

## Summary of the Second UN World Data Forum: 22-24 October 2018

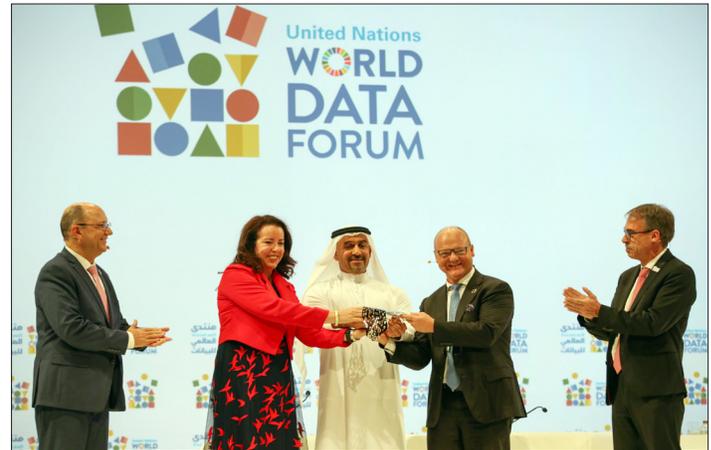
The second UN World Data Forum convened from 22-24 October 2018, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE). The Forum was hosted by the Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority (FCSA) of the UAE, with support from the Statistics Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), under the guidance of the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC) and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (HLG-PCCB).

Over 2,000 individuals registered to attend the over 85 plenary and parallel sessions that were organized during the three-day Forum under six themes:

- innovations and synergies across different data ecosystems;
- leaving no one behind;
- building trust in data and statistics;
- how far have we come?;
- understanding the world through data; and
- new approaches to capacity development for better data.

Representatives from national statistical offices (NSOs), international organizations, and civil society organizations, along with data scientists from the private sector and academia discussed challenges and opportunities for harnessing the power of data and monitoring to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In addition, a number of initiatives were announced and several publications were launched during the Forum.

At the conclusion of the event, the Dubai Declaration was announced. The Declaration focuses on the theme, “Supporting the Implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data.” Through the Declaration, participants at the second UN World Data Forum resolved to ensure that quality, relevant, timely, open and disaggregated data “by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability and geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts” are made available and accessible to all users. In addition, the Dubai Declaration calls for the establishment of an innovative funding mechanism that would be responsive to the priorities of national data and statistical systems, with the goal of mobilizing funds, and activating partnerships and funding opportunities, to strengthen the capacity of national data and statistical systems.



A silver falcon is presented to the Swiss delegation following the announcement that the third World Data Forum will be held in Bern, Switzerland, in 2020

On the final day of the Forum, Stefan Schweinfest, Director, UN Statistics Division (UNSD), highlighted that the UN had successfully used its convening power to bring over 2,000 participants to Dubai to engage and discuss systems to create information that can support the most important policy decisions of the day, especially for implementing the 2030 Agenda.

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Abdulla Nasser Lootah, Director General, FCSA, noted that the proceedings, which have been filmed and archived, offer a tool for the data community going forward and urged that the discussions begun in Dubai should continue. Schweinfest announced that Switzerland would host the third UN World Data Forum in Bern, in October 2020.

### A Brief History of the UN World Data Forum

The decision to organize a series of UN World Data Forums followed a recommendation in the report titled, “A World That Counts: Mobilising the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development,” which was presented in November 2014 by the UN Secretary-General’s Independent Expert Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development. Subsequently, the UNSC decided that a UN World Data Forum on Sustainable Development Data would be the suitable platform for intensifying cooperation with various professional groups, such as national statistical offices (NSOs), information technology and geospatial information managers, and data scientists among other representatives of government, intergovernmental organizations and civil society.

The first UN World Data Forum convened from 15-18 January 2017, in Cape Town, South Africa. At the conclusion of the event, the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data was launched. The Action Plan was prepared by the HLG-PCCB and was the result of a call to recognize that modernizing NSOs is essential to achieving the SDGs by 2030. The Plan sets out a framework for member countries to assess, build and strengthen NSO capacity, and is divided into six strategic areas: coordination and strategic leadership on data for sustainable development; innovation and modernization of national statistical systems; strengthening of basic statistical activities and programmes, with particular focus on addressing the monitoring needs of the 2030 Agenda; dissemination and use of sustainable development data; multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development data; and mobilization of resources and coordination of efforts for statistical capacity building. This Plan was adopted by the UNSC during its meeting in March 2017.

### Report of the second UN World Data Forum

The second UN World Data Forum opened on Monday, 22 October. During the opening session, Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General, UN Department of Economic and Social



Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General, UN DESA

Affairs (DESA), reflected on the value of the Forum in implementing the SDGs and guiding international development policy through the integration of economic, social and environmental data and statistics. He highlighted the importance of removing barriers to new data sources and modernizing national statistical systems to meet new data demands.

High-level statements were offered by Abdulla Nasser Lootah, Director General, Federal Competitiveness and Statistics



Amina J. Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary-General

Authority (FCSA), UAE, and Amina J. Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary-General. Lootah thanked Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, for his presence at the opening session, and highlighted that the UAE is working to make sure the best possible data are available to drive the Fourth Industrial Revolution and ensure that it involves the best innovation

possible. He said that towards this objective, the UAE will be announcing agreements on Artificial Intelligence (AI) during the World Data Forum.

Mohammed highlighted that robust and accessible data and information can provide a host of benefits, including the ability of citizens to monitor how their governments are performing and to hold decision-makers to account. She called attention to a number of related UN projects on data, including the Open Data Hub for the SDGs, the Global SDG indicator website, and UN Global Pulse. She also stressed that UN country teams of the future must be equipped with the skills and capacities necessary to harness the opportunities offered by all types of data and innovation.

Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), DP World, highlighted the need for information and data to optimize trade decision-making.

Throughout the three-day event, participants took part in over 80 parallel events that were organized around the six themes: innovations and synergies across different data ecosystems; leaving no one behind; building trust in data and statistics; how far have we come?; understanding the world through data; and new approaches to capacity development for better data. Participants also gathered in an opening roundtable panel focused on the power of data for sustainable development and a plenary session to discuss migration statistics. A closing plenary focused on the way forward.

This report summarizes the plenary sessions as well as 28 of the 84 thematic parallel events. The summaries of the parallel sessions are organized by theme.

### Plenary

**Roundtable Dialogue:** During the opening session on 22 October, a roundtable dialogue discussed the theme, “Harnessing the power of data to meet the data demands of the 2030 Agenda.” The dialogue was moderated by Mona Chalabi, data editor from *The Guardian*.

Mahmoud Mohieldin, World Bank Group, highlighted the 2018 SDG Atlas, which maps, charts and provides stories related to the SDGs and draws on the World Development Indicators, a database of over 1400 indicators for more than 220 economies with data going back 50 years. Omar bin Sultan Al Olama,



Panel speakers for “Harnessing the power of data for sustainable development.” L-R: **Mona Chalabi**, The Guardian US; **Mahmoud Mohieldin**, World Bank Group; **Omar Sultan Al Olama**, Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence, UAE; **Harpinder Collacott**, Executive Director, Development Initiatives; and **Clint Brown**, Esri

Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence, UAE, noted that meteorological and climate change data amounts to 100 million gigabytes per day, which he said would take scientists over 100 years to analyze. He said this scenario demonstrates humanity’s race against time in the use of data.

