

**Global Preparatory Seminar
for
the United Nations World Data Forum
Guilin, China: 7-9 September 2016**

**A Transformative Vision
for
Data for Sustainable Development**

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CENTRE FOR POLICY DIALOGUE (CPD)
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Southern Voice
2015 On Post-MDG International Development Goals



Key discussion topics and questions

1. Learnings from developing countries' experience

*What are the main **difficulties and challenges** the world is facing with regard to data for sustainable development?*

2. Actions for realising data revolution

*What **steps and actions** are needed to produce accessible, reliable, high quality, timely, and disaggregated data to bring our vision close to reality?*

3. A vision for data revolution

*How do you see the **transformative vision** for data affecting the way data are currently collected, processed, and disseminated for policy-makers and the general public?*



Approach of the Presentation

- Reflections on the three discussion topics based on findings of the studies undertaken by the *Southern Voice*
 - Seven-country project called [Post-2015 Data Test: Unpacking the Data Revolution at the Country Level](#)
 - Four follow-up studies (Turkey, Bangladesh, Tanzania and Senegal) on country action plan to address the gaps identified in the course of the earlier Post-2015 Data Test
 - Several studies on Bangladesh's data challenges regarding SDGs

1. Learnings from developing countries' experience

1.1 Assessing the data needs

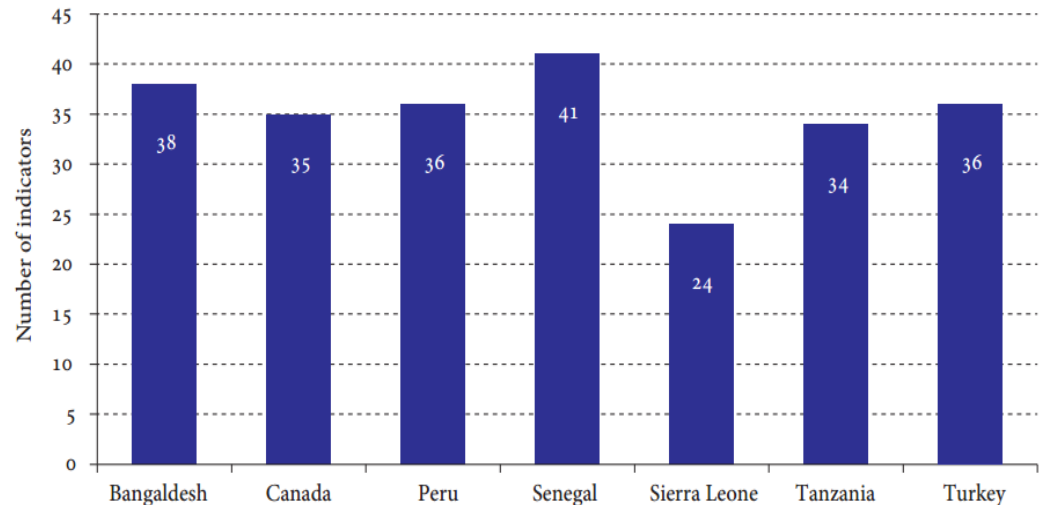
- Data for a large number of SDG indicators may be **unavailable**

For instance,

- Out of 231 global indicators, for 81 indicators data is not available in Bangladesh (35%), half of the indicators data was not available for Moldova (50%) and 157 is not available in Mongolia (68%) (Source: *Data Ecosystems for Sustainable Development, A report prepared by CPD for UNDP*)

- Data availability across the 45 indicators in seven countries shows Senegal has data for the highest number of indicators (41), followed by Bangladesh (38), Peru and Turkey (36 each), Canada (35) and Tanzania (34) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Total indicators for which national-level data exist across countries



Source: Kindornay, Bhattacharya and Higgins (2016).



1. Learnings from developing countries' experience (Cont.)

1.1 Assessing the data needs (Cont.)

- Besides traditional survey based sources, **administrative record** keeping will provide a large portion of data
 - Lack of awareness, capacity and resources
- A number of **surveys** were **discontinued/irregular** in many countries
- There is a need to increase **frequency** in conducting surveys
- Survey reports are often **released** with a substantial **time lag**
- Availability of data at a **disaggregated level** is a major weakness
 - Defining disaggregation types within country context is an issue too



1. Learnings from developing countries' experience (Cont.)

1.1 Assessing the data needs (Cont.)

- There will be a need to ensure a balance between **universality vs. national priorities.**
 - Similarities exist in terms of the national priorities identified across countries (7) for a number of goal areas (e.g. early childhood education; youth unemployment and pay equity; disaster resilience and safeguarding specific ecosystems)
 - Range of priorities vary both across and within income-level groupings
 - Additional country-relevant indicators identified for the global targets (Source: Kindornay, Bhattacharya and Higgins 2016).

