

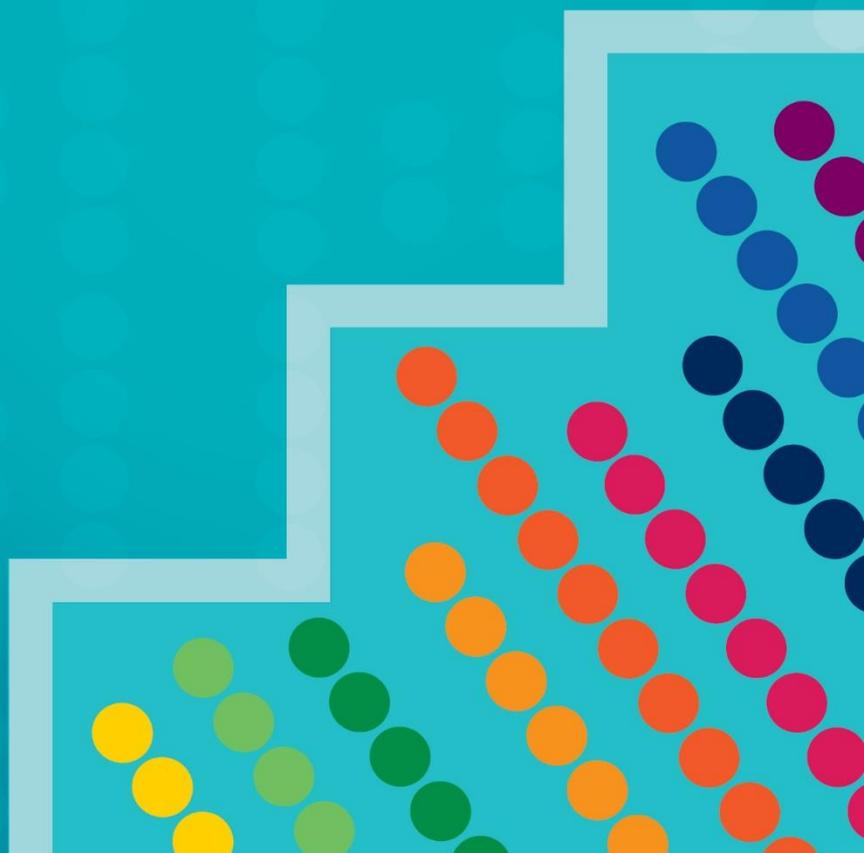


**United
Nations**

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs

2020 STATISTICS DIVISION IN BRIEF

BETTER DATA. BETTER LIVES.



Today, national statistical systems experience a series of important technological and societal changes that redefine how official statistics are collected, processed, and disseminated. The availability of new data sources and the emergence of new data producers has led to an increase in the supply and demand of information. Confronted with the multitude of information available, users are showing a heightened interest in data that is more detailed and more timely, but remain as trustworthy and of high-quality, as they are accustomed to. National statistical systems worldwide strive to meet this increased demand of our data users by providing new and improved official statistics and acting as data stewards for the entire data ecosystem.



UNSD has a long history of serving the global statistical community in all ‘traditional’, fundamental areas of official statistics; and, yet, at the same time UNSD is also striving to support national statistical systems in a multitude of ways to respond to the new data challenges. Especially in the last couple of years UNSD has taken numerous new initiatives, such as the integration of geospatial and statistical data, the big data work programme and the Data for Now initiative, to mention just a few.

A central guiding theme of our work remains, of course, the information support for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The annual progress report, which is produced together with the entire UN statistical system is a highly visible and successful flagship publication. As the Secretary-General has recently declared a Decade of Action to accelerate sustainable solutions to deliver the Global Goals, UNSD is in particular committed to intensifying its capacity building efforts to assist countries in their efforts to modernize national statistical systems.

Looking forward at 2020, I am thrilled to see that a number of major global events will enable us to work and interact closely with a multitude of partners and data stakeholders: the 6th International Conference on Big Data in the Republic of Korea (June), the 6th High level Forum on UN Global Geospatial Information Management in London (April) and of course the 3rd World Data Forum in Bern in October.

In this booklet, we showcase the past and ongoing contributions UNSD brings to the global statistical community. We are confident that UNSD is well positioned to serve the global statistical system.

I hope you will enjoy reading this year’s edition of the brochure and we are certainly looking forward to celebrating with you World Statistics Day 2020 in October.

Yours sincerely,

Stefan Schweinfest
Director United Nations Statistics Division/DESA

The United Nations Statistics Division

is committed to the advancement of the global statistical system. We compile and disseminate global statistical information, develop standards and norms for statistical activities, and support countries' efforts to strengthen their national statistical systems. We facilitate the coordination of international statistical activities and support the functioning of the United Nations Statistical Commission as the apex entity of the global statistical system.

