
International Seminar on Open Data for the Sustainable Development Goals

Co-organized by Statistics Korea and UNSD
(invitation only)

25 to 27 September 2017
Seoul, Republic of Korea

Main Conclusions

1. An international seminar on open data for the sustainable development goals, hosted by Statistics Korea and focusing primarily on opportunities and challenges of making data more open and accessible by national statistical systems in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was held from 25 to 27 September 2017 in Seoul, Republic of Korea. The seminar was organized by the UN Statistics Division (UNSD) and Statistics Korea (KOSTAT).

2. Over the course of this two-and-a-half-day International Seminar, the following topics were discussed:

- Session 1: Open data initiatives in support of the 2030 Agenda and SDG indicators
- Session 2: Supporting the role of national statistical systems in Open Data initiatives
- Session 3: Balancing openness with risks, such as security and privacy
- Session 4: Ensuring stakeholder involvement in Open Data processes
- Session 5: Improving data sharing through data interoperability
- Session 6: Coordinating capacity building towards Open Data initiatives

See Annex 1 for the detailed agenda. For more information and access to the presentations given at the Seminar, please refer to the Seminar's website¹.

3. Representatives from the National Statistical Offices of Cambodia, China, Ghana, India, Jordan, Lao, Mexico, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Philippines, State of Palestine, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, and the Republic of Korea and from UNSD, Africa Development Bank, Center for Open Data Enterprise, Development Gateway, Development Initiatives, ESRI Korea, International Development Research Centre, Joined Up Data, Open Data Watch, and the World Bank attended the meeting (See Annex 2 for the list of participants).

4. This International Seminar contributes to the ongoing dialogue on the importance of open data initiatives in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and draws upon the Seminar on open data held prior to the 48th session of the UN Statistical Commission in March

¹ <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/meetings/sdg-seminar-seoul-2017/>

2017. The objective of this Seminar is to review and recommend solutions and best practices for making data more open and accessible by addressing the practical question of how to make data more open in the context of national statistical systems, from planning to a sustained and effective operation. Furthermore, the topic of open data will be reviewed and discussed at the 49th session of the UN Statistical Commission in March 2018. The outcomes of this Seminar will provide valuable inputs to the points to be taken up for discussion by the Statistical Commission.

5. The meeting was opened by the Commissioner of KOSTAT, Mrs. Hwang Soo Kyeong, and an opening statement was made by Mr. Stefan Schweinfest, Director, UNSD, via video link.

6. A keynote address was delivered by Ms. Shaida Badiie, Managing Director, Open Data Watch. Ms. Badiie emphasized that there is a lot of support and commitment to making data more open, and discussions have moved to the practical aspects of how to make this happen. She emphasized that as the data ecosystems expand, it is important that national statistical systems remain at the center and lead the way forward. The process of open data is a long-term commitment that requires strategic planning. The benefits and challenges need to be balanced, and it is essential that privacy and confidentiality concerns are addressed. Ms. Badiie concluded with five areas that the international statistical community need to consider: supporting the role of the NSO, building stakeholder engagement, protecting data privacy and security, and promoting the use and impact of data.

7. The International Seminar opened with a roundtable discussion bringing together experts on open data to discuss the meaning of open data, implementation of open data practices in national statistical offices (NSOs) as well as the broader national statistical systems (NSS), and current barriers faced by NSOs in making data more open. The experts emphasized the need to strengthen the relationship between the data producers and users to address demand and supply of data and the need to have strong partnerships, develop a set of best practices or models on institutional structures to share among countries, and address barriers such as the legal aspects and ways to enhance data openness and ensure privacy. Points raised by the participants included how to effectively use the budget to support the NSO to make data open, how to ensure data quality in open data, and how to link to and integrate administrative data from different ministries into the NSO's open data holdings. In conclusion, the main points from the experts to be brought to the attention of the statistical community were:

- i. User dialogue and regular communication are essential
- ii. Open data should be seen as a tool and as a goal
- iii. The purpose of open data is to reuse the data and have an impact
- iv. Changes in the institutional structure might be needed

8. There was also a guided discussion on main topics, ideas, and recommendations proposed for discussions by the United Nations Statistical Commission lead by Ms. Francesca Perucci of UNSD. The objective of the guided discussion was to review the challenges faced by national statistical offices in the implementation of open data and to collect useful inputs for the points to be taken up for discussion on open data by the Statistical Commission at its 49th Session in March 2018. From the guided discussion, it was agreed that there is a new role for the NSOs from producers of data to more of a guardian role and becoming a steward of the national

statistical systems. The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs offer an opportunity to empower NSOs and promote use of data. Some of the best practices seen throughout the seminar include the importance of government structure, the legal framework, balancing risks, the linkage with users, and clearly defining and sharing terms of use as an easy step to promote open data use. As countries progress toward open data, the role of the NSO changes to support others to do more. One key element throughout the process of data value chain is trust, both building it and maintaining it.

