Communicating data in VNRs and engaging data users

Workshop on Preparing Evidence-based Voluntary National Reviews for 2021 HLPF

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The importance of data and evidence-based VNRs

- Data is critical to accurately assessing progress toward the SDGs
- The VNR process brings statisticians, policy makers, civil society and other stakeholders together
- Data is the starting point of the discussion – data availability, accessibility (usability), and literacy are key
- Data increases transparency and trust
User Engagement
Who is a data user?

What do different data users need?

**Researchers**
- Microdata with detailed metadata
- Survey questionnaires
- Indicator databases

**Policy makers**
- Policy briefs
- Accessible data portals
- Reports

**Media**
- Press releases
- Individual interviews
- Ready infographics and charts

**Civil Society**
- Training materials in local languages
- Brochures
- Accessible data portals
What is user engagement in the VNR data context?

- Two-way communication and a ‘feedback loop’ rather than one-way dissemination of statistics
- Building trust in statistics and fostering an open dialogue
- Helping users understand and interpret data – improving statistical literacy
- Collaborating to increase data availability, improve data quality and foster new uses of data and a richer landscape of analysis
Tools for engagement during the pandemic

- Virtual conferences
- Bilateral meetings
- Virtual Focus group consultations
- National SDG data platforms
- User Satisfaction surveys
- Social Media
- Toll-free lines
- Radio shows

Statistics Division
National SDG data platforms
Communicating statistics in the VNR

*Based on Making Data Meaningful Guides from UNECE Statistics
https://www.unece.org/stats/documents/writing/
Some tips on using numbers to tell stories in VNRs

• Present the most important facts first, followed by subsidiary points in decreasing importance (inverted pyramid)
• Include a leading paragraph that summarizes key points at the beginning of a section
• Keep it short and simple (KISS): applies to not just text but also visuals and graphs

**GOOD EXAMPLE** of a lead paragraph:

Net profits of non-financial companies in the Netherlands amounted to 19 billion euros in the second quarter of 2008. This is the lowest level for three years. Profits were 11 percent lower than in the second quarter of 2007. The drop in net profits is the result of two main factors: higher interest costs - the companies paid more net interest - and lower profits of foreign subsidiaries.

Source: Statistics Netherlands

• Complex methodologies and details can be presented in the annex/references
Presenting statistics: charts and tables

Tables/charts should be able to stand alone, whether published within a report, article, publication or web page

Tables
• Summary tables
• Larger reference tables (statistical annexes)

Charts / Tables: key elements
• Title: what, where, when?
• Unit of measurement
• Footnote and sources
Charts

Helpful in demonstrating **comparison, changes over time, distribution, correlations, parts of a total**

**A good chart:**
- grabs the reader’s attention;
- presents the information simply, clearly and accurately;
- does not mislead;
- displays the data in a concentrated way (e.g. one line chart instead of many pie charts);
- facilitates data comparison and highlights trends and differences;
- illustrates messages, themes or storylines in the accompanying text.
Be careful not to mislead

This chart shows an overall trend of stability for about 10 years, followed by moderate growth.

By reducing the scale on the y-axis, you can highlight the changes. Small increases and decreases appear in the first 10 years and the growth at the end of the period seems more dramatic.
Infographics

Key considerations

- Keep it simple and streamlined
- Focused: one topic a time
- Illustrate key messages with data
- Work with graphic designers
- Choose appropriate icons
- Balance visual and written information
- Review and revise

UNCLEAR

THE WORLD IS NOT ON TRACK TO END POVERTY BY 2030

BETTER

THE WORLD IS NOT ON TRACK TO END POVERTY BY 2030
Infographics – Examples from SDG Report

- **TWO IN FIVE**
  - Health care facilities worldwide have no soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub (2016)

- **CLIMATE FINANCE: INVESTMENT IN FOSSIL FUELS CONTINUES TO BE HIGHER THAN INVESTMENT IN CLIMATE ACTIVITIES**
  - 2015: $781 billion
  - 2016: $681 billion

- **WOMEN MUST BE REPRESENTED FAIRLY IN PANDEMIC-RELATED LEADERSHIP ROLES**

- **WOMEN REPRESENT**
  - 25% in national parliaments (2020)
  - 36% in local government (2020)

- **GLOBAL MARINE KEY BIODIVERSITY AREAS COVERED BY PROTECTED AREAS INCREASED**
  - 2000: 30.5%
  - 2015: 44.8%
  - 2019: 46.0%
Thank you