On behalf of the organizing committee, it is a great honor to welcome you to World Bank Headquarters for the third public debt management conference organized by the Public Debt Management Network.

The Network is a collaboration between the Italian Treasury, OECD, and the World Bank. What the network does in addition to organizing this public debt management conference is having quarterly webinars on issues related to debt management and providing information and knowledge through the PDM Network website. You can find more information in your folders, and if you have not signed up on the website already, you should do that. As the last activity today before the cocktails, you can learn much more about the network.

When this type of conference – mixing debt managers and academics – was suggested back in 2018, we from the World Bank were quite skeptical whether it would work. Following two successful conferences in 2019 and 2022, this year we had 65 papers submitted, had to stop the in-person registration at 200 participants, and on top of that we have 240 signed up for online connection. In other words, there seems to be interest.

Before the official opening, let me walk you through a few practical issues:

- You have the program with you, and as you can see, most of the activities will be here in this room.
- Bathrooms are outside to the left.
- Breakfast and lunch will be served right outside, where we will also have the coffee breaks.
- At 12.15, before we break for lunch, we will have a group photo taken in the Atrium.
- At the end of today there will be a cocktail reception – also in the area outside.
- Tomorrow, we start at 9 with two breakout sessions – you will either come here or go to the 1st basement floor (C1) to C1-100.

If you have questions, grab hold of Patricia Mendez or Regina Okonkwo.

With that, let me hand over to Frederico Gil Sander, Practice Manager in the Macroeconomics Trade and Investment Global Practice here in the Bank.