9. Some of the challenges cited including the balancing act between making data more open and ensuring privacy, funding and budgetary concerns, and the legal framework needed.

The Main Conclusions from the International Seminar

10. The meeting expressed its appreciation to Statistics Korea for hosting the seminar and for extending its hospitality to the participants, as well as to the UN Statistics Division and Statistics Korea for co-organizing and conducting the event.

11. Open data is defined as “Data that is high quality, well documented, respects data privacy concerns, is free, and easily accessible and usable”.

12. Through the presentations and the discussions at the Seminar, the overall value of open data in official statistical has been established. The discussions moved toward the more practical aspects of how to implement open data principles. Overall, the participants found the sharing of national experiences and challenges and discussions on the role of the NSO in open data initiatives as well as the inclusion of a variety of stakeholders taking part in the Seminar the most useful elements. It was requested to have more clarity and details on the practical experiences of how to apply open data policies in the national context. Specific case examples were requested.

Impressive progress in how countries are implementing open data

13. The Seminar highlighted the impressive progress and many ways in which countries are implementing open data. For example, open data has started to be included in NSDS processes. Countries reported that they are implementing governance systems of open data.

14. In order to ensure access to data, countries reported the development of standards for access and publishing. There was discussion about ways for integrating the NSO open data with the government open data processes and frameworks.

15. A key issue that was raised in both the presentations and the discussions was that as countries move toward making more of their data open, they need to address open data issues in their legal frameworks. These frameworks need to be modified to incorporate or address issues. Overall, the importance of good governance was well-established in the discussions.

16. The value that open data for official statistics contributes needs to be managed along with other risks. One example of a risk that needs to be mitigated is data privacy and confidentiality, which may require changes to legislations and policies for data management, use, sharing and dissemination. Privacy and confidentiality are underlying concerns expressed by many of the

participants in making data more open. The participants discussed and identified ways of managing risks to ensure the privacy of individuals.

17. Another important dimension discussed is about how countries are implementing open data including the integration of geospatial information in open data initiatives.

Challenges that need to be addressed

18. Despite impressive progress made by the countries present at the Seminar, there are a number of challenges that need to be addressed in the implementation of open data by national statistical systems. The main underlying challenge is working toward establishing an infrastructure (including the integration of multiple existing portals) that can adequately support open data initiatives. Without adequate infrastructure across the data producers, efforts will be stalled.

19. There is a need for capacity building to strengthen systems, as well as a need for trainings to develop skills. The gaps in the statistical capacity need to be assessed and targeted capacity building efforts need to be identified to strengthen the skills and the infrastructure.

20. Within countries, there are challenges faced related to funding and/or budgeting to ensure that adequate resources are dedicated to provide the infrastructure needed to make data more open. Participants sought clarity around issues related to funding and budget.

21. A key issue raised by many of the participants was around stakeholder engagement. Partnerships take time to develop, nurture and sustain. The challenge of engaging with and reaching all stakeholders around open data needs to be addressed. The needs of the users need to be identified and addressed. However, there has to be a balance reached, in the short and medium term, between prioritizing the users' needs/demands and what the NSO provides.

22. Another challenge raised was the need to ensure adherence by other Government agencies to open data principles. This emphasizes the importance of coordinating role of the national statistical office to maintain a system wide approach to open data.

23. While the risk of privacy and confidentiality needs to be addressed, there is also the need to ensure balance between issues of privacy/confidentiality with openness.

24. The legal mechanism to ensure privacy and confidentiality while making data open was a challenge cited by many. There is a need to revise laws and legal frameworks to allow for more systematically open data.

