

FACT SHEET

January 2017

Why a UN World Data Forum?

The 2030 Agenda, with the principle of “leaving no-one behind” at its heart, underlines the need for new approaches and tools to respond to an unprecedented demand for high quality, timely and disaggregated data. The full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the follow-up and review of progress towards the achievement of sustainable development will require a new approach to the production and use of data and statistics not only by official statistical systems, but across broader data ecosystems where players from academia, civil society and business play an increasingly important role.

The first UN World Data Forum in Cape Town, South Africa,¹ will provide statisticians and data practitioners across the globe an opportunity to present ongoing and innovative approaches to producing data and statistics and will foster collaboration between private, public and community-level data producers and users. It will provide a space for knowledge sharing and for launching new initiatives and collaborations for the integration of traditional and new data sources, and will promote a better use of data by a large range of users, including by showcasing new visualization tools.

Facts about Data Gaps and Challenges

Despite an increasing awareness of the importance of data for evidence-based policymaking and development, data gaps remain significant in all countries, and in particular in the ones with fewer resources. The share of official development assistance dedicated to data collection has hovered around 0.3% between 2010 and 2013.²

HOUSEHOLD SURVEY DATA

- Household survey data are key to producing statistics and indicators in many areas of development, but such surveys are generally undertaken only every 3-5 years.
- In many cases, data has not yet been processed from surveys that have taken place after 2012.

BIRTH REGISTRATION DATA

- More than 100 countries do not accurately count births and deaths.
- The births of nearly one fourth of children under the age of 5 worldwide have never been recorded. Without a birth certificate, a child may be denied health care or education, and later in life enter into marriage or the labour force, or be conscripted into the armed forces, before the legal age.

¹ Programme: <http://undataforum.org/WorldDataForum/programme/>

² Inputs on data gaps were provided by the UN agencies and World Data Forum partners (see list here: <http://undataforum.org/WorldDataForum/partners/>)

MATERNAL AND CHILD WELFARE DATA

- Every day 830 mothers die as a result of complications related to childbirth. Most of these deaths are preventable, yet there are critical data gaps about the quality of maternal care.
- There is a shortage of accurate and comparable data on the number of children with disabilities in almost all countries.
- Universal access to safe drinking water is a fundamental need and human right. Although we have data about where drinking water comes from, we often do not know how safe it is.
- Nine out of 10 children are in primary school, but crucial data about how many are actually learning is missing.

GENDER DATA

- Around 120 million girls under the age of 20 are estimated to have been subjected to forced sexual acts. Boys are also at risk, but almost no data is available.
- Only 41% of countries regularly produce data on violence against women.
- Only 13% of countries have a dedicated gender statistics budget.

DATA ON THE MOST VULNERABLE

- Seventy-seven out of the 155 countries monitored do not have adequate poverty data, although there have been clear improvements in the last decade.
- Current poverty data can tell us how much of a country's income goes to a certain proportion of the population – such as the poorest 20% – but it does not provide specific information about gender, age or disability status.

What Do We Expect from the First UN World Data Forum?

Better data is needed to inform policy decisions from the local to the global levels, to raise awareness among the public and the media, and to track progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. At the first UN World Data Forum, a number of outcomes are expected, including:

- Launch of a Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data;
- Increased political and resource support for statistical capacity building;
- Progress on initiatives and solutions to harness the power of data for the public good and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;
- Growing consensus on strategies to address data governance and other policy issues.

For more details and examples of data initiatives by the United Nations and World Data Forum partner organizations, visit:

data.devinit.org
data.unicef.org
data.worldbank.org
datapopalliance.org/work/
unstats.un.org/bigdata/inventory/
unstats.un.org/sdgs/
www.gapminder.org
www.paris21.org

For more information about the World Data Forum, visit: UNDataForum.org

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