

“StaTact, data governance and monitoring of the SDGs for strengthening resilience of countries in special situations”

High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2018

OFFICIAL SIDE EVENT

Organized by UNITAR and UN Statistics Division

in collaboration with the Governments of Switzerland and Sweden

11 July 2018, 18:30-20:00, Conference Room 7, UN Headquarters

Followed by reception



Objectives

The proposed side event organized by UNITAR in partnership with UN Statistics Division and the Governments of Switzerland and Sweden will provide space for showcasing the new problem-solving toolkit StaTact developed jointly by UNITAR and UNSD in support of monitoring the SDGs. The tool was test-piloted earlier this year with the participation of 15 countries, mostly African and Asian Least Developed Countries and one Small Island Developing State. As the name of the toolkit suggests, its main objective is to enable UN Member States to rapidly fill in pressing SDG-related data gaps by leveraging improved governance arrangements and partnerships. The toolkit contributes to more sustainable and resilient societies through improved data governance and data utilization for policy-making purposes in selected priority areas.

The participants of the side event will learn about the StaTact toolkit and how its methodology can be applied in their respective countries. The tool is universal in that it can help address a broad range of issues through strengthened collaboration between data users, producers and holders including traditional and non-traditional data sources.

This toolkit will be of special interest to the representatives of Planning Ministries, National Statistical Offices, line Ministries as well as all other stakeholders using or producing data.



Format

The side event will consist of an introduction into the toolkit followed by the presentation of selected case studies by government officials users of the toolkit. The case studies will focus on how improved governance and data availability and utilization can contribute to strengthened resilience of countries in special situations. They will include some of the following: disaster risk reduction, improved efficiency of water use, strengthening of a National Statistical System in a conflict-affected country, and youth employment and food security. The case studies will be drawn primarily from the work carried out by several Least Developed Countries, incl. LLDCs, and Small Island Developing States.

This first part of the side event will be followed by a structured discussion and feedback sub-session. It is expected that all side event participants contribute their suggestions regarding possible future upgrades of the tool and views on the range of its applicability.

What is a StaTact?

The side event draws on the work that has been carried out by UNITAR and UNSD since early 2018 with the objective to contribute to the strengthening of institutional arrangements and brokering of partnerships to improve data collection, production, dissemination and utilization. The aim is to ensure there is strong evidence to inform policies aimed at transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies. The objective of the tool is to enable countries and their National Statistical Offices to have a multi-stakeholder discussion around institutional arrangements and the issues of coordination, partnerships and governance in support of monitoring the SDGs. The discussion is always problem-specific leading to a concrete, detailed and highly realistic short-term action plan drawing on the outcomes of a two-day analysis.

More specifically, the StaTact tool proposes an approach that combines two elements in one:

- a) a simple, bottom-up analytical framework for mapping the institutional arrangements for data ecosystems for the SDGs and for identifying challenges and good practices around a specific problem statement; and
- b) a participatory methodology for structuring partnerships and operational arrangements between holders of traditional and non-traditional data sources, producers of statistics and indicators, and users, and for planning actions to inform domestic processes.

The analytical framework aims to help assess the challenges and opportunities presented by current governance, coordination practices and broader institutional architecture with a focus on data. To this end, the analysis is focused on a specific area selected by each country and relevant inter-linkages. It uses a bottom up, tactical approach and problem trees taking country discussions around a specific measurement problem through several stages, incl. problem statement and business case, mapping to SDG and national indicators, analysis of data ecosystems, institutional arrangements, and action planning.

The StaTact tool is complemented by a quick reference guide and several other supporting documents that can be used for organizing meetings and workshops to address pressing data needs by using a short-term, tactical – as opposed to longer-term, strategic – approach, and tackling governance-related impediments and opportunities such as those related to institutional coordination, leadership, legal aspects, management, partnerships, capacities, IT infrastructure, etc. The toolkit will also be integrated in the upcoming Handbook of Statistical Organization the work on which has been endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission.

The toolkit has been developed through the pilot testing in the context of three regional workshops held in Bangkok and Addis-Ababa in February-March 2018. The fourteen countries that partook in the workshops so far include: Ethiopia, Liberia, Malawi, Sudan, Uganda, Cote d'Ivoire, DRC, Madagascar, Mauritania, and Togo, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Nepal. Additional – national – workshops

will be organized in 1 to 2 SIDS before the 2018 HLPF to provide further evidence with the examples relevant for this group of countries. These workshops typically bring together government officials from National Statistical Offices, Planning Ministries, selected line Ministries as well as representatives of non-traditional data sources.

Some may ask: *Why do we need the StaTact?* Strategies require long-term timeframe and significant investments while some of the needs may be urgent. In some cases, there exist quick fixes to such problems. The role of the StaTact is to help countries identify such quick fixes as well as address bottlenecks they are facing in implementing long-term plans such as National Strategies for the Development of Statistics or others. In short, the StaTact toolkit is about strengthening data availability and utilization by policy-makers to build stronger and more resilient societies through a better dialogue and collaboration within the National Statistical System and the leveraging of administrative data and other non-traditional data sources such as Big Data, NGOs, geospatial, etc.

Programme

Chairs:

Mr. Nikhil Seth, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations, Executive Director of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)

Mr. Stefan Schweinfest, Director, UN Statistics Division (UNSD)

What is a StaTact?

Mr. Einar Bjorgo, Director, Division for Satellite Analysis and Applied Research, UNITAR

Ms. Elena Proden, Specialist, UNITAR

Mr. Gabriel Gamez, Inter-regional Adviser, UN Statistics Division (UNSD)

Mr. Geoffrey Greenwell, Consultant, UNITAR

Sharing StaTact experience

SURINAME: Mr. Iwan A. Sno, Director, General Bureau of Statistics of Suriname

UGANDA: Mr. James Muwonge, Director, Socio-Economic Surveys, Uganda Bureau of Statistics

TOGO: Mr. Tchaou Meatchi, Director of Planning and Development Policies, Ministry of Planning of Togo

Discussion