



UNITED NATIONS

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MR. LIU ZHENMIN

UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

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**Opening Remarks**

**52<sup>nd</sup> session of the United Nations Statistical Commission**

**Virtual, 1 March 2021 9:00 am**

*Delivered by Ms. Maria Francesca Spatolisano, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs*

I am pleased to deliver the following remarks on behalf of Mr. Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. And I quote:

Mr. Chairman,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored to join you at this this 52<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Statistical Commission.

This important annual gathering comes at a time of significant stress and challenge felt across the world due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Without a doubt, the global statistical community has played a crucial role as the suppliers of authoritative and timely public health statistics needed to protect populations from the spread of the virus. And it will continue to provide a range of social, economic and environmental statistics essential to mitigate its effects, which will endure for some time to come.

Advancing standards and guidance on statistical activities takes on an added urgency as we recognize the importance of trusted data and user expectations during this pandemic.

At the same time, many statistical offices are struggling themselves with funding constraints and other barriers to their operations. There is an urgent need for additional support to ensure the continuity of these operations.

To this end, the Statistics Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the World Bank launched the Covid-19 Survey of National Statistical Offices at the beginning of the pandemic, in cooperation with the Statistics Divisions of the five UN Regional Commissions.

Several rounds of this survey showed the tremendous impact on statistical operations. And, the creativity and adaptability of national statistical offices who have responded with innovative data solutions and partnerships to serve statistical needs.

Further, many in the statistical community are exploring an expanded role as a data steward in the changing data ecosystem. A role built on better governance, more collaboration, effective methods and capability, and improved access and understanding, to make fullest use of data to support better decision making, and therefore better lives.

Mr. Chairman,  
Excellencies,

The Covid-19 pandemic as a stark reminder of the need for global cooperation and solidarity. It brings renewed relevance to the importance of the 2030 Agenda as our guiding framework to deliver a sustainable and prosperous future, through timely and disaggregated data and statistics.

The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs stands fully committed to support you in your important work.

I wish you fruitful deliberations and a successful Commission session.

I thank you for your attention.

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