Thank you Chair,

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

The International Telecommunication Union or ITU expresses its thanks to ESCAP for the kind invitation to join the ninth session of the Committee on Statistics and congratulates the secretariat for the successful organization of the Asia-Pacific Statistics Week 2024.

As the United Nations specialized agency for ICTs, ITU recognises the role of SIAP in developing statistical capacity in Asia and the Pacific. To further contribute to SIAP's role, please allow us to elaborate on a few initiatives from ITU that can support this objective.

Last month, ITU launched the 2024 edition of the Measuring Digital Development: Facts and Figure report. This flagship report tracks global connectivity with estimates of key indicators, including those related to Internet use, infrastructure, affordability, Internet traffic, gender, and location. This report also includes the five ICT indicators that ITU is responsible for, as part of the Global Sustainable Development Goal Framework.

Additionally, ITU takes this opportunity to highlight the importance of universal and meaningful connectivity – the ability for everyone to go online under optimal conditions, at an affordable cost, anywhere and anytime they need. In support of this initiative, the 2024 edition of ITU's ICT Development Index was published earlier this year. May we encourage distinguished delegates to take this opportunity to review the document.

The ITU has also developed resources to support the use of mobile phone big data for official statistics and information society measurements, crucial for the monitoring of the Global Digital Compact and progress towards universal and meaningful connectivity, supported by the UN Global Assembly in its adoption of the Pact for the Future.

ITU training materials include a comprehensive Guide and ITU Python Notebooks that provide practical tools for countries to harness this new source of data. Two free online training courses on the collection of ICT statistics are available on the ITU Academy, and a new course on ICT service price statistics is under development.

Together with ESCAP, and as the regional training institute, SIAP can play a pivotal role in sharing this knowledge across countries from the region. This can be achieved through strengthened collaboration within the UN-CEBD (**UN Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics**) Training Task Team or by integrating courses on mobile phone data into SIAP's training activities, empowering countries to leverage these innovative data sources for policy and decision-making.

The International Telecommunication Union is ready to explore with SIAP the inclusion of such capacity development materials in SIAP's regional training programme.

Thank you chair.