1. Learnings from developing countries' experience (Cont.)

1.2 Ensuring data quality : A snapshot from Post-2015 Data Test Report

Country	Relevance	Accuracy and reliability	Timeliness and punctuality	Accessibility and clarity	Coherence and comparability
Bangladesh	2	2	2	2	2
Canada	3	4	4	4	4
Peru	3	4	2	2	4
Senegal	3	2	2	3	3
Sierra Leone	3	3	3	3	2
Tanzania	4	4	2	4	4
Turkey	4	4	3	4	4

Source: Kindornay, Bhattacharya and Higgins (2016).

- **Strongest:** Relevance
- **Weakest:** Timeliness and punctuality
- Improved performance related to income-level with exceptions

1. Learnings from developing countries' experience (Cont.)

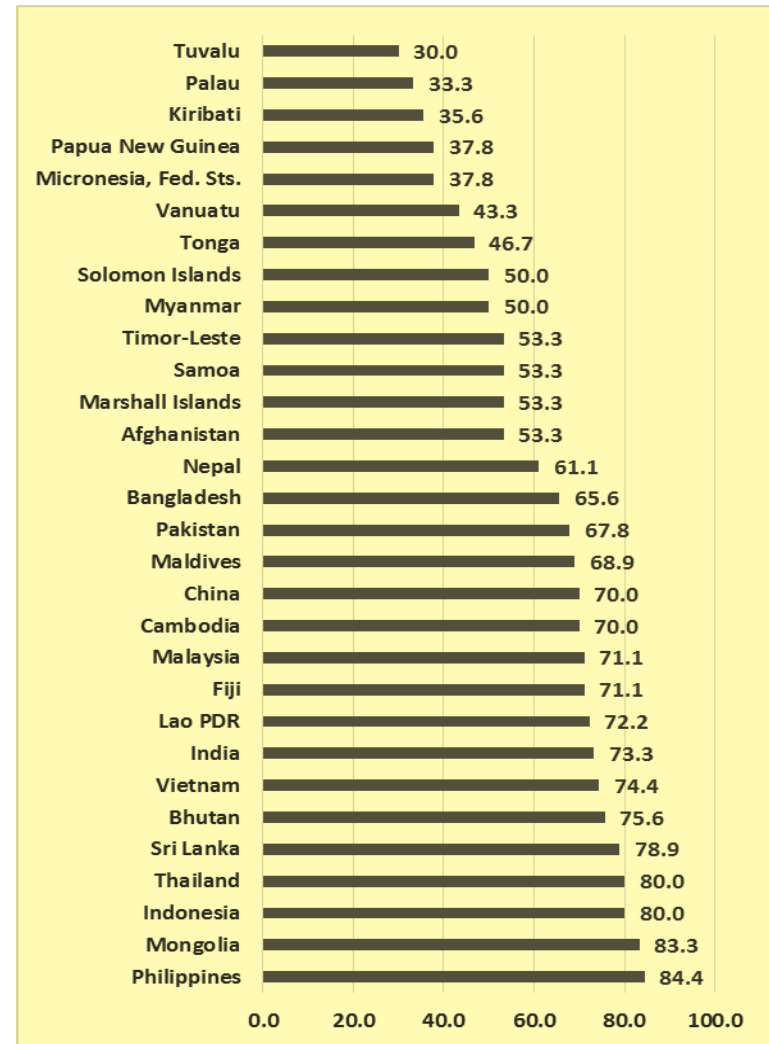
1.3 Providing more and predictable resources for data

- **Budgetary allocations** for data tend to be **marginal and volatile** – needs to ensure **predictability** (for example, on average, the GoB has been spending USD 27.7 million annually on statistics (FY11 to FY15))
- It is perhaps the case that as a country develops, it can also **invest more in data – secured domestic resources**
- **More commitment** is required from governments in developing countries but efficacy in utilising budgetary allocations also needs to be enhanced
- **ODA** allocation for data was found to be **dictated by sectoral concerns – MDG effect**
 - Only five major donors have been contributing more than 80% of total aid for data
 - Nature of these donors in providing project/program-based finance was found to be volatile
 - Project based ODA is becoming more common
 - Loan/credit is becoming more preferred form
- Creation of **Trust Fund** would be a positive step – needs to secure sustainable institutional capacity (along with funds) at country level

1. Learnings from developing countries' experience (Cont.)

1.4 Focus on sustainable statistical capacity

- Results from Asia based on **statistical capacity assessment** by the World Bank (2013)
 - Wide variation among the countries
 - 6 countries had scores below the threshold of 50 and all of these were island countries
 - Small island Asian countries will require significant capacity development
 - Compared to African counterparts in other Asian regions, in general, are better
 - The weakest area is 'methodology' - critical for ensuring quality
- **Core statistics** generation should be predictable: population census, HIES, LFS