Harpinder Collacott, Development Initiatives (DI), underscored the value of policymakers at the national and sub-national levels in determining data investments to ensure informed policies for decision making.

Clint Brown, Esri, called attention to the emerging opportunities to bring together data from multiple systems as well as the possibilities to use large data sets with cloud systems.

**Improving Migration Statistics: The Way Forward:** This plenary session took place on Monday afternoon, 22 October, and was moderated by Mona Chalabi, *The Guardian*.

Liu Zhenmin, DESA, introduced this session by calling on the global statistics community and partners to work together to generate data for evidence-based policy to achieve safe and regular migration.

Pietro Mona, Deputy Head, Global Program for Migration and Development, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), noted the misperception of migration issues in public and political spheres and said this shapes challenges in migration. He said data statistics can contribute to rephrasing the narrative on migration, which can directly have an impact on families, individuals and countries.

Grace Bediako, Acting Director-General, National Development Planning Commission and Chairman, Ghana Statistical Service Board, highlighted her country’s efforts to streamline migration at the national and sub-national levels. She referred to the National Policy on Migration and National Medium-Term Development Policy Framework, which she said are key documents that guide the work of her Government on migration and other development issues.

Pedro De Alarcon, Head of Big Data for Social Good, Telefónica, presented on the potential use of innovative approaches for migration statistics and collaboration between the

private sector and national statistical system. He highlighted the use of telecommunications data in monitoring disaster response and climate displacement, and in determining demographics and population movements.

Maruja M.B Asis, Director of Research and Publications, Scalabrini Migration Center, presented on the role of the research community in developing new and innovative methodologies for better measurement of migration. She underscored the value of migration data in policy making and encouraged investment in research, as well as inclusion of the academic community in communicating key findings.

Cathy Kruger, International Cooperation Office, Statistics Sweden, reflected on the cross-sectoral nature of migration statistics, which include issues such as human rights and conflict management. She said statistics can help measure limitations in order to assist policy makers in future policy decisions.

During the discussion, panelists discussed the role of the media in shaping populist narratives, policy implications of data, advocacy issues raised by non-state actors, limitations of datasets and privacy concerns in the use of public and private data.



**Pietro Mona**, Deputy Head, Global Program for Migration and Development, SDC



Panel speakers for the session “Data Interoperability in Action: Enabling Data Integration for Sustainable Development Across Ecosystems.” L-R: **Enrique Ordaz**, INEGI, Mexico; **Claire Melamed**, Executive Director, Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data; **Francesca Perucci**, UN Statistics Division; **Shaida Badiee**, Managing Director, Open Data Watch; **Beata Lisowska**, Development Initiatives; and **Josh Powell**, Development Gateway.

### ***Theme: Innovations and Synergies Across Different Data Ecosystems***

**Data Interoperability in Action: Enabling Data Integration for Sustainable Development Across Ecosystems:** Following opening remarks by Perucci, Chief, Statistical Services, UN Statistics Division (UNSD), and Claire Melamed, Executive Director, Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (GPSDD), session participants emphasized the importance of joined-up, “interoperable” data, which, panelists noted, allow stakeholders to work across different data sources and improve collaboration. The discussions focused on the newly-launched guidance document on data interoperability, with panelists directing audience members to the introductory booklet titled, ‘Using Data to Join Up Development Efforts,’ distributed at the session. Speakers shared early examples and lessons on operationalizing its principles, with a World Bank participant noting that the guide, “helps demystify interoperability.”

Across two panels, participants emphasized the relevance of human and institutional interoperability, without which, they cautioned, today’s data siloes will be reinforced. Presentations highlighted the need for better data governance that brings producers and users together to open the conversation and work together from the start. With participants describing the relationships between data governance, strategy, principles, management and standards for data sources, one panelist lamented that without interoperability, the proliferation of open data portals would require yet another tool in order to search across them.

A participant from the United Kingdom noted that interoperability can increase the value of existing data, and called for investment in better and more effective data, while another from Kenya called for culture change, stressing the need to develop principles to ensure collective ownership and data sharing.

Questions were raised from the floor including on achieving a common language, national reporting on the SDGs, the role of legislation and enforcement, and challenges to sharing data.

**The Data Revolution: AI for Sustainable Development:** Moderator Jake Porway, Executive Director, DataKind, said the rise of big data laid the groundwork for automated processes and machine learning. He noted that big data and AI are being used for sustainable development, citing three applications of data: counting and reporting; testing and modeling; algorithms and automation. Success in using AI for SDG implementation, he indicated, stems from six components: a clear problem statement; datasets; data scientists; funding; subject matter expertise; and social actors.

Panelists agreed that they see AI as “hope, rather than hype” and emphasized the importance of local solutions for local problems, such as digital platforms that rely minimally on the internet in contexts where web access is limited. Addressing audience questions, they discussed: the importance of capturing diversity in data; the role of regulations and issues relating to accountability, including financial costs; and using AI to reach unrepresented or marginalized groups.

Some audience members expressed concern that policymakers do not understand technology well enough to legislate on it, though one participant flagged that his government has been taking steps on the matter. Porway closed by noting that although much of the conversation is rooted in policy, the subject demands a community conversation incorporating a range of stakeholders.

**Federated System for the SDGs: Global and National Open SDG Data Hubs:** Sergio Fernandez de Cordova, Chair and Founder, PVBLIC Foundation, moderated this session, which considered the experience of NSOs in UAE, Mexico, Palestine, Ireland, and Tanzania in building open data hubs for their national SDG data.



Panel speakers for the session “Federated System for the SDGs: Global and National Open SDG Data Hubs.” L-R: **Hanan Ahli**, Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority, UAE; **Sergio Fernández de Córdova**, Chairman and Founder, PVBLC Foundation; **Benedict Mugambi**, Tanzania National Bureau of Statistics; **Paul Morrin**, Central Statistics Office, Ireland; **Nafir Massad**, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics; **Enrique Ordaz**, INEGI, Mexico; and **Clint Brown**, Esri.

Speakers highlighted the value of the data portals in driving SDG implementation. They also noted the importance of: story maps to engage users in data lessons; national ownership and open data; and using census data for assessing development progress. Challenges were noted in regard to keeping the platforms user-centered. Speakers also, *inter alia*: stressed the need for a simpler design, improved visualization and graphs, and improved geospatial elements; highlighted story maps as providing a good way to collaborate across ministries; and called attention to the tools available on the UN’s SDG Hub to create platforms, visualizations and data stories.

**Big Data for Sustainable Development: What Does It Take To Get To The Next Level?:** Robert Kirkpatrick, Director, UN Global Pulse, opened the session by describing a fragmented landscape where data are collected and produced in real time by machines and owned by corporations, but needed by the public sector. Noting that governments have capacity constraints and that businesses that control data see risks around privacy, regulation and competition, he highlighted a need to change the balance of public trust and increase investment in science and technology.

Presentations demonstrated projects undertaken by UN Global Pulse in Uganda and Indonesia, revealing key ingredients such as public sector champions, an adequate legal framework, platforms designed with users in mind, and sufficient funding. Paula Hidalgo-Sanchis, Pulse Lab Kampala, moderated the ensuing

discussion. Panelists presented on the importance of financial data and efforts by the mobile industry to scale up actions. Moving from data to insights, they stressed, requires partnership, investments in skills in both the public and private sector, and internal cultural shifts. They identified overarching takeaways on what it takes to scale up, such as: collaboration; demonstration of value to the public interest; creation of market demand; building capabilities; and money and power.

