The Video Message for the 77th session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Mr. Gogita Todradze, Executive Director of Geostat, Chair of the 7th season of the Committee on Statistic

Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

National Statistical Systems in Asia and the Pacific have an ambitious agenda, to produce, deliver and communicate a vast array of official statistics. These statistics should be relevant, trusted and meet the needs of many users.

In 2017, the Commission endorsed the report of the 5th Committee on Statistics, containing our collective vision. That by 2030, national statistical systems are enabled and empowered to lead development and deliver innovative, trusted and timely products and services for urgently needed and evolving statistical requirements of Agenda 2030 for sustainable development.

And in 2019, the Commission endorsed a declaration entitled Navigating Policy with Data to Leave No One Behind. The declaration acknowledges whole-of-government support to national statistical systems to ensure data and statistics are available for all population groups including women, migrants and the disabled, and at the local level.

Georgia was elected Chair of the Bureau of the Committee on Statistics at its 7th session in 2020. I would like to thank my colleagues for this honor. Under difficult circumstances brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, I chaired the Committee’s formal session in August 2020 and wish to acknowledge the support given to me by all countries, development partners and the secretariat. Despite the challenges of the hybrid modality, the Committee made five important decisions.

The Committee endorsed a monitoring and evaluation framework for the collective vision and declaration, and a final framework will be circulated to countries by the end of 2021.

The Committee decided to actively pursue several areas to address data gaps including the mainstreaming of gender into its activities. The Committee also agreed to focus attention on the use of big data for official statistics and the integration of data into consistent and coherent accounts. And agreed statistical capacity building and training, including through the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific should be a priority.
These decisions are timely given the recent launch of the 2021 Asia-Pacific SDG Progress report. The report highlights, data availability for the SDGs has improved from 27% in 2017 to nearly 50% in 2020. It also uses disaggregated data for 27 global SDG indicators. However, despite a lot of progress over recent years, data gaps remain. Six years into the 2030 Agenda and still 39 indicators have no data for any countries in our region and disaggregated data for key population groups including women and the disabled are missing. This highlights the important role of the National Statistical Systems and the Commission’s Committee on Statistics. We still have work to do!

The Bureau were requested to draft recommendations for implementation of these four decisions for the consideration of the Committee while bearing in mind the need to stay within existing regular budgets. The Bureau’s draft recommendations have been circulated to Committee members.

Ladies and gentlemen, while we have much to do, we are on the right path. And this year, a second Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics will take place to hear the progress, towards the region’s agreed vision, for universal registration and areas in need of acceleration. I invite you all to participate in the Ministerial to ensure we get everyone, everywhere into the picture.

I take the opportunity to thank you and our development partners for your commitment to data and statistics. The Committee’s work would not be possible without the significant contributions of donors. In particular from the Governments of Australia, China, Japan, Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom, as well as Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health initiative.

We are delivering on the data needs of the 2030 Agenda and we are delivering together.

Your support and encouragement is invaluable to our efforts.

Thank you.