Session 4: Data Dissemination in the Demographic Yearbook System – UNSD Demographic Statistics Database and its Future

Wednesday, 11 November 2020
from 7:00am to 8:45am (NY Time/EST/UTC-5)

Background of the session

The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) collects national population estimates, vital statistics, international migration and population and housing censuses data from national statistical offices (NSOs). Built on the global data collection, **the United Nations Demographic Yearbook (DYB)** and its database constitute a system of disseminating demographic data. Celebrating its 70th edition in 2020, the DYB continues to evolve for better usability and international comparison by introducing new technologies and statistical concepts. **This session is to take stock of NSOs' best practices and recommendations to improve data and metadata dissemination in the DYB system.**

The DYB system has two channels to disseminate collected data. The DYB webpage contains its historical tabulations of the Yearbooks in PDF and for recent years in Excel. In addition, the Demographic Statistics Database in UNdata enables users to download official demographic data.

However, both have limitations in discoverability, searchability and usability. For example, users need to know what tabulations the DYB contains before reaching to the DYB webpage. In addition, the DYB covers a certain scope of years and data collected through questionnaires collections so does not serve as a database.

For UNdata, users can download only up to 100,000 records at once and need to download larger dataset in batches. Currently, however, users can filter data by only 4 variables (country, year, rural/urban and sex), which limits creating appropriate data batches. In addition, non-technical audience may find it challenging to read and use downloaded data, available only in record formats (XML/CSV).

Expected outcome of the session

The expected outcome of this session is a set of recommendations for efficient and modernized data and metadata dissemination in the DYB system. The list will feed into a conclusions and recommendations document at the end of the meeting, which will be further submitted to the Statistical Commission in March 2021 as part of a background document.

In this light, NSOs and international organizations are invited to present their practices and recommendations for data and metadata dissemination in the DYB system through answering the following guiding questions:

1. What tools in disseminating demographic data and metadata does your NSO use?
2. How can we improve usability / discoverability / searchability?
3. What are the innovative ways to collect and disseminate metadata information? In What format – word, excel, other platforms?
4. To what extent is it appropriate to make metadata public?
5. What features should DYB's future data dissemination have?