Opening Statement

Mr. Stefan Schweinfest
Director of the United Nations Statistics Division

Dear Dr. Lisa Bersales,

Dear Mr. Rolando Canizal,

Dear Colleagues,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this regional training workshop on the compilation of Tourism Satellite Accounts. Tourism plays a significant role in every national economy around the world. I am therefore also pleased to know that today at this workshop we can welcome not only our dear colleagues from the Philippines but also colleagues from around Asia and even from Africa with the objective to learn about and improve the production of tourism statistics and indicators.

I would like to start by thanking our hosts Dr. Lisa Bersales, National Statistician of the Philippines, and Rolando Canizal, Undersecretary for Administration and Special Concerns at the Department of Tourism of the Philippines, who were both actively involved in the preparation of this meeting. All your efforts have been and are much appreciated. It shows how we - as a global community of official statisticians - can work together. It is at the core of my work to encourage international cooperation in strengthening official statistics, and it therefore heartens me to see that this cooperation is also happening in the Philippines.

I would like to further express my thanks to the co-organizers, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and to our other

partners, Eurostat, and particularly Statistics Austria and Statistics Canada for their support to this event.

Dear Colleagues,

Strengthening statistical capacity is at the heart of what my office, the United Nations Statistics Division, wants to achieve. We would like to support every national statistical system around the world to be able to deliver the requested and necessary official statistics to its policy makers for evidence-based decision making.

To produce official statistics, especially tourism statistics, the statistical agencies need to cooperate with other government institutes to collect the necessary input data, such as border surveys, and compile from these and other inputs the relevant tourism statistics and the tourism satellite account, while making sure that these are fully coherent with the internationally agreed recommendations, especially with the System of National Accounts 2008. We are, therefore, bringing together participants from national statistical offices and from the ministries to exchange their knowledge and experiences.

The focus on the workshop is on the compilation of the tourism satellite account, or the TSA for short. The indicators which we can derive from the TSA will inform your policy makers about the importance of the Tourism sector for your economy; it will show the contributions made by tourism to national income and employment. The *6th International Conference on Tourism Statistics: measuring sustainable tourism,* which will take place later this week, will particularly look at the economic, social and especially the

environmental dimensions of tourism. The TSA will help in the measurement of these sustainable development aspects.

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to take the opportunity to briefly mention the main priority of work of the United Nations at this moment, namely the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This agenda – as you may recall – was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 2015. The implementation of this agenda is still the main topic of discussion in New York, and will be for the foreseeable future.

Within this context, the global statistical community was given the role to establish the indicators for monitoring progress on achieving the 17 sustainable develop goals and its many targets. A global indicator framework was adopted for that purpose at the most recent meeting of the UN Statistical Commission in March 2017. This framework contains also indicators for monitoring progress on targets for sustainable tourism, and the TSA is an important measurement tool for those indicators.

Last but certainly not least, I would like to introduce to you our colleagues, whom we have invited to conduct this workshop. This excellent team includes experts from national statistical offices, namely Mr. Peter Laimer of Statistics Austria (Peter is also the chair of the UNWTO Committee on Statistics) and Ms. Demi Kotsovos of Statistics Canada as well as experts from the international agencies, namely Mr. Christophe Demunter of Eurostat and Mr. Karoly Kovacs and Ms. Lubov Zeifman of my office in New York.

I am very confident that this team will guide you expertly through the more difficult conceptual issues underlying the TSA. They will also share good practices in the compilation of the TSA. The ultimate goal is of course to help produce the highest quality tourism statistics, which are relevant for policy makers at home, and which are also comparable at the regional and international levels.

I wish you a very active, fruitful and successful workshop and wish you also a very interesting Conference later this week.

Thank you.