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**Items for discussion and decision: Data and indicators for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

**Summary of the discussion of the Friday Seminar on Emerging Issues  
“The Data Revolution in Action: Building a Federated System of SDG Data Hubs  
and Collaborative Platforms for Innovation”**

Prepared by United Nations Statistics Division /  
Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Friday Seminar on Emerging Issues

THE DATA REVOLUTION IN ACTION:  
BUILDING A FEDERATED SYSTEM OF SDG DATA HUBS AND  
COLLABORATIVE PLATFORMS FOR INNOVATION

Friday, 2 MAR 2018, 10:00 am – 6:00 pm

Meeting organized by United Nations Statistics Division

**SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION**

The principle of national ownership, which puts national reporting at the center of the SDG review process, underlines the critical need to build a modern statistical, technological and institutional infrastructure to support an interconnected system of trusted local, national, regional and global sources of data and knowledge to inform national policies for the implementation of sustainable development goals.

The discussion at the Seminar highlighted the following:

- National reporting that is country owned and country led is central to the overall system of SDG follow-up and review. In this context, a federated system-of-systems approach recognizes and strengthens **country ownership** of each national hub, as well as the **role of National Statistical Offices** in coordinating the production, sharing and dissemination of data and statistics at the national level.
- A federated information system for the SDGs is able **to strengthen and link data communities** within and across national and international data hubs, to allow the **sharing and integration** of statistical, geospatial, and other sources of data and information to support the implementation of the 2030 agenda at the local, national, regional and global levels.
- At the **national level**, the primary purpose of this architecture is to strengthen interconnectedness of data providers, analysts, and users from multiple communities within countries. It aims to **enable the use of high-quality data and information** by making the data accessible to different audiences in a convenient and engaging manner, maintaining its credibility, and **putting the needs of users at the center**.
- By enabling national SDG data hubs to scale and connect with each other and with regional and global data hubs, this architecture will also allow **national data to be fully visible, accessible, and usable also at the global level**.
- The role of international statistical agencies would remain unchanged based on their **existing mandates**. The network of federated information systems would

facilitate the **development and implementation of commonly agreed statistical methodologies**, thus improving comparability and harmonization of data in their respective sectors.

- Two key elements for the implementation of a federated information systems architecture are: (1) standards-driven **interoperability** of systems and data, and (2) implementation of **open data practices**.
- The network of interconnected SDG data hubs must be **standards-driven**, with well-documented metadata and in full adherence with internationally agreed standards. Statistics must be usable accessible and fit for purpose, following established international standards and guiding principles.
- The ability of **geospatial information (and GIS) and Earth observations data to be integrated with statistical data in the data hubs** is fundamental to integrate datasets coming from multiple traditional and non-traditional sources. Moreover, **analytic GIS capabilities** are also essential for the compilation and communication of indicators and information products that are relevant for policy makers at different levels of aggregation.
- Participants stressed the **important role of official statistical systems** in validating the data and ensuring the adoption of internationally agreed standards and implement quality assurance frameworks.
- In this new landscape, where **NSOs are at the center of the interconnected system**, the implementation of a federated system of SDG data hubs and collaborative platforms for innovation would strengthen the ability of NSOs to adapt and modernize.
- The vision of a federated system of SDG data hubs stresses **the use of web technology to strengthen data dissemination, communication and user engagement**.
- Maintaining public **trust in official statistics requires a participatory approach** in the collection, production, and dissemination of data, and to better communicate the value of data.
- Establishing a larger data community is at the basis of the development of a federated system of SDG data hubs. The development of such system needs to be **inclusive and leave no one behind**, and its implementation will require different approaches and timelines, tailored to the particular needs of different groups of countries.
- **Technology today provides opportunities that were not available in the past** for National Statistical offices to bring together members of the broader National Statistical Systems and to reconcile local, national and global reporting needs.

- Participants emphasized that a Federated System can only be implemented with **adequate capacity development efforts** to strengthen the data sources and ensure the sustainability of the national data hubs.
- The Federated System will help the coordination within and across countries, including for **channeling resources** (both internally and from the wider donors' community).
- The **Cape Town Global Action Plan** provides a good blueprint for the development of the Federated System, while the **UN World Data Forum** will provide the space to review the status of implementation of a system of interconnected SDG data hubs and to further strengthen collaboration across different data communities.