

2nd International Workshop on Economic Census
Seoul, Republic of Korea, 6-9 July 2009

Opening Statement

Paul Cheung, Director
United Nations Statistics Division

Dear Colleagues,

It is my pleasure to join the Commissioner of the Korea National Statistical Office (KNSO) Ms. Yi, Insill in welcoming all of you to the Second International Workshop on Economic Census. The workshop is jointly organized by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and KNSO and I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my Korean colleagues for hosting this event and for their efforts in its preparation. I am also grateful to the US Census Bureau which consistently supports the UNSD activities in promoting good practices in basic economic statistics and participated in both international workshops on economic census.

This workshop is dedicated to the topics of great relevance for the establishment and maintenance of a sound foundation for the compilation of economic statistics in countries at different levels of economic development. It is a follow up event to the First International Workshop on Economic Census, jointly organized by UNSD and the National Bureau of Statistics of China in 2005, which evaluated the potential of the economic census for production of high quality and policy relevant economic statistics and concluded that it serves as the cornerstone for the economic statistics infrastructure in many countries.

Since 2005 a number of countries conducted economic censuses and many of you had an opportunity to reflect more on the current challenges and newly gained experiences. At the international level the statistical community made significant advances in improving the methodological foundations of economic statistics from basic statistics to national accounts. This includes adoption of the revised standard international classifications, international recommendations for industrial and distributive trade statistics as well as adoption of the 2008 version of the System of the National Accounts and these have to be taken into account while countries plan their economic census programmes. However, no matter how good international standards are the availability of high quality country data can only be ensured if national economic statistics programmes implement those standards effectively, with country specific circumstances in mind and apply good practices. This workshop is designed to assist countries exactly in this respect.

The Second International Workshop on Economic Census is envisaged as a forum to continue our discussion of the role of economic census in measuring the constantly changing economies. The workshop will focus on practical aspects of the conduct of an economic census – from its planning, through data collection and processing, to the dissemination and analysis of census results. Proceedings of the workshop will serve as a basis for the preparation of a handbook on challenges and good practices in economic census to assist countries in further strengthening their national programmes of economic statistics. To achieve the objectives of the workshop we invited countries from different regions with different experience, circumstances and needs. I am grateful for your interest in the workshop and willingness to share your knowledge and vision. I wish you every success in your deliberations. Also, I hope you will be able to find time to enjoy the hospitality of our Korean hosts as well as the wealth of cultural heritage of the city of Seoul.

Thank you.