**Earth Observation Applications for the Sustainable Development Goals: Opportunities for Scaling Successful Methods:** Two panels discussed ways in which Earth observation (EO) methods can be used to support SDG monitoring efforts, particularly on Goals 6, 9, 11 and 14.

The first set of panelists noted that the SDG indicators are universal, while some from the UN system highlighted that EO data are global in their coverage, are high resolution, and can have lower collection costs than survey data. Panelists noted challenges around resource-intensive ground-truthing, country ownership, the fact that free data may not be available at the resolution required, and that the multitude of EO data sources can be confusing for users. Each set of panelists outlined initiatives to build country capacity through big data platforms.

The second panel showcased the use of the Africa Regional Data Cube (ARDC), which was developed by the GPSDD, as well as country-level initiatives in Latin America and Asia. An African panelist said EO data can both inform targeted



Panel speakers for the session “Building strong National Statistical Systems - The Case of Business (and other) Register Data.” L-R: **Omar Seidu**, Ghana Statistical Service; **Silja Emmel**, Statistics Denmark; **Haakon Olderbakk**, Brønnøysund Register Centre; **Hanan Abbass**, Central Bureau of Statistics, Sudan; **Omurbek Ibraev**, National Statistics Committee, Kyrgyzstan; **Anne Abelsaeth**, Statistics Norway; **Rasmus Larsson**, Statistics Sweden; **Benson Karugu Ndungu**, KNBS; and **Lasse Sandberg**, Statistics Norway.

interventions and improve understanding of larger trends on issues such as urban sprawl. Another emphasized EO as building towards a common language, shared value, shared responsiveness to both peoples’ everyday needs and events such as floods, and enabling collaboration at scale, noting that the ARDC has been adopted across Africa in under a year.

**Building Strong National Statistical Systems — The Case of Business (and other) Register Data:** Moderated by Lasse Sandberg, Director, Department of Prices, Statistics Norway, this session featured four joint presentations on how Nordic countries are cooperating with others to share knowledge on population and business registers. Walking the audience through an example, one panelist demonstrated how these can serve as flexible, open-source, client server solutions that administrators can populate with their own data. Such registers, Sandberg noted, are “central blocks” of official statistics.

Panelists outlined their approaches to: assessing the current data situation; identifying user needs from business registers; setting definitions and a design for the registers, and rules for management, including data sources; and means of collecting and entering data. Challenges, they noted, include lack of: legal frameworks for sharing data across government agencies; unique identifiers across administrative data providers; links between firms and establishments; digital records; and willingness to share information.

Addressing the challenges, panelists from Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Sudan and Ghana outlined efforts on standardized quality assurance frameworks and guidelines, legislation to distinguish registered entities, coordination across ministries and data providers through Memoranda of Understanding, among other initiatives. The aim, one panelist described, is to stimulate a cycle where data are used more often—and thus get updated more often—leading to improved information quality, which renders it more attractive to users and ensures it is used more often.

**Non-Official Data: Challenges and Opportunities for NSOs:** This session was moderated by Bernard Sabiti, Partnership Manager, Development Initiatives, and focused on methods of strengthening partnerships to ensure effective use of non-official statistical sources.

Panelists shared experiences from Uganda, Canada and Nepal, and case studies from Latin America, on the use of non-official statistics from private sector, NGOs and development partners towards monitoring progress on SDGs.

Challenges highlighted by panelists included: credibility of non-official data sources; creation of partnerships to share data between the public and private sectors; reliability of processes used by non-official sources; and the sustainability of data sharing arrangements.

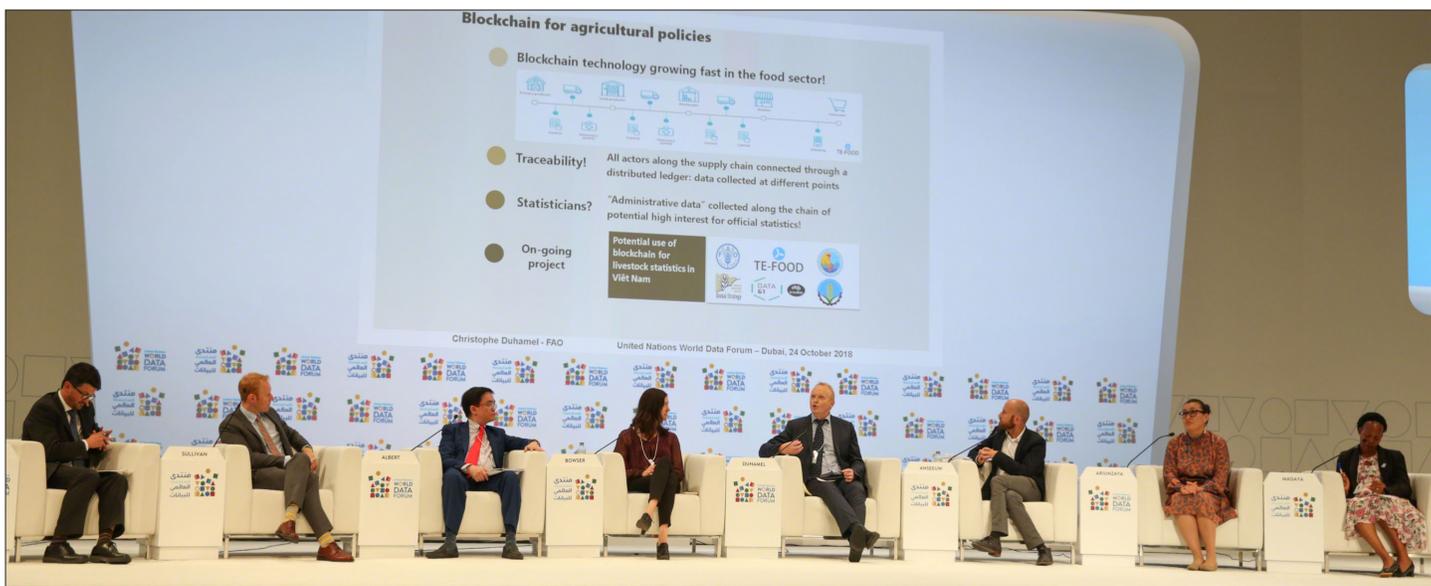
Panelists emphasized the value of using non-official data sources to capture progress on SDGs in a non-formal manner and reiterated the need for non-official sources to improve their own capacity in adopting technologically advanced ways of producing, disseminating and using official data.

Most panelists agreed that NSOs must take the leadership in engaging non-official data sources to ensure that their systems embed standards, quality and interoperability in the production processes.

**Innovate or Perish! Household Surveys in a Changing Data Landscape:** Moderator Mark Hereward, Associate Director for Data and Analytics, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and Chair, Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys



**Bernard Sabiti**, Partnership Manager, Development Initiatives



Panel speakers for the session “New Data Sources for Policy Action: From Dreams to Reality.” L-R: **François Fonteneau**, PARIS21; **Brian Sullivan**, Google; **Jose Ramon Albert**, Philippine Institute for Development Studies; **Anne Bowser**, Wilson Center; **Christophe Duhamel**, FAO; **Ward Anseeuw**, International Land Coalition; **Ayush Ariunzaya**, Chairwoman, National Statistical Office, Mongolia; and **Norah Madaya**, UBOS

(ISWGHS), noted the continuing need for household surveys despite the rise in new data sources, and called for innovations to make them more effective. Panelists said changing development and data contexts render traditional surveys less accurate than they used to be and highlighted examples of innovative practices in Asia and Africa that overcome outdated censuses, save on data collection time and cost, and contribute to SDG monitoring.

