



UNITED NATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
STATISTICS DIVISION

**Sixth Meeting of the
Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics
25-26 March 2012, Dead Sea, Jordan**

Opening Statement

Paul Cheung, Director
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Dear Colleagues,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to this sixth meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics. Since 2006, when it was established, this group has been an effective forum for the coordination of the important work carried out by all partner agencies and national institutions in this area and has launched a number of activities that have greatly contributed to the development of gender statistics worldwide.

At UNSD, as secretariat of the group, we have received tremendous support by partner agencies in carrying out the work on coordination. I would like to recognize in particular the strong partnership with UN Women, the World Bank and UNFPA, who have also provided significant financial support for the organization of this meeting and the global forum that will be held over the next few days.

At its 42nd session, in 2011, the UN Statistical Commission acknowledged the strategic role of the IAEG and requested that the scope of its work be expanded. It also recommended a series of activities to be implemented to strengthen data compilation, promote training and propose best practices for the mainstreaming of gender into national statistical systems.

Since then, the IAEG-GS has focused on four main areas of work, including: the preparation of manuals and guidelines; the preparation of a common questionnaire to be used for a survey by the regional commissions on gender mainstreaming in national statistical systems; the identification of a minimum set of gender indicators for international data compilation; and the creation of a mechanism for countries to access financial and technical resources for strengthening the production and use of gender statistics. I would like to briefly review the work done so far:

- The guidelines on the measurement of violence against women were completed and will be soon finalized after careful review by national and international experts.
- A draft of the new manual on gender statistics was prepared, based on inputs by all partner agencies and countries, and will also be soon finalized after all comments and suggestions are incorporated.

- The survey on gender mainstreaming in statistics was carried out by all five UN regional commissions, based on the common questionnaire and some of the preliminary results are already available.
- The minimum set of gender indicators was identified and presented to the UN Statistical Commission at its last session in February 2012.
- UN-Women and UNSD launched the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) partnership to develop and improve comparable gender indicators on education, employment, entrepreneurship and assets. This responds to a growing demand by countries for financial and technical support to improve the availability and use of gender statistics.
- A new advisory group on emerging issue was established to address the need for statistics on gender issues not currently covered by regular data collection, as request by the Statistical Commission.

As in the past, this meeting will be an important opportunity to review the work done, discuss the way forward and set priorities for the year ahead. We have a collective responsibility in ensuring improvements in the availability and use of gender statistics for effective policy making and monitoring. But since the Statistical Commission explicitly requested that our Division strengthened its leadership role in charting the path for the development of gender statistics globally, we need to ensure that our work in this area continues to be strengthened. We remain committed to devote the necessary attention and resources to ensure continuous progress in gender statistics. In particular, as requested by the Statistical Commission and in collaboration with the World Bank, this year, we will conduct ad hoc advisory missions to assist countries in the mainstreaming of gender into national statistical system, including into their national statistics development strategies and produce audio-visual materials based on the new gender statistics manual. Furthermore, as also requested by the Statistical Commission, we will initiate international data compilation, based on the agreed minimum set of indicators.

Gender inequality has been widely acknowledged as one of the main obstacles to development. Empowering women and girls and eliminating gender require sound

statistical information that fully reflects gender-based differences and address issues related to women and men.

I look forward to our continuing work to foster the development of gender statistics to provide high quality evidence for policy making for the achievement of, not just gender equality, but progress for all of society.

I wish you all successful deliberations.