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## **Better Data for Sustainable Development:**

### **Implementing the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Data for the 2030 Agenda**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, through its 17 Goals and 169 targets, aims to eliminate poverty, make and keep our planet healthy, and build inclusive societies, leaving no one behind. To fully implement the goals and ambitions of this Agenda and review progress against the goals and targets, there is an urgent need for more and better data. Implementing the 2030 Agenda and tracking progress on the SDGs requires quality, timely, open and disaggregated data and statistics at all levels of geography, from global to regional to national and subnational. The global data and statistical community responded to this call by adopting the Cape Town Global Action Plan for sustainable development data for the 2030 Agenda (CTGAP), which outlines a strategic framework for strengthening the statistical capacity of countries. Realizing the strategic objectives of the CTGAP is vital to allow the full implementation of the Agenda and requires immediate and adequate resources. The implementation of the CTGAP will require that national statistical offices (NSOs) together with national governments stand behind this plan of action for their countries and take charge of promoting the mobilization of the required resources. The international partners and donors also have a significant role to play. Presently, the demand for more and better data has not been reflected in the greater availability of funding. The purpose of this document is to highlight what needs to happen to unite the national and international stakeholders to make the implementation of CTGAP a reality with high returns for meeting the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

*Insert quotation to emphasize the importance of data for development from S-G or DSG or other high-level official*

The 2030 Agenda presents challenges to all countries and all national statistical systems. Developing countries, alone, face a deficit of USD 200 million/year to be able to close the funding gap. We need both adequate domestic resources allocated to build and strengthen data and statistical systems as well as increased external support, coordinated and organized to avoid duplicative efforts and keep countries at the center with full accountability for implementation.

We live in a world driven by data with increasing demand for data and opportunities offered through technological advancements and better skills. This moment presents a unique opportunity to improve longstanding weaknesses in many of our statistical systems. The scope of the 2030 Agenda requires that governments use all available data sources, including both traditional sources such as census and household surveys as well as new and innovative sources, to help guide policy and investment decisions.

In today's world, with so many potential sources of data and statistics, it is more important than ever to be sure that data are accurate and unbiased, as well as reliable and sustainable. The national statistical office has a central role in providing data to inform decision-making and investment, especially because they already work under a mature framework of principles and practices to assure that statistical data products meet these high standards.

To meet the data demands of the 2030 Agenda, national data and statistical systems need to modernize, through capacity development activities and systematic investments in the systems. The 2030 Agenda

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acknowledges the need to invest in the capacity-building of national statistical systems in SDG target 17.18<sup>1</sup>. The CTGAP highlights the need for better and sustainable funding for national statistics systems and the need to create opportunities for participation of state and non-state actors in funding statistical activities through innovative financing mechanisms. CTGAP is a blueprint for guiding both national and international development plans as well as for guiding both investors and recipients of aid for statistics to focus on priority areas for investment.

In light of the data revolution, providers of statistical capacity development must reshape their approach to promote country ownership, align support with country priorities, focus on data use and users, foster diverse public-private partnerships, utilize new funding mechanisms, and emphasize results-based support. The CTGAP acknowledges that this work will be country-led and will occur at the subnational, national, and regional levels. The plan fully communicates and coordinates existing efforts and identifies new and strategic ways to efficiently mobilize resources from international organizations, national governments, and other partners.

### ***What needs to change***

The traditional sources of data and statistics from the national offices need to be fostered to be able to provide more and better data. At the same time, mainstreaming data innovations into official statistical production processes, while focusing more sharply on users' needs, will be enabled through public-private partnerships. National statistical and data systems with national statistical offices at the center, supported by international organizations, must continue improving the availability and quality of data for sustainable development. There is a need for incentives and business models that encourage effective partnerships. There is a need to rethink how financing for data and statistics is approached. Increases in domestic resources to support and build the statistical capacity are essential. There is a need to bring in non-state actors into the financing of statistical systems. And there is a need to rethink how capacity development is delivered.

**The cost of not investing is high. Many national statistical systems face serious challenges. As a result, accurate and timely information about people's lives is lacking, numerous groups and individuals remain "invisible", and many development challenges are still poorly executed and evaluated.**

Innovative funding strategies and coordinated action are needed to bridge this gap.

Ensuring and maximizing the effectiveness of financing for capacity development is essential for the success of implementation of the CTGAP. The ultimate objective is to establish a transparent financing mechanism open to all stakeholders. We call for a funding mechanism to be established that is able to respond in a fast and efficient manner to the priorities of national data and statistical systems, with the national statistical offices as the driving force. The goal would be to mobilize both domestic and international funds, and

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<sup>1</sup> SDG 17.18: By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts

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activate public sector partnerships and funding opportunities to support the development of both traditional data systems and new tools to incorporate complementary and newer data sources.

