1. Congratulation and Acknowledgement

The SCORUS Conference of IAOS has traversed a course of a half century. First of all, I would like to express our warm congratulations on the fiftieth anniversary of SCORUS Conference on behalf of Chinese urban statisticians. The fiftieth anniversary adds to joyous atmosphere and special meaning of this 25th conference. At this moment, my Chinese colleagues and I are honored to share this glory and happiness with you, my worshipful worldwide counterparts.

Development of human history indicates that the urban development and regional development are of close association. Modern city is a fruitage of high development of social economy and an outcome for the development of science, culture and history, as well as an important milestone of history advancement of human civilization. Cities, especially modern cities, have already become economic development center and cultural center in regional society and creation center for promoting national or regional sustainable development. City’s development is affected and restricted by varies factors in its region, e.g. economic condition, geographic location, natural sources, social factors, infrastructures and ecological environment etc, including the positive and negative. For the past fifties years, the SCORUS Conference has made great contribution on positively supporting governments’ statistics departments and researchers on regional and urban...
statistics as well as scientific research, supplying scientific and reliable basis for
government policies on regional and urban development, hereby promoting regional and
urban coordinated and sustained development.

Since 1980s, Chinese statisticians have gradually strengthened association with SCORUS.
Especially after the successful holding of the 22\textsuperscript{nd} SCORUS Conference in Shenzhen,
China in 2000, Chinese statisticians actively attended SCORUS activities and learned lots
of advanced theories and methods, which promoted domestic academic research and
improved actual statistics work. I would like to take this opportunity to send our sincere
appreciation on behalf of Chinese urban statisticians to SCORUS and my worldwide
counterparts and friends.

2. Urban Development and Urban Statistics Work in China

2.1 China’s Urban Development in Recent 50 Years

50 years ago, China had about 160 cities with an urbanization rate of only about 7\%, i.e.
93\% population lived in rural area. At that time, the urbanization rate was far behind of
the world level.

According to the latest statistics files, China had 661 cities in total in 2004. There were
287 prefectural and superior cities including the four municipality directly under the
Central Government (i.e. Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai and Chongqing), and 387
county-level cities. Among these cities, 12 cities had a population over 4 millions and 163
cities had a population of 1 million to 4 millions respectively. In addition, there were
small towns more than 20,000. Total city quantity had increased by three times to the year
1956. Urbanization rate in 2004 was 41.8\%, which had increased by five times to the year
1956.

2.2 Important Effect of Urbanization to the Development of Regional and National
Economy

China’s economy and society development is continuously improved in the company of
urbanization progress. In 1956 of 50 years ago, urbanization rate was only 7\% with a
lower level of GDP. However, in 2004 China’s urbanization rate had increased to 41.8\%
with a total GDP volume of 16,000 billions RMB, which supported China to be the 6th in the world. The total population in the 287 prefectural and superior cities was 351 millions, covering about 27% of China’s population, GDP (in the year 2003) in these cities was 7,480 billions, covering 64% of the whole China; total retail sales of consumer goods was 2,800 billions RMB which represented 61%; fixed assets investment completed 4,200 billions RMB which represented 60%; and local fiscal revenue (including that of city-administrated counties) was 967.3 billions RMB, covering 81% of the whole China.

Urban flourishing development has given birth to three well-known economic circles in China, i.e. Yangtse Delta Economic Region, Pearl River Delta Economic Region and Circum-Bohai Economic Region. In one word, city is able to fully bring into play its functions of congregation, innovation, coordination and influence, and plays an utmost important roles in development of regional and national economic societies. It can be said that urbanization has become an unavoidable developing trend in China’s modernization progress and been an important platform in current construction of well-off and harmonious society in China.

2.3 Regional and Urban Statistics and Research in China
1) National Bureau of Statistics carried out the first urban survey in 1962 and collected basic data of 39 main cities in nearly 200 cities.
2) Investigation of basic information on all about 180 cities was organized and carried out in 1972.
3) In 1979, the indicators of urban statistics was improved so that urban statistics system of national statistics had taken initial shape.
4) The improved annal survey of the urban statistics, with totally 220 indicators in five categories, was formally incorporated in national statistics system. Now there are specificel organizations for urban statistics and statisticians in National Bureau of Statistics(NBS) and 31 provinces (including autonomous region or municipality directly under the Central Government) as well as more than 200 large and medium cities.
5) Publish *Urban Statistical Yearbook* and *Statistical Yearbook for Yangtse Delta, Pearl River Delta and Hong Kong and Macau SAR* on a yearly basis.

6) Make statistics Research and Economic Analysis on a Big Scale
   ① Organize *Forum for Delta Economic Development*.
   ② Work on statistics and analysis for China’s east, central and west parts.
   A. East Part (10): Beijing, Tianjin, Liaoning, Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, Shandong, Guangdong and Hainan.
   C. West Part (11): Inner Mongolia, Chongqing, Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Tibet, Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai, Ningxia and Xinjiang.
   ③ Comparison of comprehensive strength among 280 prefectural and superior cities are organized in terms of 52 indicators of the 5 categories, which attracted great attention of Central Government and local governments at all levels.
   ④ In recent years, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences has conducted research on competitiveness of 200 cities and published research results, which have been popularly concerned.
   ⑤ Lots of social academic organizations relating to correlative regional and urban economic statistics were set up from the Central Government to the local governments.
   ⑥ Economic Analysis, e.g.:
     - Chinese Urban Development Report (Annual),
     - Comparison on Economic Development in East, Central and West Parts of China,
     - Comparison on Urban Development of East, Central and West Parts of China,
     - Urbanization Research,
     - Research on Urban Poverty,
     - Research on Urban Floating People,
     - And Comparison on Urbanization Progress Home and Abroad.
   In which many research results have been adopted as proofs for governmental decisions.