Participants provided examples of innovations in household surveys such as the use of wearable physical activity trackers, noting that these trackers can reduce non-compliance, remove bias from self-reporting, and ease data disaggregation. One panelist emphasized that improving interoperability between Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and existing administrative, health, or other data can increase the value of each by enabling better understanding of development programmes and their impacts. Panelists however noted ethical questions and the need to maintain privacy at individual level.

During the discussion, speakers considered topics ranging from administrative data collection to city-specific datasets, gender disaggregation, innovation on data collection from non-traditional households, and investments in new sampling methods.

**New Data Sources for Policy Action: From Dreams to Reality:** This session was moderated by François Fonteneau, Coordinator Data Advisory Services, PARIS21 Secretariat. Speakers discussed a variety of non-traditional data sources and processes, including Google Earth, citizen science, blockchain and administrative data.

Participants discussed examples of Google Earth’s “Geo for Good” projects including tools for monitoring forest loss and surface water, and the use of Global Fishing Watch in the development of marine protected areas. The need for ground validation data for remote sensing was noted.

On citizen science, speakers noted that cloud-based tools are being developed to facilitate citizen science, but that conflicts between openness, privacy and propriety, among other issues, must be addressed.

The potential of using blockchain in the food sector was discussed, including to address the fact that one in 10 people experience food poisoning every year. Illustrating the benefits of blockchain, a speaker noted that Walmart traced the source of dried mangoes back to the farmer in six days using traditional methods, while it only took two seconds using blockchain.

Citizen participation in the definition of indicators and collection of data was also discussed, with speakers highlighting that the process builds citizen ownership of the data. Challenges for NSOs in developing capacity to incorporate these new data sources and to advise governments regarding their use were also discussed.

### **Theme: Leaving No One Behind**

**Mind the Gap: Traditional and Non-traditional Approaches to Closing the Gender Data Gap:** This session was moderated by Emily Courey Pryor, Executive Director, Data2X, and Lauren Pandolfelli, Gender Statistics Specialist, United Nations Children’s Fund.

The session focused on gaps in gender disaggregated data in national and international sources, and the opportunities to adjust and explore different approaches to ensure that gender-appropriate and disaggregated data respond to national level needs by capturing data that can inform evidence-based gender related policies.

Presentations focused on partnerships, technology initiatives and methods for developing gender-disaggregated data. Examples include GovLab, Nicaragua Legal Forensic Institute, China Time Use Survey, and the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) Project.



Panel speakers for the session “New Approaches to Data Governance in the 21st Century: A View from Countries, Multilaterals, and Foundations.” L-R: **Craig Hammer**, World Bank; **Phetsamone Sone**, Lao Statistics Bureau; **Gopi Krishna Khanal**, NNRFC, Nepal; **Jake Porway**, Executive Director, DataKind; **Haishan Fu**, World Bank’s Development Data Group; and **Fernando Perini**, IDRC).

On asset ownership, one panelist highlighted the value of this dataset in improved food security, child nutrition and education, reduced vulnerability, and increased bargaining power for women.

Further discussions focused on: implications of data on the movement of women in urban areas; time use data implications for parental roles; costs and benefits of data approaches; information diversity within household surveys; data on employment status; disability-related data; and circumstances that could impact data findings at household and national level.

#### **Integrating Civil Registration and Digital Identity:**

**Emerging Best Practices:** This session was moderated by Bill Anderson, Information Architect, Development Initiatives and focused on case studies and initial models of digitizing civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS).

Panelists presented on the use of innovative and digital approaches that merge CRVS for small and large populations in a way that effectively contributes to more efficient registration of vital statistics.

Examples from Bangladesh, Namibia and the Philippines were highlighted along with challenges, benefits and the way forward which include streamlining of registrations in a timely manner and coordinating key population statistics from birth to death in a centralized system.

Panelists discussed rights-based approaches, and challenges such as complexity and cost of maintaining open source digital CRVS systems, lack of flexibility in established digital systems, poor quality of data and duplicates, low coverage in remote areas and poor interoperability of data.

Solutions discussed include enabling data access, increasing affordability, improving user experience and empowering individuals to access their data in systems that use best practices such as security to protect personal and confidential data.

#### **Theme: Building Trust in Data and Statistics**

##### **New Approaches to Data Governance in the 21st Century:**

**A View from Countries, Multilaterals, and Foundations:** This panel discussed the rapidly evolving concept of data governance and contexts in which they matter and are being addressed.

Craig Hammer, Program Manager, World Bank, moderated the session. A panelist from Lao People’s Democratic Republic (PDR) noted the human resource challenges involved with data governance and the importance of building capacity to keep up with international best practices. A case study from Nepal showcased challenges in moving from a focus on federal-level data collection to multi-level data collection and noted the need to have data scientists at all levels of governance.

The role of partnerships was emphasized, and with it the need to establish procedures to ensure that data from partners are properly stored and managed, and agreements are reached for data sharing among organizations after a project ends. Challenges with data ownership, privacy and ethical use were highlighted, and the value of developing open data as well as open tools and algorithms for using data was emphasized.

Panelists highlighted the release of the first set of guidelines for data interoperability titled, “Data interoperability: A practitioner’s guide to joining up data in the development sector,” by the GPSDD. The panel also discussed the role of data governance in addressing power imbalances among data poor and data rich societies as well as the data powerful and data powerless.

**Open Data: But How Open?:** This session was moderated by Mohammad Hassan, Executive Director, National Statistics and Data Sector, FCSA, UAE.

Presentations highlighted opportunities, limitations and risks of open data, big data and AI. The evolution of open data and its legal implications were discussed, with one panelist highlighting the European Union (EU) General Data Protection Regulation



Panel speakers for the session “Analytics for Public Good.” L-R: **Sabir Said Rashid Al-Harbi**, Director General, GCC-Stat; **Aisha Bin Bishr**, Director General, Smart Dubai; **Mete Guney**, Mastercard; **Robert Kirkpatrick**, Director, UN Global Pulse; and **Alexandra Mousavizadeh**, CEO, Decima Global.

(GDPR), which, among other things, addresses new rights such as the right to be forgotten, right to know how data is processed, and right to be informed of breaches and data portability.

Good practices in open data such as those of Smart Dubai, which focus on smart governance and planning, seamless city experiences, technology efficiency and ecosystem enablement, were highlighted as examples of data improving the human experience.

The case of Google AI was presented as an opportunity for mechanisms to predict the future using historical data and applying new methods and approaches such as data scientists and machine learning.

The “State of Open Data” project was discussed by one panelist, who highlighted analyses of open data communities such as corporate, crime, education, environment, extractives, geo spatial, government finances, health and international aid.

The ensuing discussion focused on identification, classification, confidentiality and regulation of data.

**Increasing Trust in Data and Statistics:** The session was moderated by Rajesh Mirchandani, Chief Communications Officer, UN Foundation, and focused on ways to minimize mistrust in data and statistics.

Highlighting trust as a foundational issue in the usefulness of data and statistics, panelists called on the data community to: improve data quality by applying criteria and establishing standards; be honest and responsible by establishing and protecting data independence; and offer open, transparent and reproducible data by ensuring equal and simultaneous access to data for all.