## 1. Background

Data and statistics are at the center of the full implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the fulfillment of the ambition to leave no one behind. The need for data and statistics is widely recognized by decision makers in their requests for new and better data to ensure decisions based on evidence<sup>2</sup>. However, improving national statistical systems requires adequate resources and strong political commitment. Through the CTGAP<sup>3</sup>, the global statistical and data communities have come together to define a strategic framework to strengthen statistical capacity necessary to achieve the full scope and intent of the 2030 Agenda.

The time is mature for making lasting changes in improving national statistical system. The demand for development data has never been higher. The ongoing data revolution, meanwhile, provides societies with the potential to leverage new data sources and better tools for data production and utilization, offering opportunities for broader application of data necessary for stronger evidence-based decision-making. Most importantly, NSOs are highly motivated, agile, and responsive to make the necessary changes and implement the CTGAP. This coming together of NSOs and partners from different data communities to agree on an agenda for change, by itself, makes this time an exceptional one for making fundamental improvements. However, due to scarce resources and lack of political support, countries often cannot take full advantage of these opportunities.

Furthermore, the central pledge of 'leaving no one behind' cannot be fulfilled unless statistical systems, with NSOs at the center, have both the financial and political support to achieve the needed capacity to produce disaggregated data. Wide variations in the capacity and resources of NSOs and other actors within the national statistical systems to produce the needed information exist, with some NSOs being in more urgent need of support. Equitable follow up on the 2030 Agenda implies closing this gap between the divergent capacities of NSOs, which is particularly relevant for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

## 2. Implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan

The CTGAP put simply is a plan calling for fundamental improvements in national statistical systems, with national statistical offices in the lead, around the world. It recognizes that with business as usual the 2030 Agenda will not be fully realized. It is also intended to provide a framework for discussion, planning, implementation, and evaluation of statistical capacity development needs. Accordingly, the Plan describes areas to address key statistical capacity development. The CTGAP consists of a high-level, broad set of action statements. While ambitious in its reach, the CTGAP recognizes that the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the related global indicator framework presents an enormous challenge for all countries. Significant efforts to strengthen national statistical capacities and effective collaboration among all actors are needed.

At the heart of the CTGAP and the changes it calls for are the national statistical systems and national statistical organizations of the countries. It is their ultimate responsibility to provide the evidence to show

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Addis Ababa Action Agenda, Chapter III. 'Data, monitoring and follow-up' at [http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/AAAA\\_Outcome.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/AAAA_Outcome.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> See the CTGAP at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/hlg/Cape-Town-Global-Action-Plan/>

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progress in achieving the Goals and targets set out by their politicians in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At the same time, CTGAP acknowledges that its implementation will require that statistical systems and other data communities come together and undertake specific actions under the oversight of the national statistical authorities in countries and with the full support of the global data and statistical communities, development partners, private sector and civil society.

The HLG-PCCB will continue to provide guidance and oversight for the implementation of the CTGAP, by engaging all relevant stakeholders as necessary, presenting recommendations for the way forward to the UN Statistical Commission and bringing to the attention of the HLPF and other political fora issues related to the development and strengthening of the data and statistical systems for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The CTGAP can be utilized as a tool to navigate what needs to happen in the national context. It provides a thread linking the capacity development and ensuring some level of coherence among the different approaches and projects being undertaken in the national settings.

### **Guiding principles:**

Acknowledging the central role of CTGAP in providing the framing for implementation, the **guiding principles** for the implementation of the CTGAP are as follows:

- Activities and the programmes of change will require a country-led approach, including mobilization of domestic resources.
- Strong political leadership at the national level and clear evidence of value of data to inform policies are basic requirements for the implementation.
- A solid monitoring framework with clear accountability will be needed to track the implementation.
- All parties will ensure the fostering of better coordination among providers and recipients of financial and technical resources.
- Implementation will include addressing the full range of NSO capacities and leadership to adapt to emerging requirements and build sustainable systems.

As the data requirements of the 2030 Agenda are broad and often beyond the capacity of the national statistical systems, the need for experimentation to avail of new technologies, methods, partnership modalities offered by the data revolution is recognized as a key aspect that needs to be taken into consideration when implementing the CTGAP. With experimentation and deployment of new tools and technology, it will be important for countries to also commit to document and share experiences and good/bad practices.