3. Opportunities, Challenges and Prospects of China’s Regional and Urban Statistics
3.1 Opportunities

1) *National Economic and Social Development Planning in Term of 11th Five-Year Period* constituted by Central Government ensures an excellent policy environment.

① Quicken urbanization progress, comprehensively promote flourishing rural economy and plan urban and rural economic and social development as a whole.

② Gradually enhance urbanization level and insist on harmonious development of varies scopes of large, medium and small cities as well as small towns along the road of urbanization with Chinese characteristics.

③ Advance harmonious development on regional economy.
   - Implement the strategy of West Grand Development and strengthen supporting to the western regions.
   - Promote the adjustment and reconstruction of old industrial bases like northeastern region.
   - Accelerate the progress of industrialization and urbanization of central parts for earlier grown up.
   - Encourage east developed regions to develop first and achieve modernization in advance.
   - Strengthen economic exchanges and cooperation between east, central, and west parts so as to form a number of distinctive economic zones and belts.

2) The development of Chinese urbanization has a wide developing prospect.

Urbanization rates in developed countries are over 80% and the average rate of urbanization all over the world is nearly 50%. Under the comparison, China’s urbanization has a broad space to develop.

3) Regional and urban statistics of more than 40 years has set a solid basis.

3.2 Challenges

1) Challenges of Economic globalization, industrialization and informationalization to regional economic development and urbanization: how to confirm the ideal mode of future urban development.

2) How to scientifically definite urban and rural area now is facing many problems.
Chinese current definition standards for urban and rural regions mainly concern for requirements of administrative management, and essential meanings and the differences of urban and rural regions could not be comprehensively or scientifically shown.

3) Statistics on population settling into urban area from rural area and floating people is a weak segment while there will be more than 100 millions such persons in next 10 years.

4) There lacks of unified definition standards for urban and rural regions. It is inconvenient to collect statistics information of main international cities, which brings lots of problems for international exchanges, cooperation and comparison as well as research.

3.4 Innovation and Development

Being closely linked to analysis and decision requirements of Central Government and local governments and requirements of social public and international society, quicken innovation and perfect the regional and urban statistics system, improve the

1. Further strengthen the research of urban and rural definition, and ratify and perfect current scheme on progress.

2. Follow up new situation to continuously enrich and perfect currently existing urban statistics system. For example, add up statistical contents of floating population in regular urban household survey, and periodically develop once-for-all special investigation; as well as add up urban informatization statistics and research.

3. Strengthen statistical research on east, Central and west areas and different economic cycles and belts.

4. Make great efforts to study and training work for urban statistics workers all over the country so as to improve their theoretical and actual work capacities.

5. Periodically hold a scientific symposium on regional and urban statistics, give full play of strength of national statistics authorities, educational departments and research institutes, social academic associations (such as Urban Statistics Commission, the National Statistical Society of China, China Society of Urban Economy, and Chinese Society For Urban Studies)

6. Strengthen links, communications and co-operations with SCORUS and
colleagues and friends all over the world, introduce and absorb internationally advanced achievements and promote domestic work so as to jointly strive for establishing and perfecting regional and urban statistical standards and indicators system, hereby laying solid foundation for further bringing into play important roles of regional and urban statistics in economic and social development in different countries.

I am confident that China’s regional and urban statistics has played an important role in promoting urban and regional development, as well as all China’s economic and social development. In the future, China’s regional and urban statistics will make great contribution to execute the target of the “11th Five-Year Plan” and even brighter target.

IV. Suggestions

Considering of uniqueness and authority of SCORUS in this field, SCORUS is hoped to adequately bring into playing its organizational and coordinate role and obtain breakthrough from the following two aspects:

1. Suggest Statistics Division of United Unions to organize experts to research and establish global urban statistical system (including urban and rural definition standard and indicators system) and statistical data reporting system and promulgate data and strengthen analytical research.

2. Under the current circumstance, it is suggested to establish the submitting system of urban statistics data among international metropolis first, especially among capitals of different countries.

The aforesaid work will be helpful for all countries, especially for vast developing countries including China, to develop international comparison and research on urban development, absorb useful experience from other countries so as to avoid occurrence of “deficiency of urbanization” or “excessive urbanization”, promote regional development with scientific and continuable urbanization and become a strong driving force to promote economic and social development for all countries.

At present, the economic globalization and informatization has brought up an opportunity for the development of global urbanization, but such development is facing
constraint from resources and environment. The traditional mode of excessively chasing “giant urban development” is impossible to bring up a sustainable development. In the future the idea urban development mode should take many factors such as economy, sociality, culture, resource and environment into consideration. Now urban statistics and research is facing lots of new subjects. I believe, international regional and urban statistical research will have a more and more wider stage, and be prosperous in the future. I sincerely wish SCORUS keep youth forever! In conclusion, I welcome all colleagues and friends to visit to Beijing, to China.