

**Regional Workshop on the Changing Role of Official Statistics in The State of Qatar:  
Why the Data Culture Matters**

21<sup>st</sup> -22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022, Doha, Qatar

Your Excellency, Dr. Saleh M. Al-Nabit, President of the Planning and Statistics Authority Qatar, dear statistical colleagues and friends,

I am honoured and very pleased to address you today on the occasion of this Regional Workshop on the Changing Role of Official Statistics: Why Data Culture Matters. It is, indeed very timely to consider these issues.

We are living through difficult and challenging times: The combined effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the climate crisis and the war in Ukraine and conflicts elsewhere represent enormous challenges to global progress made over past decades. The demands for high quality information to make informed policy decisions seems to be ever increasing – on all levels: national, subregional, regional and global. Users want more data, better data, more timely data and more granular data. This is why we have to innovate, use new data sources and work in effective partnership with other data producers, such as big data and geospatial information. This implies a changing role for national statistical offices, as the title of your workshop implies: The concept of Data Stewardship is now being widely discussed, including at the United Nations Statistical Commission. National Statistical Office are no longer only the producer of trusted official classical national statistics such as population data and national accounts. They also have to play a leading role for a better coordinated and integrated national statistical and information system. Such a new system brings together data from a variety of government sources and beyond and processes them through standard quality assurance procedures to make them available to data users for informed decision making. The notion of quality is thereby critically important, to maintain the trust of data users. Experienced national official statisticians are well versed in matters of quality assurance. So they need to engage actively in a dialogue with users, to ensure that the information produced and disseminated is relevant, fit for purpose, a result of rigorous scientific production methods and compliant with international standards. The Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, which were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly are our universal guide here.

One way to lessen the burden of individual national statistical offices is to work together across borders and share experiences, in professional solidarity with the global statistical community. This workshop is a wonderful opportunity to do exactly this. I am a big believer in sub-regional and regional cooperation, as it brings countries with the same language and similar historical experiences and socio-economic characteristics together. My office, the United Nations Statistics Division has worked closely with our colleagues and partners in the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA) and in the Gulf Cooperation Council and we strongly welcome the regional dimension of this event.

Your Excellency, dear colleagues,

I remain deeply impressed, how active the global statistical community has been, even during the worst days of the pandemic. We stayed connected, we engaged, we innovated, we worked with new information sources and new partners and we gave the world the data it urgently needed. We supported each other with our experiences. This is possible because we speak the same professional language, adhere to the same fundamental principles. I extend a warm welcome to all of you to come here to the United Nations Headquarters in New York next year in March to participate actively in the 54<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Statistical Commission and help shape our future programme of global statistical cooperation.

It is in this spirit that I wish you a successful workshop!