
Friday Seminar on Emerging Issues

Towards Better Information Systems for the 2030 Agenda

- use of administrative records, big data and geospatial information

**Friday 4 March 2016,
10:00 am- 6:00 pm
Venue: Conference Room 4 (CB)
United Nations, New York**

The global community unanimously adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development on 25 September 2015 at the United Nations in New York. The 2030 Agenda is anchored by 17 universal sustainable development goals (SDGs), 169 targets and a global indicator framework. The outcome document, through the UN General Assembly, requested the statistical community to define the set of global indicators and to build the capacity to measure and monitor progress on these goals and targets.

The 2030 Agenda specifically demands the need for new data acquisition and integration approaches to improve the availability, quality, timeliness and disaggregation of data to support the implementation of the new development agenda at all levels. Data, as the basis for evidence-based decision-making and accountability, will be crucial to its success. The new reporting requirements for this Agenda imply a significant increase in the number and complexity of indicators to be compiled and disseminated. High-level political support at country level is needed to provide an enabling environment for the national statistical system to produce a large and integrated set of indicators in support of the national sustainable development plans. Therefore, this year's Friday Seminar is organised as a high level dialogue between the political and statistical community on building the institutional and statistical pre-requisites to meet the data needs for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development together.

It is now well recognized that the existing data gaps can only be overcome through strengthening of the national statistical systems. Further, SDG monitoring requires extensive use of traditional and non-traditional data sources and instruments, including geospatial and other Big Data. In this context, the fuller exploitation of administrative sources, under the modern data production architecture, is especially critical. Moreover, the building and maintenance of high quality registers and frames for persons and households; enterprises and corporations; and geospatial location are essential. These registers and frames will determine the data collections from surveys, from administrative registers, as well as other data sources. Together this should result in a multi-dimensional data system consisting of: economic, social and environmental dimensions; national, regional and local geospatial dimensions; and the thematic or sectoral dimensions represented by the SDGs.

The organization and management of such a national system of statistical information for monitoring the SDGs necessitates, above all else, effective leadership and coordination. The role of a lead agency, commonly assumed by the National Statistical Office (NSO) or similar institution, should be empowered by national legislation to assume such leadership, based on its statistical expertise, professional independence and integrity.

The multi-dimensional nature and breadth of the SDG indicators, commensurate with the supporting national system of statistical information, also warrants a multi-stakeholder partnership of producers and users of statistical information at the country level. Existing national coordination mechanisms, previously established for monitoring and reporting on the MDGs, may need to be reviewed so as to broaden the scope of the socio-economic information system to include the environmental and geospatial information system. Subsequently, the national coordination mechanisms and legislative mandates have to be broadened to include the environmental and geospatial related departments.

Due to their breadth, monitoring of the SDGs will require significant improvements in the statistical quality dimensions of conceptual coherence, timeliness and level of dis-aggregation of the indicators. Those quality improvements will support a refined analysis of progress in achieving goals and targets and can ensure policies that are formulated and implemented towards the objective to “leave no one behind”. Thus, the agenda for the Friday Seminar is organised into four inter-related segments that will discuss and address the statistical prerequisites for the 2030 Agenda.

The first segment will consist of a panel of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations and chaired by the President of the General Assembly. This panel will address the monitoring and reporting requirements of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the need for high-level political support for the design and implementation of the national multi-dimensional information system. The three other segments will focus on the registers and frames. The second segment will draw institutional lessons from the recent efforts to strengthen civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) programmes. The third segment will address the creation and maintenance of statistical business registers, and the use of administrative data and Big Data. The fourth segment will draw lessons from the creation and maintenance of built and natural environment data and their application to the ‘geo-statistical’ dimension of the multi-dimensional information system

The panels in these segments will consist of Chief Statisticians and senior subject-matter experts, and will discuss the creation and maintenance of registers and frames and their relation to a coherent multi-dimensional national system of statistical information from which SDG indicators can be derived. The Friday Seminar’s high-level dialogue will formulate the conclusions and way forward in a concluding session.