<http://datatopics.worldbank.org/statisticalcapacity/>



1. Learnings from developing countries' experience (Cont.)

1.5 Addressing the political economy

- Building blocks are not in place for the effective production of good quality data (e.g. legal framework)
- NSOs need to be mandated (legally) and resourced to coordinate and support other government institutions (for administrative data etc.)
- Integration of new technologies into statistical activities can lead to significant gains, but they should be understood within the context of existing capacity and physical and ICT infrastructure constraints at the country level
- Efforts are needed to improve the availability and accessibility of microdata, data and metadata in user-friendly forms
- Engagement with the stakeholders including policymakers, government, institutions, the research community, private sector actors, civil society and the media is important for ensuring that data generated by NSSs support evidence-based decision making by a range of stakeholders, as well as the relevance of statistical activities carried out by NSOs and other government institutions
- Disclosure of information from corporate sector is critical
- Code of conduct for statistical office should be formulated



1. Learnings from developing countries' experience (Cont.)

1.6 Validating unofficial data

- NSSs are not well equipped to integrate unofficial data as a means to address data gaps
- There is a need to build capacities to work with unofficial data producers and develop systems that allow for the use of unofficial data in national statistics
- There remains a large trust deficit between the official and unofficial counterparts
- Absence of a guideline for validating unofficial statistics is common



2. Actions for realising Data Revolution

- **Invest in national priorities, systems and institutions**

country leadership and coordination on resourcing required

- **Put national statistical offices in the leading role**

should be endowed with effective autonomy to impartially discharge their duties

- **Engage with data users to improve data relevance**

short-term: periodic ad hoc user consultations

longer term: countries will need to develop policies and systems for user consultation

- **Take stock of and harness existing data**

Assessments of existing data production should be encouraged before making investment decisions, such as launching new survey instruments

- **Fill new data gaps**

Existing data gaps should not lead to the exclusion of important sustainable development priorities in global- and national level monitoring frameworks

2. Actions for realising Data Revolution (Cont.)

- **Collect data more often and with consistency**

major statistical instruments is insufficient in low-income countries. Concepts and methodologies lack consistency across instruments, hindering the comparability of data sources

- **Ensure data quality**

- **Relevance:** *Procedures and guidelines for data collection; Meeting user needs and ensuring user satisfaction*
- **Accuracy and reliability:** *Procedures to reduce sampling and nonsampling errors; Addressing systematic and random errors; Measures to revise data*
- **Timeliness and punctuality:** *Standards and procedures to ensure timely dissemination; Procedures to monitor punctuality*
- **Accessibility and clarity:** *Policy on accessibility; Guidelines on presentation of outputs; Methodological information available; Documentation and availability of metadata and microdata*

2. Actions for realising Data Revolution (Cont.)

➤ **Coherence and comparability:** *Measures to ensure consistency across data produced; Extent to which data are comparable between sources and over time; Extent to which common standards and concepts are consistently used*

▪ **Invest in disaggregated data**

different strategies and tools will be needed depending on local context

▪ **Ensure predictable financing**

predictable flows of finance from both domestic and foreign sources have to be ensured and resources should be committed according to national plans over the long term

▪ **Unofficial data should be harnessed, but they are not substitutes for official statistics**

investments in unofficial data to support SDG monitoring should not come at the expense of strengthening official data collection

2. Actions for realising Data Revolution (Cont.)

- **Adopt appropriate technologies suited to country context**

should be understood within the context of existing physical and information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure constraints at the country level.

- **Address the systemic concerns through more and better data**

data in such areas as global partnership, coherence, global economic and financial stability, policy space are inadequate

- **Support global partnership for the data revolution at the country level**

the strengthening of country level data collection efforts in the context of SDG implementation has to be substantively complemented by global partnership initiatives – particularly for the LDCs (SDG17)

- **Create an interface between data producers and other actors**

national, regional and global platforms



3. A vision for Data Revolution

- SDGs as an agenda is **universal, transformative, integrated, and inclusive** – and so should be data revolution

3.1 Universal

- Follow the set of global indicators including global partnership, coherence and other systemic concerns
- Ensure standardisation of definition and methodology
- Improved inter-country comparability

3.2 Transformative

- Uphold the data needs for monitoring and policy feedback including focus on Means of Implementation
- Clarity on data re productive capacity, employment and income
- Recognise the role of administrative data
- Emphasise use of perception data



3. A vision for Data Revolution (Cont.)

3.3 Integrated

- Interface and synergy among economic, social and environmental
- Include data issues in national level implementation of SDGs
- Coherence among the data for different indicators
- Collect data for more indicators from smaller number of surveys

3.4 Inclusive

- Ensure contextual disaggregation at the earliest
- Emphasise on SDG 16 – “strengthened institutions”
- Facilitate use of unofficial data and interface between data producers and users
- Exploit the potential of Southern think tanks in Data Revolution



Thank You

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