The Statistics Division's main functions are:



Data

Collection, processing and dissemination of statistical information



Methodology

Standardization of statistical methods, classifications and definitions



Capacity Development

Technical cooperation programme



Coordination

Coordination of international statistical programmes and activities

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Data

Data solutions

UNSD provides multiple data solutions, ranging from databases, dissemination services, and tools for Data Science and Big Data integration. Some of these include: a global database on international trade statistics and a new project on trade data tools for countries, data science methods on the UN Global Platform, the UN Global Platform Network on Big Data, cloud-based dissemination services built for data sharing, dissemination and data visualization purposes, as well as the Global Group Register for large multi-national enterprises.



SDG Indicators

The Global SDG Indicators Database contains the data on the global indicators and includes both country-level data and regional and global aggregates. It includes data for 166 of the 232 indicators and more than 1.2 million data records. The data is compiled through the UN System in preparation for the Secretary-General's annual report on "Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals". An accompanying metadata repository provides the metadata for the indicators that have internationally established methodology and standards. Access to the country-level data and the metadata ensures full transparency with respect to the data and methodologies used for global reporting. The Database and metadata repository are maintained by the Statistics Division while the data and metadata are provided by international agencies and entities in accordance with their mandates. Access to the Global SDG Indicators Database is available at: unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/.



Data4Now initiative

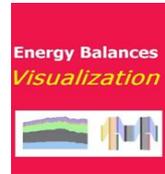
Data4Now is a joint initiative by UNSD, the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, the World Bank and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network to mobilize and establish partnerships between country statistical systems and the private sector, international organizations, and donors.

The initiative will make innovations in data production and analysis easily accessible to support progress towards the SDGs, including for monitoring progress, collaboration on data interoperability, the UNSC work on Open Data, the UNSC work on Big Data and the SD/ESRI project on the Federated Information System for SDGs.



Energy Balances Visualization

In 2019, UNSD released the Energy Balances Visualization portal presenting annual energy data by country. Visualizations include simple trend charts for the main energy flows in an economy, SanKey diagrams, renewable and non-renewable energy by source, and energy balances for 220 countries. Visit our website to view and download the most recent energy statistics at unstats.un.org/unsd/energystats/dataPortal/.



UN Comtrade Database

Data is key to the implementation of evidence-based policies and the 2030 Agenda recognizes international trade as an engine for inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction, and an important means to achieve the SDGs.

UN Comtrade provides free access to detailed international trade data. Currently, it has about 10 billion records. Last year users initiated about 63 million data requests and downloaded 678 billion records, in total. The most comprehensive world trade statistics collection is available at comtrade.un.org/.

Regional Training Workshop on the Production of SEEA-Energy Accounts and Use of Energy Information for Policy, Almaty, Kazakhstan



The launch of the national SDGs database at the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Ramallah, State of Palestine



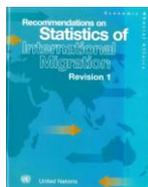


Methodology

UN Quality Assurance Frameworks Manual

This manual supports Member States in the compilation of high-quality statistics for SDG monitoring, which requires high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable and disaggregated data by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability and geographic location, among others.

Broad support by Member States was achieved by intensive involvement of national experts through the Expert Group on National Quality Assurance Frameworks and a global consultation process.

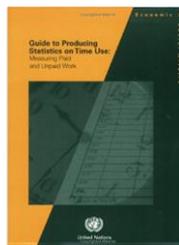


Global Programme on Migration Statistics

In 2019, UNSD initiated the development of a Global Programme on Migration Statistics. The Programme includes the revision of recommendations on statistics of international migration, and provision of targeted capacity building to assist countries in establishing/strengthening national migration data systems.

Modernization of time-use data collection

Since 2018, the UN Statistics Division and the Expert Group on Innovative and Effective Ways to Collect Time-Use Statistics have been working towards the implementation of the International Classification of Activities for Time-Use Statistics (ICATUS 2016) and the modernization of the collection of time-use data. The overall objective is to further promote this critical data collection across countries and over time for a more efficient production of relevant, high-quality, reliable and timely time-use statistics that are accessible to users. To date, the Group has been working on selected priority components (Policy relevance – making the case for time-use data in support of Sustainable Development Goal monitoring; Concepts and definitions; Modernizing time-use surveys; Minimum harmonized instrument; and Quality assurance in the context of time-use surveys and statistics) that are being discussed during the 51st session of the Statistical Commission as background documents.