Panelists explored reasons behind data and statistics mistrust, with some attributing a correlation between mistrust of government with mistrust of data. Other panelists urged the data community to be inclusive of gender, disability and other demographics to ensure usefulness of data to social change. One panelist underscored the need for accessible and affordable data to ensure its wide use and distribution.

**Analytics for Public Good:** Sabir Said Rashid Al-Harbi, Founder and Director General, Gulf Cooperation Council Statistical Center, moderated this session, during which panelists addressed the role of data in helping to achieve good public policy as well as challenges around data privacy and ensuring that data is used in the public interest.

A panelist highlighted that in the case of Smart Dubai, the objective of transforming city-wide experiences to inspire new realities and increase citizens’ happiness has been the driver for using strategies involving blockchain and AI, among other tools. They noted that data is viewed as the fuel for achieving these objectives, including the collection of survey data on citizens’ experience with city services.

A speaker noted that, if data is the new oil to fuel economic growth, AI is the refinery to get more value from data. Another likened data use to uranium, which can leak and cause harm if not handled properly. Speakers also: noted that 90% of data on the web has been created in the last two years; stressed the importance of anonymizing data before using it; and discussed the power of an index as well as the ethical dilemmas created by indices such as the fact that patterns are not reality.

Examples of the use of data for the public good included: matching cigarette purchase locations with anti-smoking campaigns; driving Dubai’s efforts to become paperless by 2021; mapping anti-refugee messages on social media; and using cell phone records to establish geographical boundaries for a quarantine.

**Statistical-Geospatial Integration: Supporting the SDGs and the 2020 Censuses:** Moderator Timothy Trainor, Chief Geospatial Scientist, US Census Bureau, highlighted the amount of work involved in conducting a national census, stressing the importance of preparation and the usefulness of geospatial tools to ensure that everyone is counted once in one place.



**Timothy Trainor**, Chief Geospatial Scientist, US Census Bureau



Panel speakers for the session “The Role of National Statistical Offices in Enhancing Capacity Development of National Statistical Systems-experiences and Lessons Learned.” L-R: **Johannes Jütting**, PARIS21; **Ola Awad**, President, PCBS; **José Rosero Moncayo**, FAO; **Marina Gandolfo**, ISTAT; and **Thomas Gass**, SDC.

A speaker said that reasons for integrating geospatial information into population censuses include its role in nation building, building resilience, enhancing service offerings, strengthening national statistical systems, strengthening partnerships, modernizing statistical infrastructure, building skills, and transforming operations. The opportunities for using geospatial data for Tier III indicator methodologies was noted. The fact that upcoming 2020 censuses, in many countries, will be the last opportunity to collect census data to feed into 2030 Agenda implementation efforts was highlighted.

Good practices in the integration of geospatial data and statistics were shared from Statistics Poland who outlined a step-by-step approach that includes elements such as: fundamental geospatial infrastructure and geocoding; recording in a data management environment; common geographies for dissemination of statistics; interoperability and metadata standards; and availability and usability of shared data.

Panelists discussed the use of geospatial data to optimize census and statistical processes that are cost effective and efficient for NSOs using existing Geographical Information Systems (GIS) software such as Esri.

Discussions focused on knowledge sharing, maximizing the use of data portals through geospatial lenses, and using earth observation in the dissemination of statistics related to SDGs.

### **Theme: How Far Have We Come?**

**The Role of National Statistical Offices in Enhancing Capacity Development of National Statistical Systems - Experiences and Lessons Learned:** This session was moderated by Jose Rosero Moncayo, Director, Statistics Division, Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN. The session focused on gaps and opportunities in strengthening capacity development of NSOs to ensure the sustainability of assistance by development partners, technical assistance between countries, and other stakeholders.

Panelists highlighted, *inter alia*: the need for priority setting that goes beyond typical technical needs; strengthening coordination at the national and global levels in the delivery of

capacity development support; considering “social contracts” in statistics on monitoring of both SDGs and national agendas; and increasing data funding to ensure evidence-based policy approaches.

In a presentation on the results of the Joint Survey on Capacity Development Priorities, the need for country-driven capacity development and more extensive and inclusive consultations on capacity needs were highlighted as key to the sustainability of activities in countries.

Panelists reiterated the importance of establishing partnerships with stakeholders and called for technical bilateral cooperation arrangements to strengthen capacity development support and ensure that it responds to national priorities, NSO governance structures and existing capacity.

In the ensuing discussion, participants focused on issues related to sustainability of capacity development including leadership, statistical literacy, academic involvement and general statistical law guidelines.

**Monitoring the SDGs 3 Years In: How Are We Doing?:** This session was moderated by Gatlin Roberts, Chief Statistician, Statistical Office, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Speakers highlighted the challenge of developing disaggregated data, including for vulnerable groups and deprived areas. The role of Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), which governments present during the annual High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), in driving national statistics was highlighted.

Jamaica reported that it was able to incorporate 50% of the SDG indicators in its VNR by drawing on non-traditional data sources, including administrative, geospatial, and civil society data. Participants also highlighted that in the Asia-Pacific region, VNRs have created a new user of national statistics: the Prime Ministers and Ministers who have presented VNRs at the HLPF.

The development of thematic reviews and reports to complement global SDG implementation assessments, such as UN-Habitat’s preparation of the first synthesis report on SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), was highlighted. The role



Panel speakers for the session “Will National Statistical Offices Exist in 2030: And if They Do Still Exist, What Will They Look Like?” L-R: **Claire Melamed**, Executive Director, Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data; **Ola Awad**, President, PCBS; **Zachary Mwangi Chege**, Director General, KNBS; **Rob Bumpstead**, UK Statistics Authority; **Oliver Chinganya**, Director, African Centre for Statistics, UNECA; and **Stefan Schweinfest**, Director, Statistics Division, UNDESA.

of maps and GIS in delivering a large amount of information and integrating various variables to provide deeper insight was emphasized, as was the role of partnerships in ensuring data reliability.

**Will National Statistical Offices Exist in 2030? And if They Do Still Exist, What Will They Look Like?:** Claire Melamed, GPSDD, moderated this discussion. The heads of several NSOs and of the UNSD offered initial comments on the future of NSOs, after which audience members provided their thoughts on the session themes.

Speakers agreed that NSOs will still be around in 2030. The discussion focused on activities and qualities that they would need to engage in and maintain to remain relevant. One speaker pointed out that every single country in the world has an NSO. Qualities that NSOs bring to the provision of data were noted to include: consistency over time and space; high standards for accuracy; and independence.

Speakers also recommended NSO activities to match the needs for 2030, such as: engaging in partnerships; engaging other communities, such as researchers and policy makers; and providing guidance on standards and principles.

Examples of model activities that some NSOs are currently undertaking were highlighted, including establishing research and development units, and producing television programming to explain statistics.

**Data Scientists: What are They?:** Seth Dobrin, Vice President and Chief Data Officer, IBM Analytics, moderated this session, which discussed attributes of and roles for data scientists. A number of speakers said they entered the field as mathematicians, but noted that while their university studies were largely theoretical, their work has involved applying a logical approach to business questions.

Speakers said data science projects require diverse teams, including mathematicians who understand the numbers, data engineers who understand math and can translate it into code, and designers with business intelligence. Another speaker said an ideal team comprises a data engineer, a machine learning expert, an optimization expert, a data journalist, and a product owner who is a subject expert focused on the end user. The value of curiosity and an interest in solving problems were also highlighted.

