Excellency,

On behalf of the Bureau of the Statistical Commission I wish to congratulate you for assuming the Presidency of the Economic and Social Council and express our appreciation of your able leadership in steering the important work of the Council in these difficult times.

Having explored carefully our options with the UN Secretariat (UNSD/DESA and DGACM) and having consulted widely with Member States, the Bureau would like to propose that the 53rd session of the Statistical Commission be convened virtually consisting of eight (8) two-hour informal meetings from \textbf{28 February to 2 March 2022 and on 4 March 2022}. The reasons for the change in format are anticipated meeting and travel restrictions for participants as delegations and other stakeholders of the Statistical Commission are comprised almost entirely of capital-based national professional experts. I can assure you that this proposal is exceptional, as the professional statistical community is eager to meet in person, as soon as the status of the global pandemic will allow it.

ECOSOC originally approved the following dates for the 53rd session: 1 to 4 March 2022. Our proposal to distribute the available 4 working days over a five-day period is due to the virtual format. Leaving the Thursday (instead of Monday) meeting free will allow for more time for informal negotiations across the globe during the critical moment of putting the conclusions of the Commission session together. A similar change in dates was approved for the 52nd session of the Commission, held in 2021. This change in dates was also already approved by the Committee on Conferences.

The Bureau of the Statistical Commission stresses again the exceptional nature of these proposed modalities, which are uniquely determined by the travel and meeting restrictions caused by the global pandemic. The Bureau fully understands and recognizes the informal nature of the virtual meetings. Nonetheless, we would like to express the hope that a decision of ECOSOC will be in place, in a timely manner, to allow the Statistical Commission to take some important decisions (on its new Bureau and on the adoption of the technical conclusions) via silence procedure.

H.E. Mr. Collen Vixen Kelapile
President of ECOSOC
We stress the need to move forward with our planning so that government delegations and other stakeholders are able to adjust their plans accordingly. At the same time, we note that we must be flexible and ready to make further adjustments considering the evolving circumstances and any further guidance to be provided by the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly, or yourself.

We respectfully ask for your approval for the above proposed change in format and time and look forward to your continued guidance and support.

Please accept Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Shigeru Kawasaki  
Chair  
Statistical Commission