



UNITED NATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
STATISTICS DIVISION

**A Global Assembly on Measuring Civil Society
and Volunteering
Bonn, Germany, 25-27 September 2007**

Opening Statement

Paul Cheung, Director
United Nations Statistics Division

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you here in Bonn for the Global Assembly on Measuring Civil Society and Volunteering. Let me start by congratulating the Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies, under the leadership of Mr Lester Salamon, the United Nations Volunteers and the participating countries with the progress you have made with the implementation of the guidelines of *Handbook on Nonprofit Institutions in the System of National Accounts (NPI Handbook)*. Your work clearly highlights the importance of civil society and volunteering in the economy.

I am also pleased to learn that the International Labour Organization is also actively participating in this project by developing concepts and definitions of labour statistics of civil society. Similarly, we are honored to have here with us today additional countries, showing interest to implement the guidelines to measure civil society. You have put in motion a process to improve data on the global nonprofit sector and place it firmly in the domain of official statistics.

This Assembly marks an important milestone on the path to create and institutionalize the capability necessary to generate timely and reliable statistics on the civil society sector for comparable analysis. It is indeed heartening to see how fruitful the dedicated efforts of a committed team can be. This project sets an example of how to approach the difficult task of implementing international statistical standards and guidelines.

Apart from the challenges brought about by the implementation process, the *NPI project* should take cognizance of updates of international statistical standards, which may have an impact on the project. Firstly, the changes to the *International Classification of Non-Profit Organizations (ICNPO)* which were brought in line with the recent release of the fourth revision of the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC rev. 4). Secondly, the *NPI handbook* should be updated to reflect the new guidelines from the updated *1993 System of National Accounts (1993 SNA)*.

The purpose of the *1993 SNA* update is mainly to bring the accounts in line with the new economic environment, advances in methodological research and needs of users, without fundamental or comprehensive changes that would impede its implantation. It was also possible to incorporate some clarifications in the SNA guidelines. Of importance to us gathered here today is the clearer delineation of non-profit institutions and non-market output in the SNA. The new guidelines would make it easier to separate the transactions of non-profit institutions from that of the rest of the economy.

It is important to capitalize on the present momentum, attained from the *NPI handbook* implementation process, to initiate an update of the Handbook. A clear programme of work and coordination mechanisms should be established in order to ensure a successful take off of an update process. This is necessary to ensure the success of the final result.

You can be proud of your achievements, and be very confident that your work is more relevant than ever before, as the demand for reliable, comparable, and high-quality statistical data continues to rise.

We at the UNSD are committed as ever before to work with you and to facilitate the advancement of the recognition of non-profit institutions in the global statistical system.

Thank you.