

MR Gogita Todradze
Mr. Gogita Todratze, Chair of the seventh session and Executive
Director, National Statistics Office of Georgia

Opening remarks
Committee on Statistics, Eight Session

Tuesday, 23 August 2022
10.00 am-12.00 (Bangkok time)
Meeting Room: Conference Room-1

His Excellency H.E. Mr. Chaiwut Thanakamanusorn, Minister, Ministry of Digital Economy and Society, Royal Thai Government; Ms Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Under-Secretary-General of United Nations and Executive Secretary of United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; Excellencies, distinguished delegates, Ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to the eighth session of the Committee on Statistics.

As the chair of the seventh session of the Committee, I am very pleased to be able to address you in person today. It is wonderful to see so many colleagues again after a long period with too many days and nights spent on zoom and teams calls. I really look forward to our next few days together to enjoy your company as well as the exciting discussions we have lined up.

The Committee plays a crucial role in supporting the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda and I have been proud to lead the work of the Bureau since our 7th Committee which was held during the height of the pandemic in 2020.

As a statistical community, we have a pivotal role to play in measuring and achieving the SDGs and since the agreements on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we have stepped up and expanded our collection,

analysis and dissemination of data significantly. We could see this in the most recent SDG progress report prepared by the ESCAP secretariat. Alongside this increase in the availability of data we have also seen an increase in the demand for more granular and more real time data, especially in response to the Covid pandemic. We have also seen an increase in the use of data by governments and also by citizens. Whilst there are these positive changes there are still too many data gaps especially on the most communities who are often in the most vulnerable situations.

We are a region with a strong collective vision and framework for action for strengthening national statistical systems. We are fortunate that several countries in Asia and the Pacific have very robust systems and are stepping up to provide support to colleagues in other countries working to improve their ways of doing things. We are also fortunate to be supported by many development partners and I am pleased to see many of those key partners here today.

This great collaboration between countries and development partners have made it possible to make agreements such as the Ministerial Declaration on Building a More Resilient Future with Inclusive Civil Registration and Vital Statistics from November last year. We all recognise CRVS as a cornerstone in our statistical systems and it is great to see the multiple efforts happening across our region.

In the last few years, we have also seen an increasing interest in using new data sources and methods. We are all learning much more about new areas such as big data and concepts such as machine learning, artificial intelligence and the internet of things. More importantly, we are also gradually understanding what this means for our statistical systems, our human resources as well as our roles as national statistical offices.

The Stats cafes organised by ESCAP has been a great inspiration for myself, my staff and dedicated statisticians across Asia and the Pacific. It seems like every week we are learning of new experiments whether it is using mobile phone data for tourism and migration statistics, using geospatial data to measure agriculture or using scanner data to monitor prices. In all of these we are seeing how new data sources can be used alongside traditional data sources like the census and administrative data. More and more we are seeing the huge potential that these new data sources are able to offer us. The stats cafes have also given us a chance to learn about new initiatives, standards and programmes that can support our own statistical systems.

But with the increased complexities and endless opportunities for innovation, the functions of our institutions will need to continue to change. This week will provide an opportunity for us all to learn from each other on how we can better embrace these changes. It will allow us to seek inspiration to do our jobs at home even better, to rekindle old friendships and to develop new friendships and new partnerships.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very delighted and proud of having the opportunity to address you as an outgoing Chair of the Bureau.

I thank you for all the confidence placed on my country and me personally, and for the great honour of serving you as a Chair. Together with the bureau members, I endeavoured to do my very best by discharging our responsibilities with dedication, professional ethics, and principles that guide the international statistical community, to ensure that this Committee on

Statistics would have more opportunities to achieve its goals and successful conclusions.

Once and again, I'd like to thank my fellow colleagues for this honour!

I am sure we will have very successful and productive discussions this week and I look forward to working with you now and in the future to carve out our role in governing data beyond 2030.

I am confident that the newly proposed Bureau will provide the leadership and experience necessary to continue the important work of this Committee over the next two years. I assure you that Georgia is your true partner who will continue supporting the Bureau in its efforts to accomplish its tasks on the way of setting statistical priorities in the region

Thank you for your kind attention.