

Global data community's response to COVID-19

[Tagline to be decided by consultation vote ending Thursday, 20 August]

Announced during the 2020 virtual format of the UN World Data Forum at the closing session on Wednesday, 21 October 2020

Prepared by the HLG-PCCB following an open and public consultation

I. Preamble [impact of COVID-19]

1. We, the participants of the United Nations World Data Forum representing the global data ecosystem of different data and statistical communities come together at a virtual session of the Forum to support the ongoing evidence-based response to the COVID-19 pandemic where the demand for data and statistics are greater than ever but they are in short supply in many parts of the World
2. Observe at the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, the importance of continued international cooperation to tackle these substantial supply side issues which impair Government's and the public's response to this pandemic, future disasters and accelerated action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals
3. Reiterate at the marking of the third World Statistics Day on the 20th October 2020 the importance of connecting the World with data we trust
4. Reaffirm more high-quality, timely, disaggregated, relevant data; that are open by default while respecting the right to privacy, are needed to inform the response to the pandemic and other disasters
5. Recognise access to affordable information can be achieved by strengthening national statistical systems through investment in new and existing data tools and platforms and by ensuring the continuity of statistical and data operations
6. Increasingly aware that data and official statistics are a critical part of building back a more equitable, sustainable and resilient future and getting us back on track to realise the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data (CTGAP) and the Dubai Declaration to finance and implement the CTGAP

II. Resolve to improve data systems [current actions]

7. We call for accelerated action on the implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan and Dubai declaration agreed in previous Forums as a key response to the COVID-19 pandemic. **We highlight our shared response to do the following:**

(Draft version for open consultation as of 5 August 2020)

- Create data to leave no one behind where we continue to develop disaggregation in data to mainstream gender equality, integrate geospatial and statistical information, and define common standards and tools to ensure that everyone is counted;
- Promote data literacy and empower the public to use data effectively, empower policymakers, planners and decision-takers to understand these data and use them effectively and assist all users to identify misinformation and disinformation;
- Maintain trust and privacy in data by full data users' engagement, protection through law, regulation and common practice for both individuals and businesses whilst ensuring transparency and accessibility to data that is of public interest;
- Develop data capacity to modernise data systems at all levels, especially among the lower-income and most vulnerable countries, to generate public data that are fit for purpose, open, interoperable and nationally coordinated; with special attention to coverage of the poorest and most vulnerable; including investment in basic statistical infrastructure such as census, survey and registration systems;
- Encourage the establishment of more data partnerships, whether public-public or public-private, to work on new data sources, tools and platforms to increase data availability and complement foundational data systems;
- Increase investments in data to respond more effectively to the COVID-19 pandemic, address the huge data gap in measuring our attainment of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and to close the digital divide and data inequality across the World.

III. Future outlook [data in the recovery]

8. We will continue to make progress on an innovative funding mechanism called for in the Dubai declaration and we must recognise for this mechanism to be sustainable that while each part we play in the data ecosystem is unique and irreplaceable only by working together are we greater than the sum of our parts.
9. We look forward to meeting together to review and expand on this response as well as share further experiences of tackling the COVID-19 pandemic through data at the third United Nations World Data Forum in Bern, Switzerland between 3 and 6 October 2021.