A speaker noted that many universities have recently introduced programmes in these fields and that their students will be coming into the workforce soon. He said it is critical for companies to teach these students about responsibility and security, as they need to know that they cannot do anything they want to do with the data they will have access to, but rather, must take responsibility for the use of the data. On the importance of AI, one speaker said AI will not replace leaders, but that leaders that use AI will replace leaders that do not use it.



Panel speakers for the session “Data Scientists: What are They?” L-R: **Seth Dobrin**, Vice President and Chief Data Officer, IBM Analytics; **Jorge Sanz Moraleda**, ADS Securities; **Eva-Marie Muller-Stuler**, Chief Data Scientist, IBM; **Juan Pablo Redondo**, Emirates Integrated Telecommunications Company; and **Tom Smith**, Office for National Statistics, UK.



Panelists for the session on “Financing for More and Better Data.” L-R: **Rajesh Mirchandani**, Chief Communications Officer, UN Foundation; **Leesha Delatie-Budair**, Deputy Director General, STATIN; **Niels Ploug**, Statistics Denmark; **Haishan Fu**, Development Data Group, World Bank Group; **Neil Jackson**, DIFD; **Stefan Schweinfest**, Director, Statistics Division, UNDESA; **Zachary Mwangi Chege**, Director General, KNBS; and **Sarah Lucas**, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

**Financing for More and Better Data:** This session was moderated by Rajesh Mirchandani, UN Foundation. He noted that the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data “puts countries in the driver’s seat” to strengthen statistical systems. Bearing this in mind, developing country panelists described their priority areas and challenges on financing data, while donors shared how they can work to close gaps in recipient countries. A panelist from the UN system noted that his division sits in the middle, and identified issues in areas of coordination and the need to invest more, collectively.

Panelists stressed the need to reevaluate processes, improve efficiency, and engage and communicate with politicians, users and the public. Flagging that “real sustainability lies in domestic resources,” panelists noted that donors can also pool resources to address priority data needs, and that partners must coordinate on how to work together when going into a country, identifying not only data needs but also relevant policies and programmes that are needed to deliver results. Achieving this, one donor noted, means completing, rather than competing with, existing mechanisms, prioritizing capacity building, and taking concrete, measurable steps that are easy to convey.

Some panelists emphasized that resource constraints lead to high scrutiny in decision-making. They noted that commitments to aid delivery, the universal nature of the SDG agenda, and the fact that data both spotlights needy populations and demonstrates successes, can help justify expenditures on statistics. Simply delivering statistics, some said, is not enough, stressing the need to influence policy in a manner that helps achieve the SDGs. Doing so, a donor panelist noted, necessitates cultivating a user-centered data culture to yield “a visceral sense of what it is that we don’t know,” which can inform a portfolio approach that allocates resources efficiently, bridges gaps, matches funders with issues, and raises the bar on coordination.

An impediment to coordination, panelists agreed, is that everyone wants attribution or credit for successes, which means siloed investments that may yield benefits for individual programmes at the expense of broader progress. A civil society panelist closed by noting strong consensus on the need for: quality, open, disaggregated data; strengthened NSOs; policy influence; a portfolio approach; and intra-agency coordination to deliver public goods.

### **Theme: Understanding the World Through Data**

**Gender Data Impact Stories: From Data to Action:** Emily Courey Pryor, Data2X, moderated this session which highlighted the impact of gender data stories using the data value chain, a process that captures the collection, production and dissemination of impact stories related to gender data.

Panelists reiterated the critical relationship between a single human story and the data that describes a broader story which has the potential to influence policymakers towards more gender responsive policies.

Winning entries from the Gender Data Impact Stories project which contributed to achieving gender equality and the SDGs in their respective communities were shared from Tanzania, Finland, Uganda and Vietnam and the different methodologies used in the integration of gender data at the community and national levels were highlighted.

Stories included: violence against women and children, which resulted in legislative and law enforcement changes; family planning and reproductive health rights, which resulted in nationwide shifts in awareness activities; and time use impact on family dynamics, which contributed to targeted outreach activities.

Challenges in communicating gender data and ensuring accurate, timely and effective gender impact stories were underscored by the panel, and one panelist -presented on key elements of good gender impact stories such as plot, climax and happy endings.



Panel speakers for the session “Data & Diplomats: Capacity Development for Diplomats and Policy-makers in the Data Age.” (L-R): **Javier Teran**, UNOCHA; **Katharina Höne**, DiploFoundation; **Maria Fasli**, Director, Institute for Analytics and Data Science; **Graham Nelson**, British Diplomatic Service; and **Grace Mutung’u**, KICTANet.

**Data & Diplomats: Capacity Development for Diplomats and Policy-makers in the Data Age:** Katharina Höne, Research Associate, Diplomacy and Global Governance, DiploFoundation, opened and moderated the discussion, noting the need to build statistical capacity amongst decision-makers. Panelists presented on: skills, myths and challenges relating to data science and analytics; how to combine data science, open source intelligence and behavioral science to address policy issues; information and communications technology and data in the African context; and the Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX).

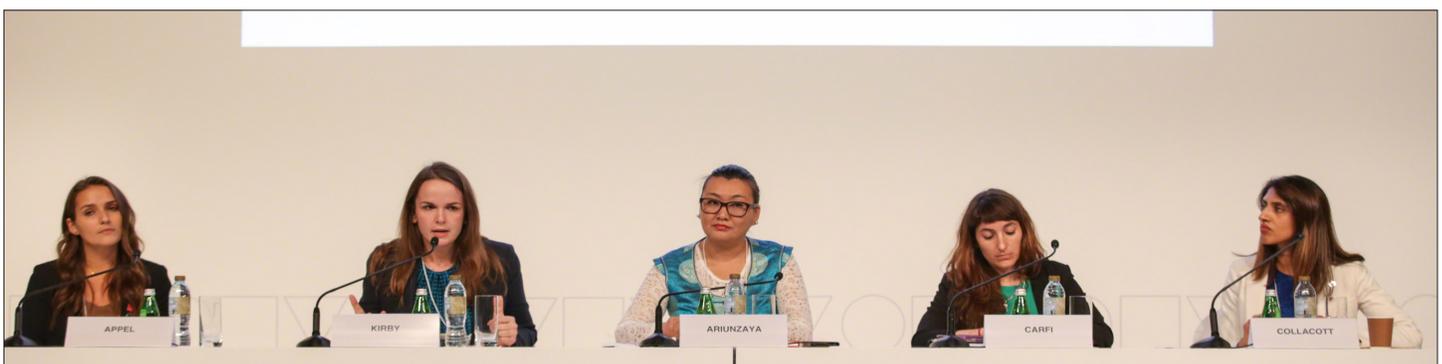
Panelists emphasized that data is most valuable when used to make better decisions, but that the value and complexity of data analyses differ, depending on whether they aim to describe a trend or predict future trends. They identified challenges, including aligning skillsets, conflating correlation with causation, and issues of access or data literacy, particularly when certain government services are only available online. Panelists also stressed capacity development needs and gaps on: drawing insights from data and translating these insights to action; challenging certain policies with data and evidence; and the conception of solutions from data without contextualization to local situations, as decision-makers must be careful not to import solutions.

Audience questions focused on, *inter alia*, data protection, risks around data being manipulated for political aims or misrepresented to reinforce assumptions, building capacity of statisticians to communicate with policy-makers, and potential conflicts between long-term policies and short-term goals.

