Ladies and gentleman
Distinguished participants
New colleagues and old friends,

On behalf of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Montreal, the UNESCO Regional Bureau of Education, Bangkok Thailand, and UNESCO Hanoi, I am very pleased on this occasion to join with you here in Viet Nam for the launch of a joint MOET / UNESCO training programme.

First of all, I would like to convey warm wishes for the success of the workshop on behalf of Dr Ko-Chih Tung, the UIS Regional Advisor and Mr Shiu-kee Chu, Head of the UNESCO Hanoi office.

My colleague and I are honored to be with you on this occasion as we seek solutions to fundamental challenges which you face not only here in Viet Nam, but across the entire region as well.

Education of good quality is a basic human right for all children. This right is mandated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the World Declaration on Education for All, the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals.

The Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam has agreed to all these conventions in principle and practice, but the responsibilities for realizing these goals lie within all of us.
As statisticians (and education planners), we bear the responsibility to uphold the rights of all children through the provision of timely and relevant data of good quality and coverage. Of course, this is responsibility is not just our own. With data in hand, we entrust our national policy makers to take the necessary and appropriate steps to analyze, plan, budget and implement a national education system which meets the needs of our children and all children across this nation.

Education of good quality requires data of good quality and thus this process begins with us.

And so we all have much to learn together. This week we face the important task of building on our experiences, learning from the past and developing together the capacities to support the information needs of the country.

Therefore, it is our honour to be here, to participate in this workshop, to support your commitment to advancing the basic right to education, and to encourage you all to face the work and challenges that lie ahead with an open mind, with a sense of enthusiasm and with the collective responsibility for the child in the forefront of your minds.

This workshop signifies the most recent step in a long and fruitful collaboration between the Ministry of Education and Training and UNESCO. We look forward to building on the wealth of expertise
within this room and to develop together the strengths and abilities necessary to meet the challenges which lie ahead.

This is the second workshop of this kind we have conducted in Viet Nam. The first workshop was held in Hanoi in August last year, with central and provincial education planners mainly from Northern regions participating. This workshop is intended for education officials from the central region of Viet Nam. We are also planning a similar workshop to train education officials from southern region sometime in November or December.

It is our hope that in the future, workshops of this kind will be replicated in all districts under the leadership of the Government to strengthen district education officials’ capacities in education statistics and planning.

Finally, I will close with a word of thanks to our hosts here in Hue, the Ministry/MOET from Hanoi for making this workshop a reality and to the UNECO Office Hanoi for such close collaboration and support. This workshop would not be possible without the financial support of the European Commission. And finally, our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to the participants of this workshop for your commitment in being here and for your future actions to come up with quality data in education.

To all of you, my most heartfelt thanks.