



WELCOME REMARKS

International Conference on Sustainable Development Goals Statistics
“Level Up: Shaping a Strong Data Ecosystem for Monitoring SDGs”
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By

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Secretary Ernesto Pernia of Socioeconomic Planning, National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)

Mr. Haoliang Xu, Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations and Director of the Regional Bureau for Asia and Pacific at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Mr. Johannes Jütting, Secretariat Manager of the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21)

And Ms. Francesca Perucci, the Chief of Statistical Branch of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)

Chiefs and representatives of national statistical offices, distinguished session chairs and presenters, guests from international organizations, fellow government servants, ladies and gentlemen, good morning! On behalf of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), it gives me boundless pleasure to welcome you all to the *2017 International Conference on Sustainable Development Goals Statistics*.

We in the Philippine Statistical System (PSS) are very much delighted to have this opportunity of organizing this three-day international conference in collaboration with the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), United Nations Development Programme Philippines, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, United Nations Children Fund Philippines, Food and Agricultural

Organization Philippines, United Nations Population Fund, Asian Development Bank, World Bank Philippines, PARIS21, members of the PSA Board and the 2017 ICSDGS Steering Committee. The support and cooperation we gained brings more than 300 representatives today from:

- national statistical offices of various countries;
- national and country coordinating agencies on SDG indicators;
- national and country focal agencies on SDGs;
- international organizations and development partners;
- international and local civil society organizations which are engaged and involved in the SDG statistical process; and
- private researchers and companies which have stakes on SDG statistics.

This year's conference carries the theme: *"Level Up: Shaping a Strong Data Ecosystem for Monitoring Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)"*. As this theme depicts, we in the statistical community are faced head on with a great challenge to level up and transcend expectations to better illustrate how our peoples live and decide, and how our societies and economies fare in the Post-2015 Developmental Agenda. This challenge to provide good quality statistics and our common aspiration to improve the lives of our brethren bring us here today. We are challenged to scale up a data ecosystem that will provide us the necessary skills, resources, and partnership to address the data requirements of the 2030 Agenda.

Indeed, the challenge is great, especially for us in the national statistical offices. As the primary source of official statistics, we must steer data support for the 17 SDGs, 169 targets and 232 unique indicators in our respective countries while bearing in mind our role to aid in the monitoring of national developmental priorities. In 2016, an assessment of the readiness of the PSS for SDGs was undertaken by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) in collaboration with the Philippines' Planning Ministry, the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), and other stakeholders in the PSS.

We found that out of the 231 indicators only 42.2 percent are categorized as Tier 1 indicators (i.e. indicators with existing and regularly produced data, clear methodology and established standards). 24.2 percent are in Tier 2 (i.e. indicators that are conceptually clear, with established methodology and standards, but whose data are not regularly produced by (PSS), while 29.1 percent still have no established methodology or standards. (4.5 percent is not applicable to PSS,) More work needs to be done to better understand and to be able to generate Tier 2 and Tier 3 categorized indicators, whereas the PSS must continue its advocacy for the regular compilation of Tier 1 indicators.

The assessment also showed that data sources are largely outside the purview of PSA. Sixty-six (66) percent of the indicators with available data are being produced by other agencies in the PSS, i.e. from their administrative-based data systems, their own surveys and studies. Thirty-two (32) percent are generated by PSA, while two (2) percent could be generated from other data sources (e.g. academic and research studies).

Besides these, the SDG and national development monitoring calls for improved relevance through more frequent statistical releases and expanded data disaggregation (e.g. geographical, income, sectoral, age, sex, race and ethnicity, among others).

In response to these, the PSA Board approved on 12 May 2016 a resolution enjoining government agencies to provide data support to the SDGs.

Thus, as the primary source of official statistics, we must widen our boundaries and establish stronger links with our ministries, local governments, the academe, and the private sector in order to supply the needed data for monitoring our progress towards the SDGs and national development priorities. We have to shape a strong and inclusive data ecosystem to be able to respond to these new information demands.

Hence, this three-day conference gives us an opportunity to nurture our connections, learn from other nations' good practices, find ways how to maximize technology and utilize new and innovative ways to address SDG data gaps.

The conference will have four key plenary sessions that will cover topics such as:

1. Data Ecosystem: Exploring New Technologies and Data Sources (including Big Data)
2. SDG Data Users: Needs and Expectations
3. Financing and Partnerships for the SDG Monitoring
4. Counting the Uncounted

On the last day of the conference, there will be a plenary session to sum up findings and recommendations from the various sessions and set our sights to what lies ahead for the statistical community in the coming years. We in the PSS as the ICSDGS Secretariat will compile recommendations from the conference sessions for possible presentation to the United Nations Statistical Commission.

There will also be 19 breakout sessions with the following themes:

1. Data Storytelling (Communicating and Understanding the Data)
2. Integration of Different Data Sources for SDG Monitoring
3. Localizing Statistics
4. Monitoring Sector Specific Indicators
5. Setting Statistical Standards
6. Building Readiness for the SDG Challenge

It is with great confidence that by the end of this conference, we will be able to identify the needed resources, support and capacity building programs and all possible partnerships that can facilitate SDG data availability and access.

I strongly believe that this conference and with the strong support of our colleagues in the international statistical community, government, private sector, civil society, and development partners we will have a strong global data ecosystem for

monitoring SDGs. Thus, with better information, we hope to contribute to the achievement of all the targets and indicators of SDGs so that by 2030 no one is left behind.

I encourage everyone to participate actively, have a fruitful exchange of ideas and start a new partnership.

Once again, we are happy to host this milestone event on SDG statistics. We invite everyone to a welcome dinner tonight and to a city tour on October 6 organized by the PSA in cooperation with the Philippine Tourism Promotions Board (TPB). We hope that through these activities we can offer our guests the best of the Philippines.

Again, my warmest welcome greetings to all and good morning.
Mabuhay!