Economic statistics

Updates of the economic statistics standards are designed to ensure member states can provide the statistics related to the measurement of economic activities for assessing progress with the 2030 Agenda. UNSD is working in partnership with the newly established UN Network of Economists (UNEN), bringing statistical perspectives and resources to support the development of new economic measures for sustainable development. These include guidance notes on the economic statistics themes of globalization, digitalization and well-being and sustainability.



SEEA-EEA Revision

The System of Environmental-Economic Accounting — Experimental Ecosystem Accounting’s (SEEA EEA) revision is to be submitted to the Commission in 2021. It involves over 100 experts, who have drafted 26 discussion papers that were reviewed by over 1000 global experts.

Crucial 2020 environmental events include: Convention on Biological Diversity CoP discussing the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, the IUCN World Conservation Congress and the first year of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. The SEEA is well placed to serve as an important framework for monitoring and reporting for these initiatives, among several others.



Statistical Classifications

Statistical classifications are a key requirement for the production of reliable, comparable and methodologically-sound statistics. UNSD is the custodian of several international standard classifications that are being maintained and updated to ensure their applicability to current economic, social, environment and other phenomena that are being measured in international statistics. The international classifications are used by countries as the basis for their own national classifications. UNSD serves as the Secretariat of the Expert Group on International Statistical Classifications and hosts the coordination and working meetings of the Expert group and its Technical Subgroups. UNSD also organizes technical workshops on classifications around the world.



Handbook on Management and Organization of National Statistical Systems

The development and delivery of the Handbook on Management and Organization of National Statistical Systems were accompanied by regional thematic conferences with chief statisticians to closely align the guidance with the needs for capacity development of statistical organizations, which directly supports the call for capacity building at the national level in the Cape Town Global Action Plan. An UNSD priority in 2020 is to release the Handbook as a live document on the Internet.



Global Set of Climate Change Statistics and Indicators



Based on the request by the 47th session of the Statistical Commission to UNSD to develop a global set of climate change statistics and indicators, UNSD has carried out a systematic review of climate change statistics and indicators from 130 countries with representative regional coverage, analysed more than 7,500 individual climate change statistics and indicators, and identified a draft set of the most commonly repeated indicators thereby promoting a bottom-up approach to their selection. The final number of statistics and indicators will be decided after the Pilot Survey (February-March 2020) and the Global Consultation (May-July 2020) but the set of indicators planned to be submitted to the 51st session of the Commission will be comprehensive and applicable to all countries. Collaboration between UNSD and UNFCCC has been strengthened to promote the policy and statistics interface as per the request of the Commission at its 49th session.

Global Statistical Geospatial Framework

The United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) adopted the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework (GSGF) to address the urgent need to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Now, the GSGF is tabled at this session for endorsement. If endorsed, this will be the first framework to be adopted by both the global bodies on statistics and geospatial information.





Capacity Development

Capacity development

With the changing data ecosystem, new approaches to capacity development are needed to enable national statistical systems to face the challenges. UNSD engages in a large number of activities to develop national capacity working the UN Development Accounts and through donor-funded projects.

Development Account 10th tranche Statistics & Data



This innovative program brings the 10 Secretariat entities together, integrating their technical capacities and strengths to reinforce developing countries' capacity to measure, monitor, and report on the sustainable development goals quickly, accurately, and reliably, for evidence-based policymaking. The initial focus of the project was around statistics and indicators for the environment, society and demographics, and the economy. Programme activities included: country advisory missions, national training seminars, development of guidelines and e-learning courses, stocktaking events promoting the exchange of good practices, lessons learned and remaining challenges. Based on its success in its first two years, the Programme was granted an extension with an increased budget. By the end of 2019, the Programme had already delivered more than 460 specific outputs targeting 130 developing countries in all regions of the world. Implementing agencies are: the 5 UN Regional Commissions, UN-Habitat, UNCTAD, UNEP, UNODC and UNSD. Additional development partners include: the World Bank, UNFPA, UNDP, and the EU.

World Population and Housing Census Programme

UNSD is focusing on the assessment of the implementation of the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme, scheduled for 2020 as that year represents the mid-point of the 2020 Round of Censuses that started in 2015 and will run until 2024. The major emphasis of this assessment will be on the capacity of countries to deliver on the requirement to conduct a population and housing census, or otherwise produce small area census statistics, at least once in the period 2015 – 2024.