### **Governance and oversight:**

Setting up a strong and efficient governance and oversight structure is key to the success of the CTGAP's implementation. The UN Statistical Commission would be a main player in the oversight of CTGAP implementation through its annual reviews, and the HLG-PCCB the main body of the Statistical Commission to oversee the implementation. However, as not all donor agencies are represented at the Statistical Commission, it is recommended that they be assigned a role in the governance structure of the implementation. To strengthen political support for the implementation of the CTGAP, it is suggested that the oversight mechanism reach beyond the UN Statistical Commission. Thus, the potential mechanism should consider a specialized CTGAP oversight body that draws from UN Statistical Commission (and the HLG-PCCB), and key donors and implementing agencies. Furthermore, it is recommended that the CTGAP

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implementation be also considered by the HLPF as part of the overall deliberations on SDG implementation.

### **Implementation priorities:**

At the core of the 2030 Agenda are the countries and their national priorities. The implementation of the CTGAP will be country-led and driven. The national priorities will be central to the implementation. However, addressing critical SDG priorities with significant political support is also important in securing both domestic and external funds for capacity development activities. Overall, the importance of dialogue between the national statistical offices and the policy makers cannot be overemphasized. Throughout the implementation of the CTGAP, the implementation priorities should be flexible enough to adapt to emerging SDG priorities that would also allow for new supporters of the CTGAP implementation to take a role.

### **Ongoing work and activities implementing the CTGAP and related activities:**

International support of statistical capacity building is long-standing. There are a number of ongoing work programs and related activities that support the implementation of the CTGAP. The HLG-PCCB has compiled some examples<sup>4</sup> of how the CTGAP is being implemented through an open consultation in October 2018. It is essential that all activities, particularly those supported by external funds, related to the implementation be taken into consideration as new initiatives are planned to avoid duplication of efforts.

## **2.1 Capacity development**

The broad scope of the 2030 Agenda has resulted in a changing environment in which NSOs operate. The multi-dimensional nature of the SDGs requires that the statistical systems produce quality, timely and reliable data and statistics that cross over multiple domains and rely both on traditional data sources and methodology, and incorporate innovation ideas and methodologies. There are many examples of how national statistical offices have responded by redefining their role and changing how they operate. For example, NSOs are collaborating more with users to better understand and deliver products that meet their needs. NSOs are also exploring and establishing new partnerships with new data providers and integrating new data sources to improve the coverage, relevance and scope of statistical production. Other NSOs are striving to be more innovative, for example, through the customization of dynamically changing products and services. NSOs are also adapting to the changing nature of the current data world by adopting more prominent leadership roles in ensuring data quality and sustainability. NSOs are also engaging with geospatial agencies in their countries to integrate geospatial information and statistical systems and increasingly make use of administrative data for the production of official statistics and indicators. Many NSOs have increased efforts to adopt open data policies and make national official statistics easily accessible to more users.

### **2.1.1 Capacity development needs**

In late 2017, a survey<sup>5,6</sup> on statistical capacity needs was undertaken jointly by PARIS 21 and the HLG-PCCB and facilitated by the UN Statistics Division. The aim of the survey was to obtain a better understanding of the current needs regarding capacity development in NSOs and the challenges, priorities and plans NSOs

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<sup>4</sup> Please see the following website for more information on the implementation notes for the CTGAP (NOTE: URL will be added).

<sup>5</sup> UNSD sent the survey to all National Statistical Office Heads and Director Generals. As of 8 April 2018, a total of 92 responses were received (92/195). The survey was sent to all Member States, British Virgin Islands and the State of Palestine.

<sup>6</sup> For more information on the survey, see <http://www.paris21.org/capacity-development-40/cd40-survey>

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have in the short and medium term. Based on the survey and NSOs deliberations at the UN Statistical Commission, and on the priorities highlighted by different data communities in various fora, the following areas are identified as the ones where support is most urgently needed:

1. Data sources: administrative sources, integration of new data sources and geospatial information, household surveys.
2. Leaving no-one behind and most critical dimensions such as disability, migrant status, geographical.
3. Development of new skills in NSOs.
4. Coordination of national statistical systems and cooperation between NSOs and other producers of official statistics.

