

## **High Level Forum on Official Statistics**

### **Communicating data and statistics: Bringing trusted and actionable data to the public, the media and policy-makers**

Monday, 5 March 2017

3:00 – 6:00pm

UNHQ, Conference Room 4

Meeting organized by UNSD

National and global policy initiatives, such as the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as day-to-day resource allocation decisions by public servants and citizens, rely on an accurate knowledge of facts about the world. The High Level Forum on Official Statistics will discuss how Statistical Agencies can communicate more effectively to help policy makers, the media and the general public identify, understand, and make full use of trusted sources of data and statistics, in order to support the planning, implementation and monitoring of development efforts at all levels of decision making.

Good communication of data and statistics is at the basis of the work of the statistical community. The Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics recognize that "official statistics provide an indispensable element in the information system of a democratic society", and stress the need for "official statistics that meet the test of practical utility" and that are "compiled and made available on an impartial basis... to honour citizens' entitlement to public information". Moreover, the Fundamental Principles highlight the need to retain trust in official statistics and facilitate the correct interpretation and proper use of the data and statistics.

Data are at the heart of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Thus, a systematic approach in communicating national statistical data into official processes for measuring the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs is essential. The fast pace of the evolving data ecosystem requires communication strategies for the official statistical system. It is essential that there is an environment of trust surrounding the data produced and published by the official statistical system.

Increasing data and statistical literacy and improving communication of data and statistics allow citizens to better understand the world around them and to make informed decisions. In this context, the media play an increasingly important role in communicating to the public actionable insights from trusted sources of data and statistics. Highlighting how to provide contextual information that helps make sense of today's abundance of data, the Forum will contribute to the on-going conversations around data literacy, the role of media and the use of data by the general public.

In addition to trust, the development of strong relationships between the statistical and political communities is essential to strengthen the use of official statistics and data in the

follow-up and review on the SDGs at all levels. In the General Assembly Resolution (A/RES/71/313) on “Work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, the need to incorporate contributions from the UN Statistical Commission into the deliberations at the High-level Political Forum was emphasized. In order to fully implement the resolution, the statistical community needs to identify ways to establish a productive dialogue with policy makers and integrate the work of the UN Statistical Commission into the deliberation of the HLPF. Discussions at this High Level Forum will contribute to identifying ways to bring the work of these two intergovernmental bodies closer together.

The first session will focus on how to effectively communicate data and statistics, and incorporate views from communications specialists, journalists, and statisticians.

The second session will focus on specific aspects of coordination between the UN Statistical Commission and the High-level Political Forum. The panelists will review how to bring statistical messages from the Statistical Commission to the attention of policy makers and to inform discussions taking place at the High-level Political Forum.

### **Proposed Agenda**

#### *Session 1 – Communicating data to the public*

Moderator: Ms. Sibylle von Oppeln-Bronikowski Director of Strategy and Planning, International Relations, and Research and Communications, German Federal Statistical Office

Dedication of Session 1 "Communicating data to the public" to the memory of Professor Hans Rosling by Mr. Joakim Stymne, Director General, Statistics Sweden

Panelists:

- Professor Mark Hansen, Columbia University
- Mr. Risenga Maluleke, Statistician-General, Statistics South Africa
- Ms. Emily Pryor, Data2X
- Mr. James Fransham, The Economist

#### *Session 2 – Bringing the work of the Statistical Community to the Global Political Processes*

Moderator: Ms. Ariunzaya Ayush, Chairperson, National Statistics Office of Mongolia

Panelists:

- Ambassador Rhonda King, Vice-President, ECOSOC Bureau
- Mr. Neil Pierre, Chief, Policy Coordination Branch, OESC/DESA
- Ms. Gabriella Vukovich, President, Hungarian Central Statistical Office
- Mr. Mauricio Perfetti del Corral, Director, National Administrative Department of Statistics, Colombia

Concluding remarks: Mr. Stefan Schweinfest, Director, UN Statistics Division