**ANNEX-VIII**

**7thMeeting of the Heads of National Statistics Offices (7MHNSO)**

**September 20, 2023**

**Dear Heads and representatives from National Statistical Organizations, representatives from ECO and other government representatives from Member Countries**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I feel honored to congratulate ECO Secretariat for organizing this meeting and convey gratitude on behalf of my country, Pakistan, and Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) was restructured in 2011 to make the organization more responsive to the national requirements, with increased autonomy and better coordination and integration of different data collecting agencies in the country.

In year 2020, The National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) for 2021 to 2030 was developed. The NSDS provides a vision for the National Statistical System (NSS) of Pakistan in coming ten years and sets milestones for getting there. The NSDS presents a comprehensive and integrated framework for continual assessment of evolving user needs and priorities for official statistics and for building the capacity needed to meet these priorities in a more effective manner.

PBS has brought a paradigm shift in data collection and dissemination by moving from paper based data collection to electronic data collection with monitoring dash boards. Systems such as **Tablet Based Price Data Collection System (TPCS), Decision Support System for Inflation (DSSI), Data Dissemination System** and **Digitization of area frame** have been introduced with indigenous capacity to develop support software for such systems.

**Worthy members of ECO secretariat,**

I would like to apprise you that PBS has recently completed the 7th Population & Housing Census; the first ever digital census with the population of241.49 million. In this Population & Housing Census, we have also completed Economic Frame of Pakistan. PBShas rebased its national accounts from 2005-06 to 2015-16. Now, PBS has embarked upon rebasing the GDP to 2024-25. In this context, about 50 surveys and censuses which include IAC, CMI, Family Budget Survey (FBS), Labour Force Survey (LFS), Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES)will be conducted. PBS has planned to finish this exercise by end of 2026. PBS has published **district level representative Labor Force Statistics** for the first time, earlier LFS was representative at provincial level. Moreover, PBS has completed the **Pakistan Demographic Survey** (PDS) which is the **twentieth round** of a series of surveys, initiatedin 1984.

PSLM, being the flagship survey of PBS, collects information on key socioeconomic indicators which are the main source of estimation of Multi-Dimensional Poverty. PBS, being NSO, is the main agency for monitoring & reporting of SDGS and providing the data on 58 indicators, out of which 31 indicators are monitored through PSLM Survey.

As you may be aware that Pakistan has Federal structure in which Federating Units, i.e. provinces are empowered to undertake legislation and policy in various socioeconomic areas, including official statistics. This necessitates the creation of a robust **National Statistical System (NSS)**. PBS through the NSS is planning to bring all the provinces at par so that they may be able to compile provincial GDPs in collaboration with PBS. Efforts are also being made to involve Provinces in Price data collection and enable them to compile inflation numbers at sub-national levels. These endeavors will not only improve efficiency and effectiveness of statistics but will also strengthen the federation by reinforcing mutual benefits.

**Excellencies,**

You know it well that current landscape of data comprises public and private sector which collects data through various ways including monetary transactions, websites, social media, communication, mobility, health records etc.; however, despite their immense usefulness of data collected by private sector, none of this data is part of official statistics. PBS is engaging with private sector on rental and property value, point of sale, online retailing and merchandizing, eateries restaurants and food delivery, recreation and tourism etc. to explore possibilities of making these entities part of NSS. Building on collaboration between PBS and private sector for big data, our plan is to transform PBS into Knowledge and Business organization by using big data, data analytics, and AI for specific areas like GDP estimation, inflation estimation, and demand and supply estimation etc.

**Excellencies,**

As you know Quarterly National Accounts (QNA) constitutes a system of integrated quarterly time series coordinated through an accounting framework. PBS, with the collaboration of the World Bank, has completed QNA and QNA for the 1st quarter of FY 2023-24, it will be officially published on 30th November, 2023. From where it will become regular exercise.

Like Quarterly GDP, there is a national demand from PBS to come up with more frequent labor data; especially, employment, wage, TVET, and re-employment. PBS has deliberated on it and realized that frequent labor data is hard to collect in conventional survey mode. It is therefore useful to integrate social, monetary, banking, and establishment level data to create a system of developing more frequent employment related numbers. However, this work is at planning stage.

Expanding on PBS plans to supplement and substitute the conventional surveys with social, cellular, and transaction data, PBS is engaging with big and medium size retailers and wholesalers to strengthen the price collection system for Sensitive, Consumer, and Wholesaler price indices. Once it matures, we plan to increase our reliance on these sources for price indices.

In whole price indices chain, Pakistan has a missing link of Producer Price Index, which tracks the prices between farm gate and wholesaler. PBS has sought IMF assistance to develop this index.

PBS also devised the **New Dimension of Integrated Agricultural Census (IAC)-2024.**Previously, similar type of households was approached thrice to collect information on agriculture land and crops, livestock and agricultural machinery separately. Huge samples of Households were used to conduct three censuses using three different Sample Designs. Therefore, PBS has merged these censuses to save time and cost.This way, the activity of village census, Agriculture census, Livestock census &Machinery census which was cycle of decade will be completed in less than five years. Integrated Agriculture, Livestock and Machinery censuses will be completed by end of 2024.

Cognizant of provision of natural resources due to housing and population growth, PBS has started preparation of Natural Capital Account,so that economic growth sustainability vis-a-vis squeezed natural resources may be at certain stage of planning.

**Dignitaries,**

I conclude my talk on a note that digitalization has reshaped our lives and works and it is continued. It is high time for member countries to realize the dire need to catch up and not to trail. This realization has to affect our information system, investment decisions, trade decisions, regional value chains so that mutually beneficial engagement between member countries can be deepened further.