### 2.1.2 Building blocks for capacity development

Capacity development refers to helping national data ecosystems respond to and manage the growing demand for data and the expansion of data ecosystems with new actors involved, including new data producers from the private sector and civil society. This new approach to capacity, *Capacity Development 4.0*, (CD4.0), defined by PARIS21, has objectives going beyond the traditional production-side interventions to also include the strengthening of data use, literacy and results.<sup>7</sup>

The primary aim of capacity development under the financing modality or mechanism proposed within this paper is to improve national data and statistical systems capacity to fully address the needs of the implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda. The following are the building blocks<sup>8</sup> proposed for capacity development:

- The focus of capacity development will be on the national statistical systems, including all parts of the system and data providers.
- National political commitment to both the NSO and the 2030 Agenda is essential to ensure effective evidence based policy development through the use of robust national statistics and data. Support for capacity development will be demand driven, i.e. statistical offices will identify areas that would benefit from improved capacity, and capacity development will be requested by national statistical offices, in their role as coordinators of national statistical systems, or other parts of the statistical system in coordination with the NSO.
- Capacity development needs should be defined based on existing national statistical plans (such as National Strategies, National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) or other similar plans).
- There will be a direct link between elements of capacity development and the strategic objectives of the CTGAP.
- Capacity development activities should be sustainable and with a direct impact on the continuous work of national statistical systems.

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<sup>7</sup> For more information, see <http://www.paris21.org/capacity-development-40>.

<sup>8</sup> Capacity development within this framework will also be in compliance with 'Good practices in technical cooperation for statistics', as described in the document E/CN.3/1999/19.

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## 2.2 Funding

### 2.2.1 Financing for data is critical

Meeting the data challenges of the SDGs will require increased investments in international and national data and statistical systems. Investing in data brings returns. Development data are critical for policy making, planning, and monitoring and measuring impact nationally and globally. Yet statistical systems in developing countries are often under-resourced and under-staffed and traditional support to statistical capacity building is not fit for purpose

### 2.2.2 Current status of gaps in financing for data

The demand for more and better data for the SDGs has not consistently been translated into a corresponding growth in funding, and the excitement around new data sources and disruptive technology has not always been met with commensurate support for the national systems that is needed to take advantage of them. Despite the evidence:

- Aid for statistics, as calculated by PARIS21 in its *Partner Report on Support to Statistics* (PARIS21, 2017), averaged 0.30 percent of total official development assistance (ODA) between 2013 and 2015 (about USD 600 million per year).
- A large share of global support to data for development continues to come from a very small number of providers: in 2015, five providers of development co-operation (the World Bank, Canada, the United Nations Population Fund, the European Commission/EUROSTAT and the African Development Bank) accounted for 75% of official development assistance for statistics (PARIS21, 2017).
- In 2015, USD 181 million was committed as bilateral aid for statistics. This aid accounted for one-third of total commitments to statistics. The top five bilateral providers by size of contribution are: Canada, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Korea and Australia, accounting for 78% of bilateral aid. (PARIS21, 2017).

The *State of Development Data Funding* report (GPSDD, 2016) calculated the minimum cost of producing data for the Tier 1 and Tier 2 SDGs in 144 developing countries to be about USD 2.8-3.0 billion per year up to 2030. The estimates include the cost of expanding the program of surveys and censuses and of improving administrative data systems. This report estimated that developing countries face an annual funding gap, once domestic budgets for statistics as well as aid for statistics from bilateral and multilateral sources are accounted for, of USD 200 million to produce data for the SDGs.

Filling the estimated SDG data funding gap for an additional USD 200 million annually in ODA (USD 541 million in 2015) would make a huge difference to enable countries to put in place statistical systems capable of supporting the SDGs, as long as the aid focuses on building sustainable statistical systems.

### 2.2.3 Cape Town Global Action Plan as a global plan to guide investment in data and statistics

Traditional support for development data has largely focused on technical assistance. Characterized by low levels of coordination among providers, this type of support has targeted specific sectors rather than whole-of-government approaches and has lacked country ownership. These efforts have not yielded substantial increases in statistical capacity. In the context of the data revolution, providers must reshape their approach to statistical capacity development to promote country ownership, align support with

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country priorities, focus on data use and users, foster diverse public-private partnerships, utilize new funding mechanisms, and emphasize results-based support.

#### **2.2.4 Establishing a Development Data Funding Facility**

Ensuring and maximizing the effectiveness of financing for capacity development is essential for the success of implementation of the 2030 Agenda whose data needs have created short, medium and long-term challenges that must be addressed in a timely and efficient manner.

The ultimate objective is to establish a transparent financing mechanism open to all stakeholders, including public and private ones, which allows for financing both in terms of monetary inputs as well as provision of in-kind transfers and allows for the openness in combining funding. The first step will be the establishment of a funding facility to advocate for and articulate the needs of countries and the CTGAP priorities; bring together all interested donors; and identify synergy and catalytic opportunities. The facility will initially use small grants catalytically, bringing programmes to scale by leveraging far greater sums from donors – including from private philanthropies -- and domestic government resources. The facility will initially focus on providing a way of doing better with existing funds and through information sharing, networking, and coordination of support by both donors and recipients of aid for statistics. It will later expand its focus and scope of work, as more donors and national governments commit resources to address national needs and priorities of the CTGAP.

