Bringing Children Out from the Shadows:
The urgent need to disaggregate and share COVID-19 data for children's well-being

09:00-10:30 (EST), 8th March 2021
Side Event of the 52nd session of the United Nations Statistical Commission

Concept Note

BACKGROUND

A year into the pandemic, COVID-19 infection and death rates have soared into the millions. How many of these infections have been children? How many children have died? The fact is, we do not know – only about 60 countries have data on COVID-19 infection and death rates that can be disaggregated by age and sex and are publicly accessible. These data deficiencies have serious consequences for children's lives. National policies, programmes and resources aimed at protecting girls and boys during this challenging time will inevitably fall short without the evidence to focus and hone interventions. At a regional and global level, these data shortfalls impede monitoring efforts to capture the virus's impacts on children and take necessary action. The collection and transparent distribution of robust, accurate statistics on COVID-19 is urgently needed, with countries and the global community working hand in hand.

COVID-19 data deficiencies demonstrate long-standing shortfalls in data collection and governance in many countries, necessitating a broader discussion of what is needed to strengthen data systems. Some countries are grappling with poor or non-existent data collection systems; others may have the data, but be unable or unwilling to make them accessible.

ACTION

'Bringing Children Out from the Shadows: The urgent need to disaggregate data for children's well-being' will address the bottlenecks in data collection, sharing and governance issues and establish a way forward. Convened by UNICEF and WHO as a side event to the 52nd Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission, the event will invite countries to reflect on the implications of reporting on standard age and sex categories for deaths, major health events (e.g., surveillance during epidemics) and on health conditions (e.g., disability, chronic diseases), while also offering high-level guidance.

To provide firsthand accounts and insight on these topics, NSO/MOH representatives from four countries will share their experiences in systems strengthening along the data supply chain, from community/health centre level to national mechanisms. Countries will further identify the support they need from the global community to make long-lasting changes to the collection and sharing of standardized data.

UNICEF and WHO will offer high-level strategies and recommendations on generating reliable, quality, transparent data that can be disaggregated by age and sex.

OBJECTIVES

1. Identify and address data collection, analysis and use gaps and the support needed to address these deficits
2. Share challenges and good practices to strengthen surveillance and data systems in countries
3. Pinpoint the data sharing and governance mechanisms needed to promote transparent distribution of standardized data as a public good, bearing in mind data privacy and protection issues
4. Improve the usability and comparability of data across and within countries, regions and over time and more accurately inform efforts to support children during and after the pandemic

EVENT STRUCTURE

90-minute session with panel discussion and Q&A. **Moderator: Mark Hereward**

Time (EST)	Session	Panellist
8:45	Sign on	
9:00-9:10	**Opening remarks** by WHO and UNICEF	• Samira Asma, Assistant Director General, Data, Analytics and Delivery for Impact, WHO • Vidhya Ganesh, Director, Division of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring, UNICEF
9:10-9:40	**Session 1: Data needs and gaps and recommendations on standardized age and sex data** o An urgent need for disaggregated data: Understanding the Impact of COVID-19 on Children (10 minutes) o Why we need standard age groupings for disaggregation of health data (15 minutes) o Q&A (5 minutes)	• Mark Hereward, Associate Director for Data and Analytics, UNICEF • Theresa Diaz, Unit Chief, Epidemiology, Monitoring and Evaluation, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health and Ageing Department, WHO
9:40-10:00	**Session 2: Panel discussion – Challenges and good practices on surveillance and data system strengthening, data sharing**	• Arturo Barranco Flores, Director of Information on Health Needs and Population, MoH Mexico • Suneeta Krishnan, Deputy Director, BMGF India Country Office
10:00-10:25	**Q&A**	• Participants and all panellists
10:25-10:30	**Closing remarks**	• Mark Hereward, Associate Director for Data and Analytics, UNICEF • Somnath Chatterji, Director ai Department of Data and Analytics, WHO

TARGET AUDIENCE

Chief Statisticians and Ministers of Health plus staff, UNICEF and WHO Statistics and Health colleagues

ZOOM LINK: https://unicef.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_zFe-v8gdT_qf0G84fAm8Sw