Going forward: At the country level

25. Implementing open data in the national statistical systems will require efforts by both national actors and support from the international initiatives. Discussions of steps needed at the national/country level focused on the following recommendations:

- Integrate open data in NSDS plans – it is important to take advantage of the development of national plans and incorporate the principles and practices of open data

- Address the issue of open data in laws/legal frameworks, including ways to ensure sustained funding
- Secure resources and develop necessary skills
- Develop platforms for stakeholder consultations, including for defining the “value” of data/what is valuable to users
- Ensure that users’ demands are addressed and make sure users’ participation is gradually part of the practices used in the statistical system operations
- Create partnerships with all relevant data producers
- Promote interoperability
- Develop visualization and other tools to make data easily understandable/accessible

Collective/global interventions

26. While there are many steps that need to be taken at the national level to implement open data within national statistical offices/systems, there are also actions that can be addressed at the global or collective level. There is a need to provide overall guidance for open data practices, recognizing that every country will need to develop their own path.

27. Collectively, the international community needs to develop support programmes and guidance for different groups of countries with different needs to assist them in implementing open data. Providing support based on the different level of needs will allow for country to country support so that countries with more developed systems for open data can share their best practices with others.

28. There was a call to redefine national statistical systems, recognizing different data ecosystems and including all relevant data producers and users, with NSOs at the center.

29. The participants suggest that the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics be mapped to the Open Data Charter to review the overlap and devise how to make the implement the FPOS with open data.

30. In order for open data to be usable, there is a need to develop tools and governance systems for data interoperability.

Global statistical and data systems

31. Specific suggestions from the meeting related to the work of the global statistical and data systems include:

- i. Establish a mechanism within the UN Statistical Commission to work on principles and guidance and support for implementation of open data in countries
- ii. Include open data guidance and examples of best practices in the updated Handbook for Statistical Organizations
- iii. Promote the inclusion of open data principles and practices in capacity development programmes and projects
- iv. Establish a website for open data best practices
- v. At UNWDF 2018, provide space to further advance the work across all data ecosystems and further strengthen partnerships between NSOs and other data producers

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Agenda

(as of 25 October 2017)

Monday, 25 September 2017

9:30-10:30 AM **Opening**

- Ms. Hwang Soo Kyeong, Commissioner, Statistics Korea
- Video message from Mr. Stefan Schweinfest, Director of the United Nations Statistics Division
- Ms. Francesca Perucci, UNSD

Key Note: Ms. Shaida Badiie, Open Data Watch

10:30-10:40 **Coffee break**

10:40-12:15 **Round table discussion**

Moderator: Ms. Shaida Badiie, Open Data Watch

- Ms. Richa Shanker, Central Statistics Office, India
- Mr. Jean-Louis Sarbib, Development Gateway
- Ms. Amparo Ballivian, World Bank
- Dr. Young soo Bae, DG of Statistical Research Institute, Korea
- Mr. Richard Yoon, ESRI-Korea
 - Discussion

12:15 - 13:30 **LUNCH**

13:30 - 15:30 **Session 1: Open data initiatives in support of the 2030 Agenda and the SDG indicators**

Moderator: Ms. Amparo Ballivian, World Bank

- Mr. Armando Aguiar, Director of Information Services, INEGI Mexico
- Mr. Louis Kouakou, African Development Bank
- Mr. In Chang PARK, Ministry of the Interior, Korea
- Ms. Norov Sodnomdotj, Mongolia
 - Discussion

15:30 – 15:45 **Coffee break**

15:45-17:30 **Session 2: Supporting the role of national statistical systems in Open Data initiatives**
Moderator: Ms. Francesca Perucci, UNSD

- Mr. Mark Abuabu-Dadzie, Ghana
- Ms. Richa Shanker, India
- Mr. Recide, PSA, Philippines
 - Discussion

Tuesday, 26 September 2017

9:30 - 11:00 **Session 3: Balancing openness with risks, such as security and privacy**
Moderator: Mr. Louis Kouakou, African Development Bank

- Mr. Adam Brown, Statistics New Zealand
- Ms. Dematoagodage Dona Gauri Anoja Senerviratne, Sri Lanka
- Mr. Tom Orrell, Joined Up Data
- Mr. Mohammad A.S. Marie, PCBS, Palestine
 - Discussion

11:00 – 11:30 **Coffee break**

11:30 – 13:00 **Session 4: Ensuring stakeholder involvement in Open Data processes**
Moderator: Ms. Shaida Badiee, Open Data Watch

- Mr. Bill Anderson, Development Initiative
- Mr. Recide, PSA, Philippines
- Ms. Laura Manley, Center for Open Data Enterprise
- Mr. Phet Sayo, IDRC
 - Discussion