Regional Workshop on Environment Statistics and Climate Change Statistics for the CARICOM Region, St. George's, Grenada



Workshop on Energy Statistics for Latin American and Caribbean Countries (UNSD/ OLADE/ IEA), Lima, Peru



UNSD-DFID project on SDG Monitoring

The overall objective of the project is to make national Sustainable Development Goals data open and available to the widest possible audience. The project supports 20 pilot countries and is expected to improve the availability of national indicators, by increasing the number of indicators and disaggregations available, and by supporting the establishment of national data and metadata platforms for dissemination of the SDGs. There are also activities to support improved cooperation at the national level and to promote the use of statistics in evidence-based decision making. On the global level, both national and international SDG indicators will be made available and comparable through the SDGs Data and Visualization Platform.





Coordination

UN World Data Forum 2020

The third UN World Data Forum will be hosted by the Federal Statistical Office of Switzerland from 18 to 21 October 2020, with support from the Statistics Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, under the guidance of the United Nations Statistical Commission and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



UN Global Platform

The UN Global Platform is the digital collaborative environment on data innovation for the global statistical community, as requested by the UN Statistical Commission in 2018. It will enable the development and sharing of new data solutions to compile timelier, more frequent and more detailed statistics and SDG indicators. An UNSD priority in 2020 is the signing of the Memorandums of Understanding between UN/DESA and the regional hubs of the UN Global Platform in China, Rwanda, and UAE.



8th Global Forum on Gender Statistics

Under the Global Gender Statistics Programme, and with the guidance of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics, the UN Statistics Division is organizing the 8th Global Forum on Gender Statistics. The event will take place from 15 to 16 October 2020 in Bern, Switzerland. The Forum will be an opportunity to discuss ways to improve data and evidence for gender policies, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The UNSD flagship quinquennial publication *The World's Women, Trends and Statistics*, in its 2020 edition, will be launched at the Forum.



SDG Monitoring Support: Data & Statistics Systems

Strong statistical systems and SDG data platforms are key to the full implementation of the 2030 agenda. The Statistics Division accelerated capacity development and technical assistance in 2019 in response to Member States' calls to improve capacity for the production and communication of SDG data and indicators. At the yearly evaluation in July 2019, the project received an 'A' rating.



The High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity Building

The High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (HLG-PCCB) is the custodian of the Cape Town Global Action Plan (CTGAP) for sustainable development data. The HLG-PCCB provides strategic leadership for the CTGAP implementation process, promotes the national ownership and fostering of statistical capacity-building, recommends priority areas to target funding, advises how to harness the opportunities provided by the data revolution and promotes engagement between the statistical community and other stakeholders working on the implementation and monitoring of 2030 Agenda; in particular through its role guiding the UN World Data Forum.



Economic Statistics

The Friends of the Chair group on economic statistics was created by the Statistical Commission during its fiftieth session to document the operations of the current system; establish networks between working groups; challenge working groups to operate in new ways; and increase engagement with a broad range of users.



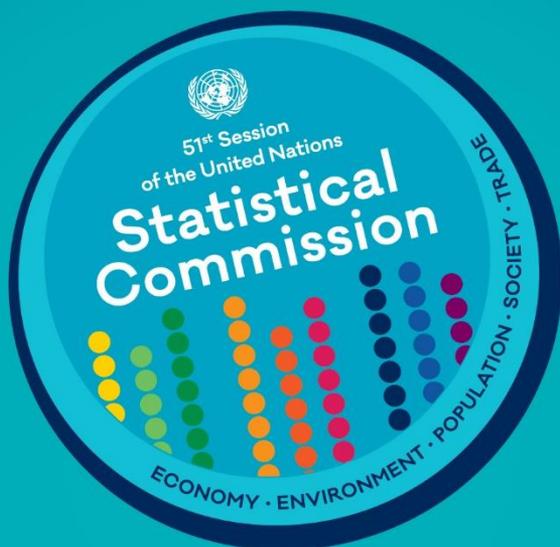
The United Nations Global Forum on Economic Statistics will be key to the Friends of the Chair Group's engagement strategy on economic statistics. It aims to look at user needs from the perspectives of economic growth, including environmental, social, and inequality-related impacts. It will be held in Brussels, Belgium, in late 2020, by Eurostat with the support of Statistics Canada and the United Nations Statistics Division.

UN Legal Identity Expert Group

Throughout 2019 UNSD acted as a co-chair, with UNDP and UNICEF, of UN LIEG, established by the direct request of the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations.

UN LIEG developed the definition of legal identity and the UN Legal Identity Agenda which consists of a holistic approach for continuous and universal civil registration, production of accurate and comprehensive vital statistics and functioning of identity management systems. UN LIEG transformed into the United Nations Legal Identity Task Force to support deployment of the UN LIA in pilot countries and for further work on the UN LIA framework.





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