**Matchmaking for the Data Revolution: Bringing Data Producers and Users Together:** This session was moderated by Deidre Appel, Program Manager, Open Data Watch, and Paige Kirby, Advisor, Development Gateway.

Case studies from the Mongolia National Statistical Office, Open Data Charter, and Development Initiatives were shared, and panelists highlighted the human face of data, outreach opportunities and media-friendly initiatives to advance use of existing data portals.

Panelists discussed the varying needs of data producers and users, noting that academics prefer raw data, politicians prefer specific policy context data and that the public needs nuanced data due to time and inclination towards analyzing data themselves. One panelist noted the fluid nature of producer and user, pointing out that aid data is now being produced and used by countries to inform their policies both national and global.



Panel speakers for the session “Matchmaking for the Data Revolution: Bringing Data Producers and Users Together.” L-R: **Dierdre Appel**, Open Data Watch; **Paige Kirby**, Development Gateway; **Ayush Ariunzaya**, Chairwoman, National Statistical Office, Mongolia; **Natalia Carfi**, Open Data Charter; and **Harpinder Collacott**, Development Initiatives.



Panel speakers for the session “Innovative Monitoring and Evaluation Solutions for the implementation of SDGs for Small and Vulnerable States.” (L-R): **Souad Aden-Osman**, Executive Director, Coalition for Dialogue on Africa; **Motselisi Matsela**, Commonwealth Secretariat; **Romeela Mohee**, COL; **Malehloa Molato**, Director, Bureau of Statistics Lesotho; and **Yasmin Cassimally**, Deputy Director, Statistics Mauritius.

Many agreed that there should be translators of data who play a role in the middle of the value chain to make sure that data is understood by broader audiences. Participants spent the final part of the session working in small groups to share information on data they are most often requested to produce, and capacity issues related to the production of data.

#### **Innovative Monitoring and Evaluation Solutions for the Implementation of SDGs for Small and Vulnerable States:**

The session was moderated by Souad Aden-Osman, Executive Director, Coalition for Dialogue on Africa, and focused on an SDG Conceptual Framework developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat, and national solutions to SDG implementation.

Elements of the Conceptual Framework highlighted included its contribution to: national strategies to implement SDGs; prioritization of goals and targets; assessment of government influence in the implementation of SDGs; sequencing of goals and targets already defined; and alignment with national strategies and development targets.

Panelists discussed SDG implementation arrangements in Mauritius and Lesotho, both of which have formalized and integrated the SDGs at the national level with committees established by their governments and relevant stakeholders to coordinate the SDG process.

Examples of the Commonwealth Secretariat’s work were shared, such as Lifelong for Farmers, which educated over 350,000 farmers in parts of India and Africa on financial literacy and environment conservation, and Girls Inspire, a programme that assists young girls with training, internships and employment in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Mozambique.

In the ensuing discussion, participants focused on: customizing of indicators in the context of Small Island Developing States (SIDS); extrapolating non-official data sources to complement NSO data; and initiatives taken by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) to streamline indicators for SIDS.

#### ***Theme: New Approaches to Capacity Development for Better Data***

**Who Wants to Know? The Political Economy of Statistical Capacity:** Jose Antonio Mejia, Lead Specialist, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), moderated this session. He and several panelists noted that speakers at this meeting have likened statistics to water, oil, currency, or an otherwise vital force that we only tend to recognize when it’s missing or of poor quality. Speakers emphasized that institutions such as NSOs do not exist in a vacuum and can be undermined by political interventions. They also highlighted the importance of independent statistics that go beyond monitoring and evaluation purposes to provide trusted, credible information that is not only relevant to individual people, but also helps inform decision-making. Some speakers stressed that statistics need to be able to tell a story.

Challenges to achieving such a statistical system include data disaggregation, helping donors understand who are the most vulnerable, and articulating the externalities of development to strengthen accountability systems. They emphasized that reshaping the statistical landscape requires finance and technical knowledge of standards and practices, and leveraging donor support.



Panel speakers for the session “A New Era for CRVS Systems: Innovation and Transformation to Develop Capacities, Reduce Gender Inequities, and Improve Data for the SDGs.” L-R: **Mayra Buvinic**, Data2X; **Gemma Van Halderen**, Director, Statistics Division, UNESCAP; **Oliver Chinganya**, Director, African Centre for Statistics, UNECA; **Yusuf Murangwa**, Director General, NISR; **Badamtsetseg Batjargal**, GAIPSR, Mongolia; **Omurbek Ibraev**, National Statistics Committee, Kyrgyzstan; and **Judith Kilobi-Otieno**, Civil Registration Department, Kenya.

Additional issues raised during this session include the need to: think of data as the soft infrastructure of development; capture the benefits of local data-driven action; identify windows of opportunity for policy reforms and new capacity needs; engage statisticians in the preparation and presentation of VNRs; and engage in the review of the SDG review process that will take place in the context of the 2019 meetings of the HLPF.

**A New Era for CRVS Systems: Innovation and Transformation to Develop Capacities, Reduce Gender Inequities, and Improve Data for the SDGs:** Moderated by Oliver Chinganya, Director, African Centre for Statistics, UN Economic Commission for Africa, the session connected administrative data on events such as births, deaths, adoptions and marriages, to SDG-relevant issues including gender, health, technology, migration and disaster risk reduction.

A civil society panelist noted a strong correlation between birth registration and delayed marriage—as well as fair divorce—and consequences for those women’s children. Highlighting that the rate of unregistered female deaths significantly exceeds those of males, among other statistics, panelists articulated a range of economic and social gender disparities that arise from gender gaps and other shortcomings in civil registration.

Panelists from Africa, Asia and international institutions emphasized the need to build capacity at administrative, professional and clerical levels, and innovate using new information technology solutions to achieve coverage in

hard-to-reach areas. On solutions, one panelist described a CRVS e-learning course developed by the World Bank, and another noted how her country is transforming the system from passive to active by linking civil registration to their maternal child health strategy and training maternal child health service providers on how to collect the necessary data.

As countries seek to transition from paper to electronic records, panelists noted, key aspects of CRVS will be affordability, sustainability (of financial resources), and speed of implementation.

**Follow the Data: Building Better Data Systems for Better Health:** This session was moderated by Kelly Henning, Public Health Lead, Bloomberg Philanthropies. Participants highlighted that CRVS is central to achieving the SDGs and discussed projects to improve CRVS processes.

Speakers noted a number of factors driving progress, including: country ownership and leadership; coordination and data sharing at the central/federal level; coordination and data sharing between the local and federal levels; and creating value for data collection and use. One speaker discussed the “I-registered” campaign in Nigeria, which links administrative data to vital statistics and provision of health and basic services, as an example of creating value for data collection and use.

During the discussion, participants highlighted the burden of data collection on front-line health workers, the need to consolidate and rationalize data collection instruments, and the need to think forward about the data that are being collected.

## Closing Plenary

### Implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data – The Way Forward:

The closing plenary opened with a panel discussion moderated by Rajesh Mirchandani, UN Foundation. Nnenna Nwakanma, Africa Regional Coordinator, World Web Foundation, said the Forum has made progress on gender participation and shifted the attitudes of participating statisticians, data experts and economists. She encouraged the Forum to increase participation of women and ensure involvement of young people and non-specialists who can learn from the data community.

