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 Workshop on International Statistical Classifications, which has been jointly organized by the UNSD (United Nations Statistics Division) and ECLAC (The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean).

Importance of classifications and classification expertise:

The importance of classifications cannot be stressed enough. Classifications are the foundation for statistical work. The ability to compile internationally comparable statistics is underpinned on the availability of clear and well developed classifications. The ability to compile meaningful statistics is underpinned on the availability of relevant/up-to-date classifications. It is therefore our tasks to make sure that we develop and maintain statistical classifications that are clear, unambiguous and relevant to the current time as this ensures the comparability of the statistics across countries and across time.

There is also a specific expertise that is needed for classifications. The work on classification is not just adding or deleting categories but understanding the principles behind the classification and its structure, the interrelation between the classification categories, the measurability and relevance of the categories, and also the history of the classification to ensure continuity.

About the Committee

As you know, the Committee of Experts on International Statistical Classifications serves as the central coordination body for current and future work on all international statistical classifications. It plays a key role in preserving the coherence of the international family of classifications and in supporting the adoption of best practices in the development of international statistical classifications.

The Committee has done an admirable job in advancing the work programme of international statistical classifications over the past few years, notably the endorsement of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC Rev.5), Version 3 of the Central Product Classification (CPC Ver.3), the Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose 2018 (COICOP 2018) and the Classification of Statistical Activities 2.0 (CSA 2.0). Significant progress on the revision of the Standard International Energy Product Classification (SIEC), and that the Task Team on the Classification of Functions of Government (COFOG) has been established to initiate the revision process.

National adaptation

As the revision process of various international statistical classifications are approaching to the end or completed, national statistical offices are encouraged to embark on a national programme of work to align their national statistical classifications to the latest revisions of international statistical classifications in producing statistics, integrating these into their long-term work plans

This can serve as a vehicle for modernizing the national statistical system. In particular, the development requires collaboration between different agencies to set up an institutional mechanism for the compilation of accounts.

Aim of the workshop

And this is one of the aims of the workshop: to exchange country experience in the development, maintenance and use of classifications. In this regard, you are all encouraged to actively participate in the next few days' discussions of the specific needs for the development and maintenance of classifications.

The workshop also aims to deepen your technical understanding of classifications. Over the next few days, we will go through a series of presentations, discussions and exercises covering key areas on classifications 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 classifications, and you will be able to bring this knowledge back and take follow-up actions to advance national adaption of international statistical classifications in your respective country.

Collaboration with ECLAC

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

To conclude, I would like to thank all our colleagues at ECLAC for their excellent organization of this event. Moreover, I like to express our gratitude to the expert Andrew Hancock from Statistics New Zealand and Claude Macchi from Eurostat 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 Santiago.

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