

*6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the UN Committee of Experts on Business & Trade Statistics*

**18 September 2023**

*Opening Statement*

*Stefan Schweinfest, Director UNSD*

*Welcome*

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to the 6<sup>th</sup> Committee of Experts on Business and Trade Statistics meeting.

It is a great pleasure to meet again in Mexico for the UN Committee on Business and Trade Statistics meeting. In a sense, Mexico is the birthplace of the Committee, as its first meeting was held in Mexico in 2018. The Committee has done a lot of work since then, and it is great to be back in Mexico in conjunction with the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of INEGI. We have a lot to celebrate! Returning to Mexico reflects the commitment of INEGI to move forward with the agenda on business and trade statistics. Therefore, I would like to thank INEGI for its kind offer to host the meeting in this lovely city of Merida. And also to all task team leads and members, and my colleagues in UNSD, who have all worked hard since the last Committee meeting, and also, to Stefano Menghinello, who has been leading the Committee and guiding its work programme to the level that we are now.

Further, we all know that the Committee has a tall order: to coordinate and guide the development of business and trade statistics and foster their integration and harmonization. In many countries, business and trade statistics are considered the pillar on which the other economic statistics are built and stood upon. It means that the quality of those statistics would directly influence the others. However, I am optimistic and confident that we can overcome challenges and achieve our objectives stated in our mandate with our collective mind and hard work.

The work of the Committee is well aligned with the overall direction of economic statistics taken by the Statistical Commission. First is the Network of Economic Statisticians, which the UN Statistical Commission established to :

- 1) Facilitate networking, coordination, and communication on innovations, experiments, and best practices to make progress on priorities to keep economic statistics relevant.
- 2) Coordinate with statistical committees and groups, as appropriate, to measure the multidimensional relationships between the economy, environment, and society of the 2030 Agenda.

In its Synthesis Note of the Network of Economic Statisticians as part of the background document in the Statistical Commission, the Network underlines the importance of data integration, which plays a crucial role in advancing innovation and modernization of the national statistical system. It determined that data integration is essential to the changing data landscape

for official statistics to meet the emerging user demand for multidomain and disaggregated information.

In this regard, I am very pleased to know that this Committee has taken the work (of data integration) forward with the endorsement of the recent Statistical Commission to develop a guidance/handbook in integrating business and trade statistics and including gender and geospatial perspective into business and trade statistics. I am aware that working teams have been established to continue working on this topic, and I look forward to hearing their progress update in one of the sessions of this meeting.

The second, the coherence and consistency across economic statistics, is the major and common theme of the current cycle of revising various economic statistics standards and international classifications. I am also aware that the revision of the trade statistics manual, which this Committee currently undertakes, has put a lot of effort into coherence with the update and revision of SNA and BPM, including the alignment of the timelines and the revision of ISIC and CPC. It is something we could be proud of, and it can be a great example of successful collaboration and coordination across different statistical domains at the global level.

Another achievement is the Statistical Commission's endorsement of the global initiative on unique identifiers for businesses and encouragement to countries and relevant organizations to coordinate their activities in this area in an effort to provide a solid infrastructure for statistical business registers. The unique identifiers would then facilitate microdata linking and the integration of data from different sources.

The agenda of this week's meeting is comprehensive and inclusive. The meeting will review the progress of the work of its task teams, address follow-up actions to the decisions of the Statistical Commission, and review new developments and initiatives in business and trade statistics. In addition, the meeting will provide an opportunity to review the mandate of the Committee to ensure that it reflects the current efforts by the Committee to integrate business and trade statistics better and strengthen the horizontal and vertical integration of business and trade statistics with other statistical domains.

I look forward to the outcome of your discussions this week, the specific work plans you will map out, and the synergies and brainstorming that can best happen in a physical meeting with face-to-face collaboration. I wish you great success in your deliberations and a great stay in Mexico.