George W. McCarthy, President, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, said the Forum needs to take note of the promise and pitfalls of big data, acknowledging that big data from space agencies offer possibilities to integrate data and learnings about “people and place.”

Sofie Habram, Policy Specialist, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, said the sustainability of capacity development initiatives is dependent on country ownership in partnership with agencies.

Perucci, UNSD, underscored the usability, accessibility and mainstreaming of data, emphasizing the need for the statistics and data community to be more inclusive in its approach.

Zachary Mwangi, Chair, Statistical Commission, Kenya, described coordination at the national and global levels as being necessary for the effectiveness of the statistics and data community, and noted that capacity development needs to be demand-driven and integrated at the national level.

Discussions centered around research needs, public trust of data, the role of NGOs in data outreach, and data journalism as an avenue to create more awareness and increase the impact of data and statistics.

**Dubai Declaration: Supporting the Implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data:** Stefan Schweinfest, Director, UNSD, moderated a discussion with Mahmoud Mohieldin, World Bank Group, and Gabriella Vukovich, President, Central Statistical Office, Hungary, and co-chair of the UN Statistical Commission’s High-Level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building, prior to reading the full text of the Forum’s outcome document titled, “Dubai Declaration: Supporting the Implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data.”

Mohieldin described positive developments on data, as well as challenges. He outlined four global tracks relating to sustainable development: finance, implementation, data, and science, technology and innovation. He stressed that country budgets are key at the national level and highlighted three broader issues: trust deficits, data disaggregation, and technology’s potential for disruption. Mohieldin emphasized that addressing these demands coordination, collaboration, cooperation, and culture change.

Vukovich underscored the country-driven nature of the SDG process, the centrality of NSOs in delivering the SDGs, and the need to speed up NSOs’ modernization and change the way they engage with stakeholders. On expectations for the third UN



Francesca Perucci, UN Statistics Division

World Data Forum, she expressed a desire to see data analysis and presentation, in order to make policymakers aware of what is available and how data can be used.

Schweinfest noted that the Declaration: commits to continue the journey that began at the first UN World Data Forum in Cape Town; focuses on implementation and practical solutions; and addresses funding and financing for data. The financing section calls for the establishment of an innovative, demand-driven funding mechanism, created under the mandate of the UN Statistical Commission, operating under the guidance of representatives of national statistical systems and different data and donor communities, and serviced by a Secretariat located at an international institution with global membership.

**Closing Statements:** Abdulla Nasser Lootah, Director General, FCSA, UAE, thanked participants for their engagement in the second UN World Data Forum, saying, “We all believed in peace, we all practiced respect and we all expressed appreciation.” He highlighted that best practices have been identified in the Forum’s more than 85 sessions and also noted that innovative solutions have been highlighted in the UAE pavilion. He thanked the event sponsors, and wished Switzerland success in organizing the third UN World Data Forum.



Abdulla Nasser Lootah, Director General, FCSA, UAE

Schweinfest highlighted the UN's convening power and said the second UN World Data Forum confirmed this attribute. He officially thanked the UAE for organizing the Forum and acknowledged the people, Government and leaders of Dubai, noting that they had set a high standard of support for the event. He encouraged participants to carry the spirit of Cape Town and Dubai forward, and to create bridges between now and the next Forum. He closed the second UN World Data Forum at 6:42 pm.

### Upcoming meetings

**Eighth Meeting of the UN Inter-Agency and Expert Group on the SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDG 8):** The eighth IAEG-SDGs meeting will review: the SDG indicators' tier classifications and work plans; the implementation plan for data flows and case studies; progress on data disaggregation; and experiences on SDG monitoring. **dates:** 5-8 November 2018 **location:** Stockholm, Sweden **contact:** Heather Page **e-mail:** pageh@un.org **www:** <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/meetings/iaeg-sdgs-meeting-08/>

**7th Global Forum on Gender Statistics:** This forum will bring together producers and users of gender statistics to discuss ways to improve data and evidence for gender policies, in the context of the 2030 Agenda. The UNSD, in collaboration with the Government of Japan under the guidance of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics (IAEG-GS), will host the event. **dates:** 14-16 November 2018 **location:** Tokyo, Japan **contact:** Grum **e-mail:** grum@un.org **phone:** +1 212 963 4950 **www:** <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/events/?Id=456>

**UN World Geospatial Information Congress (UNWGIC):** The inaugural UNWGIC will address the theme, "The Geospatial Way to a Better World," to ensure that geospatial information has its widest and fullest utility in service of social, economic and environmental development. The UNSD, as the Secretariat for the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM), in collaboration with the Government of China, will host the event. **dates:** 19-21 November 2018 **location:** Deqing, Zhejiang Province, China **e-mail:** [info@unwgic2018.org](mailto:info@unwgic2018.org) **www:** [http://ggim.un.org/meetings/2018-1st\\_Congress\\_Deqing/](http://ggim.un.org/meetings/2018-1st_Congress_Deqing/)

**50th Session of the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC):** The UNSC brings together Chief Statisticians from UN Member States and is the highest decision-making body for international statistical activities. The Commission consists of 24 member countries of the UN elected by the Economic and Social Council. **dates:** 5-8 March 2019 **location:** New York City, US **contact:** UN Statistics Division **e-mail:** [statistics@un.org](mailto:statistics@un.org) **www:** <http://unstats.un.org>

**UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2019:** The HLPF is charged with following up on implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the SDGs. HLPF 2019 will address the theme, 'Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality.' It will conduct an in-depth review of SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 13 (climate action) and SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), in addition to SDG 17 (partnerships for the Goals)

which is reviewed each year. 51 countries will conduct VNRs for HLPF 2019. **dates:** 9-18 July 2019 **venue:** UN Headquarters **location:** New York City, US **contact:** DESA **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>

**62nd ISI World Statistics Congress (WSC):** The biennial WSC is the flagship conference of the International Statistical Institute (ISI), and will bring together eminent statisticians and members of the statistical community to present, discuss, promote and disseminate research and best practices in every field of Statistics and its applications. **dates:** 18-23 August 2019 **location:** Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia **contact:** Department of Statistics, Malaysia **e-mail:** [secretariat@isi2019.org](mailto:secretariat@isi2019.org) **phone:** +603-8885 7000 **www:** <http://www.isi2019.org/>

**UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development under UNGA Auspices:** The UN General Assembly will hold a meeting of the HLPF at the level of Heads of State and Government, from 24-25 September 2019. HLPF meetings under UNGA auspices take place every four years, and take place at the beginning of the UNGA session. **dates:** 24-25 September 2019 **location:** New York City, US **contact:** Office of UNGA President **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>

**Third UN World Data Forum:** The biennial forum serves as a platform for enhancing cooperation across governments and professional groups, such as information technology, geospatial information managers, data scientists and users, as well as civil society stakeholders. **dates:** 18-21 October 2020 **location:** Bern, Switzerland **contact:** UN Statistics Division **e-mail:** [statistics@un.org](mailto:statistics@un.org) **www:** <https://undataforum.org/WorldDataForum/>

For additional upcoming events, see: <http://sdg.iisd.org/events/calendar/>

### Glossary

CRVS	Civil Registration and Vital Statistics
DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
EU	European Union
FCSA	Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority of the UAE
AI	Artificial Intelligence
GPSDD	Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data
HLPF	United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
NSO	National Statistics Office
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNSC	United Nations Statistical Commission
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
VNRs	Voluntary National Reviews of the SDGs