Very good morning to all of you.

First of all, on behalf of the Royal Thai Government, may I extend my warm welcome to you all to Bangkok, our diverse city of Thailand. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) for inviting me to be here with you this morning.

I would also like to convey my sincere congratulations to ESCAP for organizing the third session of the Committee on Statistics, for leaders of national statistical systems and development partners to discuss matters of strategic importance to statistics development in the region, to promote cooperation aimed at supporting national efforts, and to formulate regional positions on major issues that influence global initiatives.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

A prominent priority of the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT), which is responsible for the Thai National Statistical Office, is to manage the country’s statistical system to promote evidence-based planning and policy at both national and local levels, so as to for my country to be ready for the ASEAN Community in 2015. During the past two years since the second session of the Committee on Statistics, our National Statistical Office has achieved significant progress in National Statistical Development System and in innovation of data collection.

I am happy to share with you some details of our achievement. The role of the NSO in the National Statistical Development System, as mandated by the Statistical Act, is to make
statistics relevant, useful, and timely for policy-making and decision making at both the national and local levels. One important tool for the NSO is the statistical master plan. The NSO has been implementing the first National Statistical System Master Plan (2011-2015) which was endorsed by the Cabinet.

The implementation of the Master Plan requires a close working relationship between the NSO and the Line Ministries. To ensure such a close working relationship, the Cabinet established a Statistical System Committee chaired by myself, composed of 20 ministerial permanent secretaries plus experts. In addition, 21 Sectoral Statistics Subcommittees were endorsed at the Ministerial Permanent Secretary level and appointed by the ICT Minister. The Statistical System Committee is required to submit to the Cabinet an annual report on the development of the National Statistical System. We are in the process of preparing the first report.

This implementation of the Master Plan is aiming at achieving 4 major objectives. They are;

Firstly, to effectively manage the national statistical system so as to support widely use of statistics and information for evidenced-based plans and policies and also to promote the use of administrative data so as to alleviate the burden of respondents, reduce expenditure for conducting survey and census.

Secondly, to standardize statistical data and improve statistics quality.

Thirdly, to effectively construct a statXchange [read as: stat exchange] system so as to facilitate sharing and linking official statistics and information among all government agencies.

Fourthly, to develop an Executive Information System (EIS) to support the executive decision making.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to mention another major achievement of the Thai NSO, under my leadership.

I give priority to SMART Government. With this priority, the Thai NSO has shifted their data collection from traditional way into more IT-oriented methods. For example, Tablet PC’s are used in conducting the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey or MICS4, with support by UNICEF. Next year, the NSO will expand the use of Tablet PC into conducting Agricultural Census. With the use of Tablet PC, the Thai NSO will obtain higher quality data in a shorter time, as the devices are expected to shorten the time of data collection and processing, and help control data quality.
Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the Minister of overseeing the National Statistical Office, I see first-hand the importance of statistical data for evidence-based planning and policy-making, especially in times of unpredicted events. Hence, I give full support to the Thai NSO in producing timely, relevant and quality statistical data and information.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am extremely delighted to learn that the Committee will discuss and decide on regional solutions to strengthen economic, population and social, agricultural and environment statistics, as well as improved coordination of statistical capacity-building. These are certainly priorities for Thailand, but in my view they are priorities for the ESCAP region as well. So you have an important and challenge task ahead of you over the next three days. I am, however, confident that through exchange of views and the sharing experiences and lessons, the Committee will come up with recommendations of concrete steps that we collectively can take to promote evidence-based planning and policies, with the ultimate goal of improving the lives of our peoples. I look forward to hearing the outcomes of your deliberations.

I wish you all a fruitful discussion and have a pleasant stay in Bangkok.

Thank you very much.