The development data funding facility will also help countries identify SDG-related data needs and set their priorities on what will be the highest investment impact. This in turn will facilitate government statisticians in building a country-driven investment case for finance ministers, and get donors (both public and private resource providers) focused on the same objectives.

The secretariat function for the development data funding facility would be housed at a large international organization, such as the World Bank - a semi-autonomous unit that would take advantage of the institutional setup and experiences dealing with large financial funding mechanisms as well as leverage the institution's operational capability, and provide unique access to ministers of finance.

Furthermore, the facility would complement existing structures and activities to strengthen support for national statistics systems. The goal is to mobilize both domestic and international funds, and activate public and private sector funding opportunities to support the development of both foundational data systems and new tools to incorporate complementary and newer data sources.

The facility will be created under the mandate of the UN Statistical Commission as its ultimate stakeholder, with an advisory board including representatives of different data and donor communities guiding decisions on the operational modalities and on raising resources to address the data needs for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The funding mechanism will follow a set of ideas and principles for capacity development initiatives consistent with CTGAP implementation and endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission. As such, it will foster a coordinated approach to capacity development. By being entirely demand-driven, the mechanism will unlock more domestic resources for data and statistics over the medium- to longer-term.

The roles and functions of the funding facility will be managed by the HLG-PCCB following extensive consultations with development partners and donors to ensure better coordination of activities. The role and functions can be summarized under three broad headings: 1) Provision and management of funds, 2)



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Catalyzing high-impact investments in data and statistics to unleash greater domestic resources over the medium-term, 3) Exploring and implementing innovative funding instruments. Delivery of capacity building will rely on partnerships to execute this work.

Under the three headings, the following activities have been identified:

- 1) Provision and management of the funding mechanism
  - a. Provision of high-impact catalytic funding
  - b. Fund management: managing funding and funding flows between recipients and donors
- 2) Catalyzing high-impact investments
  - a. Support country processes that ensure proposed projects address highest priority data needs to maximize impact and develop projects that avail of modest grants to significantly increase domestic resources alongside IDA and IBRD, which are aligned with bilateral financing, and private sector resources
  - b. Match projects with central or decentralized funds
  - c. Maintain a database of countries' expressed and vetted needs for capacity building, possible capacity providers and the funds available
- 3) Exploring and implementing innovative funding instruments
  - a. Develop pathfinder approaches to identify new modes of integrating financing with in-kind support recognizing the new era of financing for development and the need to foster new forms of collaborations to effectively and efficiently cultivate transformational change in implementation methods.

### 3. Follow up

It will be necessary to establish evaluation criteria that will ensure accountability, transparency, integrity and feedback of administration of the financing mechanism. Criteria developed for the follow-up within the financing mechanism will comply with the standards for evaluation of statistical capacity development and will be agreed among partners participating in this mechanism. The actual implementation of the capacity development projects will need to be evaluated based upon the source of the funds. For example, funds come from different sources and the donor evaluation criteria will need to be taken into consideration. Further details for the follow-up and evaluation will be prepared by the relevant partners.

The UN World Data Forum in Dubai is the opportunity for all data communities and development partners to come together and launch this new initiative as a fundamental component of the implementation of the CTGAP.

### 4. Implementation of the financing mechanism – immediate actions

The immediate actions to be undertaken in order to advance the preparations for the establishment of a funding mechanism include:

- Develop advocacy/communication strategy
- Brainstorm and convey bilateral/multilateral meetings with donors and international banks on the feasibility of the financing mechanism
- Establish concrete goals/outputs for the financing mechanism

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- Convene an initial donor consultation
  - Identify initial group of donors willing to participate in this mechanism
- Assign roles to relevant bodies (HLG-PCBB, WB, UNSD, PARIS21, GPSDD, and others)
  - Establish an HLG-based governance system
- Launch the Dubai document, including the new financing mechanism or initial plans at the UNWDF on 24 October 2018
- Tentatively hold the “Bern High Level Dialogue on Development Data Financing” in January 2019
- Adoption of the Implementation Plan including the funding mechanism by the 50<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Statistical Commission in March 2019

**Other upcoming events related to funding are as follows:**

- **4 October 2018:** PARIS21 expert meeting focusing in particular on funding
- **5 October 2018:** Launch of the Informal OECD DAC group on Development Data