13:00 – 14:30 LUNCH

14:30 – 15:45 **Session 5: Improving data sharing through data interoperability**
Moderator: Mr. Bill Anderson, Development Initiatives

Panel a) National example

- Mr. Junwoo JEON, Statistics Korea

Panel b) Work programmes on data interoperability

- Ms. Linda Hooper, UNSD
- Mr. Tom Orrell, Joined Up Data
- Mr. Armando Aguiar Rodriguez, INEGI, Mexico
 - Discussion

15:45 – 16:00 **Coffee break**

16:00 – 17:30 **Guided discussion on main topics/ideas and recommendations proposed for discussions by the United Nations Statistical Commission**
Moderator: Ms. Francesca Perucci, UNSD

This interactive session will focus on:

- Reviewing types of challenges faced by national statistical offices in the implementation of Open Data initiatives; and
- Determining what it takes to implement – developing a checklist.

Wednesday, 27 September 2017

9:30 – 11:00 **Session 6: Coordinating capacity building towards Open Data initiatives**
Moderator: Ms. Laura Manley, Center for Open Data Enterprise

Panel a) International efforts

- Ms. Linda Hooper, UNSD
- Ms. Shaida Badiie, Open Data Watch
- Mr. Jean-Louis Sarbib, Development Gateway

Panel b) Country needs

- Mr. Manoj Lal Pradhan, Nepal
- Mr. Mark Abuabu-Dadzie, Ghana
- Mr. Lay Chaan, National Institute of Statistics Cambodia
 - Discussion

11:00 – 11:15 **Coffee break**

11:15 - 12:15 **Main conclusions and recommendations from the Seminar**
Moderator: Ms. Francesca Perucci, UNSD

12:15 - 12:30 **Closing**

- Statistics Korea
- Ms. Francesca Perucci, UNSD

13:00 **Cultural outing**

Annex 2. List of Participants

Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Statistics Division

ESA/STAT/AC.343/L.3

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List of participants (as of 25 October 2017)

Countries	
Cambodia	Mr. Lay Chhan Deputy Director General 386 Preah Monivong Boulevard, Sangkat Boeung Kengkang I, Khan Chamkarmon Phnom Penh, Cambodia
China	Mr. Liben Hou Principal Program Officer No. 57 Yuetan Nanjie Sanlihe, Xicheng, Beijing, 100826, China
Ghana	Mr. Mark Abuabu-Dadzie Director of Information Technology Ghana Statistical Service Head Office P.O. Box GP 1098 Accra, Ghana
India	Ms. Richa Shanker Director Social Statistics Division Central Statistics Office West Block-8, Wing-6, Ground Floor R.K. Puram, New Delhi – 110066 India
Jordan	Mr. Ahmad Mohammad Ahmad Head of Population Statistics Division
Lao	Mr. Boupoua Samaychanli Vice Minister Head of Lao Statistics Bureau
Lao	Ms. Phetsamovie Sone Deputy Head of Lao Statistics Bureau

Mexico	Mr. Jesus Armando Aguiar Rodriguez Director of Information Services Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Gerografía Av. Heroe de Nacozari Sur 2301, Jardines del Parque, Aguascalientes; AGS. C.P. 20276 Mexico
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Philippines	Mr. Edgar M. Fajutagana IT Officer III CVEA Bldg, PSA Complex East Avenue, Qurzon City Philippines
State of Palestine	Mr. Mohammad A. S. Marie Acting Director of Quality Department Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics P.O.Box 1647, Ramallah – Palestine Ramallah City, Ein Munjed Quarter, Tokyo St.
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Vietnam	Ms. Tran Thi Thu Statistician Integrated Statistics Department General Statistics Office of Vietnam

Experts and Other Organizations

Africa Development Bank	Mr. Kouakou Koua Louis Senior Statistician
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Africa Development Bank	Mr. Momar Kouta Senior Technical Expert
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Open Data Watch	Ms. Shaida Badiie Managing Director 7107 Laverock Lane Bethesda MD 20817 United States
World Bank	Ms. Maria Amparo Isabel Ballivian Valdes Lead Economist 1818 H St NW Washington DC, 20433 United States

United Nations

United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)	Ms. Francesca Perruci Assistant Director, Statistical Services Branch, UNSD
United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)	Ms. Linda Hooper Statistician, Statistical Services Branch, UNSD