

UN World Data Forum 2018 wraps up with launch of Dubai Declaration to boost financing for better data for sustainable development

Switzerland selected to host next Forum in 2020

(Dubai, 24 October) — The second United Nations World Data Forum is concluding today with the launch of a Dubai Declaration to increase financing for better data and statistics for sustainable development.

“While it is clear that the data revolution is having an enormous impact, it has not benefited everyone equally,” said United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed in her statement at the Forum. “Our task is to make sure data is available to all people. We must make sure it is harnessed to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda at all levels and in all regions and countries...But we urgently need to bridge important gaps. Funding for data and statistical systems remains limited. And beyond funding, we need political, technical and advocacy support in all areas.”

The Dubai Declaration calls for the establishment of an innovative funding mechanism open to all stakeholders, that will aim to mobilize both domestic and international funds, and to activate partnerships and funding opportunities to strengthen the capacity of national data and statistical systems. The funding mechanism will be created under the guidance of representatives of statistical systems and different data and donor communities who will support the decision making on the operational modalities and on raising resources to address the data needs for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

“The UN World Data Forum is the best place to launch a declaration on financing for data and statistics,” said Mr. Liu Zhenmin, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. “To achieve the ambitions set on in the Cape Town Global Action Plan, both increased domestic resources and international support will be needed. My expectation is that the declaration, the outcome of the discussions at this forum, will help us shape the way forward to promote “more and better funding” for data and statistics. The immediate next steps will be translating those ideas into action and ensuring that we maximize the effectiveness of funding for sustainable development data, as this is crucial to fulfil the data needs of the 2030 Agenda.”

“We are delighted to have hosted influential leaders, decision makers and experts from around the world over the past three days here in the UAE,” said H.E. Abdulla Nasser Lootah, Director General of the Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority (FCSA) of the United Arab Emirates. “The positive and insightful outcomes we’ve achieved during this important gathering are essential for unifying visions and empowering individuals, institutions and governments to embrace modern technologies and harness data to serve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) locally, regionally and internationally.”

Over 2,000 data experts from more than 100 countries gathered at the Forum from 22-24 October, with participants from governments, national statistical offices, the private sector and academia, international organizations and civil society groups.

Across over 85 sessions during the three days of the Forum, many innovative solutions to the data challenges of the 2030 Agenda were proposed and partnerships were formed.

Innovative data solutions

Some highlights from the Forum include:

- The launch of a data interoperability guide by a collaborative led by the UN Statistics Division and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, which identifies practical steps to help countries and development partners on the pathway towards integration of data from multiple sources for better monitoring and policy making to achieve the 2030 Agenda.
- Important discussions on building trust in data and statistics showed that 70% of this expert audience believed there is a crisis in lack of public trust in data, 35% felt the top cause is that statistics do not align with pre-conceived ideas, and 37% said that improving citizens' data literacy was needed to tackle this challenge. These sessions highlighted an important area of work for the data community moving forward, particularly as it relates to data literacy for both the public at large and policymakers and the need to ensure data relevance, openness and quality.
- A session organized by Data2x featured gender data impact stories, including a moving story of how the results of a survey on domestic violence in Viet Nam shocked government officials into enacting new legislation and awareness-raising campaigns which have become a model across Asia. This story and the others highlighted in this session demonstrate the impact data can have when communicated in a way that policymakers can understand. This data impact story is an important example for other data producers, civil society members and journalists on how data can be used to influence policy actions.

Switzerland to host Forum in 2020

It was announced today that Switzerland will host the next UN World Data Forum in Bern from 18-21 October 2020. The announcement was made at a press conference today by Dr. Gabriella Vukovich, co-chair of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the group that oversees the organization of the Forum.

"We are looking forward to working with the colleagues from Switzerland to organize an exciting World Data Forum in 2020," said Stefan Schweinfest, Director of the UN Statistics Division. "The UAE has set a high standard of support, and the energy and engagement behind the Forum continues to build, as evidenced by growing attendance."

For media: Recordings of the closing press briefing and other Forum sessions, as well as other information for media, can be found at undataforum.org. Downloadable photos are available for use with attribution at <http://enb.iisd.org/undata/worlddataforum/2018/>. Social media: Follow the conversation on Twitter using #UNDataForum.

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