

**Training Workshop on the Compilation of Quarterly National Accounts for
Economic Cooperation Organization Member Countries**

8 to 11 March 2015

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Opening remarks

Mr. Marashlioglo, Honourable Economic Cooperation Organization Deputy Secretary General,

Dr. Rezaee, Head of the Statistical Research and Training Centre,

Dr. Golestan, in charge of the Office of Head, Public Relations and International Cooperation, Statistical Centre of Iran

Fellow participants,

On behalf of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), it is my pleasure to welcome everyone to the Training Workshop on the Compilation of Quarterly National Accounts (QNA) for Economic Cooperation Organization Member Countries. The workshop continues the longstanding collaboration between UNSD, the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and the Statistical Centre of Iran to provide technical assistance to ECO member countries. I would like to take this opportunity to thank ECO for initiating this workshop that would allow us to share our experience and knowledge on the compilation of QNA and the Statistical Centre of Iran for hosting the event and kindly making these excellent facilities at its Statistical Research and Training Centre available for this workshop. At the same time, I would like to thank the resource persons from the Statistical Centre of Iran and the Turkish Statistical Institute for kindly offering to present some of the topics for this workshop.

In response to the global economic and financial crisis a few years ago, the United Nations Statistical Commission, at its 42nd session, endorsed an international work programme on short-term statistics. One of the deliverables of the international work programme is the establishment of an internationally-accepted data template and metadata on short-term statistics for use in macroeconomic surveillance, early warning of economic and financial vulnerabilities and the detection of turning points in business cycles. One of the statistics in the data template is the QNA. Thus, this workshop has come at the right time as it will help to equip participants with the skills and knowledge to improve the compilation of QNA in their country if they are already doing so. For participants from countries which do not currently compile QNA, we hope that the presentations and discussions during the workshop will provide you with some key ideas on how to start a system to compile QNA in your country.

QNA estimates have many uses. One key purpose is to provide a picture of current economic developments that is more timely than that provided by annual national accounts and more comprehensive than that provided by individual short-term indicators through the use of an integrated framework. Another purpose is to support policy needs and monitoring by providing early warning on the occurrence and timing of economic upturns and downturns, and measuring the short-term impact of internal and external shocks on production, income, investment and consumption, so that prompt and effective fiscal and monetary policy responses can be formulated.

Compiling QNA is a very complicated task. Some will say that it is more challenging and difficult than compiling annual national accounts. The reason is the pressure to produce accurate, comprehensive and reliable QNA estimates in a timely manner every quarter to satisfy the different demands of various stakeholders, such as policy-makers, business community, researchers, analysts, forecasters, etc. Besides, the compilation of QNA is an intensive exercise as it uses techniques such as benchmarking and seasonal adjustment, which are not used in the compilation of annual national accounts. Also, the data sources which are used in the compilation of QNA may be more diverse than those used in the compilation of the annual national accounts. In addition, the technique to calculate volume measures of GDP is more tedious than that used to calculate volume measures of annual GDP.

Thus, we have arranged for presentations during this workshop to tackle these very interesting and challenging topics in the compilation of QNA. We also hope that the discussions that will follow after the presentations will help participants to exchange and share experiences, discuss issues and challenges and identify best practice approaches in use of data sources, benchmarking, seasonal adjustment, and compilation of price and volume measures. Indeed, we hope to make the training workshop as interactive as possible with active participation from everyone. Thus, many of the presentations will have questions at the end so that participants can spend some time answering these questions and learn in the process.

To conclude, we would like to express our sincere thanks to ECO and the Statistical Centre of Iran for the excellent work done in making all the logistical and administration preparations for this workshop. We would also like to wish everyone a successful workshop.