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Regional workshop on the use of mobile phone data for official statistics

11 – 14 June 2019, Jakarta, Indonesia
Hosted by the BPS Statistics Indonesia

Concept note

In September 2015, the international community agreed to 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with 169 targets to be achieved by 2030 - a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. To monitor progress, a global set of SDG indicators has been developed which all countries are required to regularly report on.

For example, SDG indicators should help to monitor progress on target 8.9 (to promote sustainable tourism which creates jobs, promotes local culture and products) or target 10.7 (to facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people). Traditional data collection methods, such as surveys, are not sufficient to address the increased demand for timely, frequent and granular data.

For this reason, the UN Statistical Commission created – in 2014 – the UN Global Working Group (GWG) on Big Data for official statistics to develop and test the use of new data sources and new technologies. The aim of the GWG is to lower the barriers of entry, particularly for developing countries, in the use of Big Data, such as satellite data, mobile phone data, scanner data, and social media data.

Mobile phone data could help determine where tourists and migrants come from, how long they stay and where they go. Data could also be used for establishing commuter patterns and traffic monitoring as well as support urban planning. The granularity of information which potentially can be obtained through using mobile phone data is much higher than what can be obtained through traditional surveys. The time lag from data collection to analysis could also be significantly reduced.

The workshop will introduce the use of mobile phone data in the statistical production process. It will explain what mobile phone data are, why and how they need to be pre-processed and how we can derive statistics from them. How mobile phone data can complement traditional data sources and the use of non traditional methods and data sources for producing official statistics will also be discussed. Sample data sets will be used for hands-on work. Further, case studies will be described from a few countries where mobile phone data have already been used for official statistics. Finally, the work of the Task Team on the Use of Mobile Phone Data of the

UN Global Working Group on Big Data will be highlighted and the UN Global Platform will also be described, as a digital platform enabling international collaboration.

Participants at the workshop will be statisticians from selected ESCAP member states as well as resource persons from UNSD, ESCAP, GlobalPulse Lab Jakarta and consultants. National Statistical offices are asked to nominate two officials to participate in this workshop. Participants should have working experience with tourism, migration or population statistics, with data science or machine learning techniques or with any related area. The workshop will be conducted in English.

The workshop will feed into the work of the UN Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics to develop a Handbook on the use of Mobile Phone data for Official Statistics and an e-learning training programme on use of mobile phone data for official statistics.

The workshop is being organized with support from BPS Statistics Indonesia.