session in March 2017, the United Nations Statistical Commission reaffirmed the importance of Statistical Business Registers, underlined its foundational role in the production of economic statistics, and stressed the continued need for capacity building activities on Statistical Business Registers in developing countries.

Most notably, the endorsement of the UN Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers in 2019 and the Maturity Model for Statistical Business Register in 2022. These Guidelines reflect the global recognition by the international statistical community of the importance of Statistical Business Registers and they will be the basis for the formulation of technical assistance programmes to strengthen Statistical Business Registers in countries.

To reflect the importance of SBRs, the UN Committee of Experts on Business and Trade Statistics established the Task Team on SBR with the broad objectives to address challenges in developing exhaustive business registers and develop tools to help countries in strengthening the Statistical Business Registers. Also, the Wiesbaden Group on Business Register, a city group established since 1986, organized meeting every second year to engage in further development of business registers, survey frames and associated topics, to support a more integrated approach to structural economic statistics and address emerging development and use of business register.

From an institutional perspective, embarking on a national programme of work on SBR can serve as a vehicle for modernizing the national statistical system. In particular, the development requires collaboration between different agencies in order to set up an institutional mechanism for the compilation of accounts.
And this is one of the aims of the workshop: to exchange country experience in the development, maintenance and use of business registers. In this regard, you are all encouraged to actively participate in the next few days in the discussions of the specific needs for the development and maintenance of SBR.

The workshop also aims to deepen your technical understanding on the SBR. Over the next few days, we will go through a series of presentations, discussions and exercises covering key areas on SBR and the emerging development in this area. We hope that by the end of the workshop, you will have a better understanding of the principles and needs on SBR, and you will be able to bring this knowledge back and take follow up actions to advance the development of SBR in your respective country.

As you know, this workshop is organized jointly with SIAP and UNSD. Throughout the past years, a large number of events, including webinar and e-learnings have been organized under the joint collaboration between SIAP and UNSD, which have benefited many experts at national and international level. UNSD looks forward to continuing the collaboration with SIAP while building on these successful activities.

To conclude, I would like to thank all our colleagues at SIAP for their excellent organization of this event. Moreover, I like to express our gratitude to the experts from the Statistics Netherlands for contributing their knowledge and expertise in their respective areas during this workshop.

I would also like to thank all the participants who have traveled to Chiba.

Wishing you all a pleasant stay in Chiba and a very fruitful and successful Workshop.