**80th Session of the Economic and Social Commission**

**for Asia and the Pacific**

**Building statistical capacity in a digital and disaster-prone world:  
Celebrating milestones**

A Commemorative Side Event for the 70th Year of Japan’s ODA and Membership to ESCAP

Bangkok and online, 22nd April, 1:15 p.m.

**CONCEPT NOTE**

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| **Scope and Purpose** |

The side event will showcase Japan’s longstanding support for the work of the UN, especially for ESCAP and the UN Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP), highlighting the key role that SIAP plays in strengthening human capacity for production, management and use of statistics/ data in developing countries and how this is helping to track progress in countries’ implementation of the sustainable development goals, whilst safeguarding the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.

These Principles provide a collective manifesto for serving various segments of society with impartial, relevant and accurate information to guide decisions, and underpin everything producers of official statistics do. Implementation of these principles can be put at risk amid unexpected events including natural disasters, and in an increasingly digital world --- an issue which is relevant in the disaster-prone Asia-Pacific region.

The speakers in this session will highlight the challenges and opportunities in building statistical capacity in an increasingly digital and disaster-prone world, with a view to identifying lessons learned and ways forward in terms of new actions in the region.

The session will also share UNDP’s experiences on how countries in the region can address the pressing need to change how disaster data is managed where institutions cannot share, analyse, visualize, and use data for policymaking, programme planning, budgeting, and, more importantly, identifying who is most in need of these interventions --- with a view to reviewing the way how vital information can be disseminated and used by duty bearers and rights holders, especially those that are most vulnerable.

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| **Host and Sponsor** |

The event is sponsored and hosted by the Government of Japan, given their ongoing support for the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific. The event was organized in partnership with SIAP, ESCAP Statistics Division, UNDP, JICA and the Embassy of Japan.

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| **Format** |

The event is structured as follows:

1. Introduction by H.E. Mr. OTAKA, Ambassador of Japan to the Kingdom of Thailand
2. **Keynote speech by the Government of Japan (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications)** on the challenges and importance of producing impartial, relevant accurate, and uninterrupted streams of information and statistical systems, even amidst disasters, in alignment with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, in disaster-prone and digital-sensitive Asia-Pacific region. The speech will highlight some challenges and lessons learnt in ensuring accuracy and constancy of data and measurements, from the perspective of mainstreaming both the Fundamental Principles and disaster prevention, and share lessons learnt in Japan in its continuous effort to improve its response to disasters and ensure statistical measurements.
3. **Setting the scene: Brief overview by the Director of SIAP** on statistics on the number of graduates from SIAP’s training sessions/ capacity development program (geographic representation of graduates and their work distribution)
4. **Panel discussion on building statistical capacity in a digital and disaster-prone world.** The objective will be to have high level speakers who are part of the SIAP alumni from various data-driven policy areas including experience in National Statistical Offices.

The first question will be a general one focusing on the role of SIAP:

* What role has SIAP played in building statistical capacity in your national statistical office/ affected work in other broader policy areas, where applicable?

In the second round of questions the focus will move to consider challenges and opportunities faced by national statistical offices including government offices as they work in a rapidly changing data ecosystem: i.e.,

* In the digital world, what do you see as the biggest challenge in ensuring constancy and accuracy of official statistics?
* What do you see as the biggest opportunity linked to production, distribution, management, and use of accurate/independent official statistics in your country in the coming years?

The third round of questions will highlight:

* Voices from stakeholders about importance of accurate data collection and measurements during emergencies/disasters, and expectations for future relevant training programs
* UNDP’s experience of assisting governments in the region (Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka) to help identify data and capacity gaps for disaster risk reduction by promoting relevant and optimal IT capacities and digital data governance ---- an experience, later scaled up toward other countries in different regions.
* Recap on theme of human capacity development at ESCAP/SIAP in a digital and unpredictable era ---- including exploring potential ways forward in realizing synergies among multilateral, bilateral, south-south cooperation efforts involving various stakeholders.

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| **Background and relevance to the agenda for the 80th session of the Commission** |

This side event will link to the Commission’s focus on “Leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific”. Official statistics are a key part of the digital innovation agenda providing trusted quality information for policy makers and to hold governments to account.

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| Time | Agenda Item |
| 13:15-13:20 | **Opening Remarks**  by Government of Japan (H.E. Mr. OTAKA, Ambassador of Japan to the Kingdom of Thailand) |
| 13:20-13:35 | **Keynote speech**  by Mr. Ogawa, Government of Japan (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications) on the challenges and importance of producing impartial, relevant accurate, and uninterrupted streams of information and statistical systems, even amidst disasters, in alignment with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, in disaster-prone and digital-sensitive Asia-Pacific region. |
| 13:35-13:38 | **Setting the scene**  by Director of SIAP (Dr. Shailja Sharma)  Short Introduction on SIAP/ESCAP’s capacity building assistance |
| 13:38-14:02 | **Panel discussion on challenges and opportunities in building statistical capacity in a digital and disaster-prone world**  Moderator: Director of SIAP  Panelists: Chief Statisticians of Maldives, Samoa and Tonga  • Role SIAP played in building statistical capacity in national statistical office/ affected work in other broader policy areas, where applicable  • In the digital world, what is the biggest challenge in ensuring constancy and accuracy of official statistics?  • What is the biggest opportunity linked to production, distribution, management and use of accurate/independent official statistics in your country in the coming years?  • Voices from Emergency-related stakeholders/ organizations about importance of accurate data collection and measurements during emergencies/disasters, and expectations for future relevant training programs  • Recap on theme of human capacity development at ESCAP/SIAP in a digital and unpredictable era ---- including exploring potential ways forward in realizing synergies among multilateral, bilateral, south-south cooperation efforts involving various stakeholders. |
| 14.02-14.11 | **Presentation by UNDP on Digitalization for Disaster Risk Reduction:**  Case studies drawn from the Philippines, Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka  (Mr. R. Sharma, Global Programme Specialist for Disaster Risk Information) |
| 14:11-14:15 | **Closing Remarks:** Japan International Cooperation Agency  (Board Member and Senior Vice President, Mr. Oba) |

Meeting Link

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/7063113691?pwd=lDcL7wGEEScbbRd6bb1qMJ6zW1f0KN.1&omn=89266847005>