

Investing in data and statistics for the SDGs

As the principal global authority on statistics, UN DESA leads the compilation and dissemination of global statistical information. It develops standards and norms for statistical activities and supports countries' efforts to strengthen their national statistical systems. The Department promotes the use of new technologies and develops new data sources, including under the Open SDG Data Hub and the Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics.



To support countries, especially developing countries, in meeting the challenges of producing official statistics to measure, monitor, and report on the SDGs, targets, and indicators, UN DESA and nine other UN Secretariat entities have joined forces in implementing an ambitious, joint capacity-development programme on statistics and data.

The programme has contributed to methodological development, technical assistance and training regarding most SDG indicators.



LOOKING FORWARD

The next UN World Data Forum will take place in Bern, Switzerland on 18-21 October 2020.

Bringing the world data community together

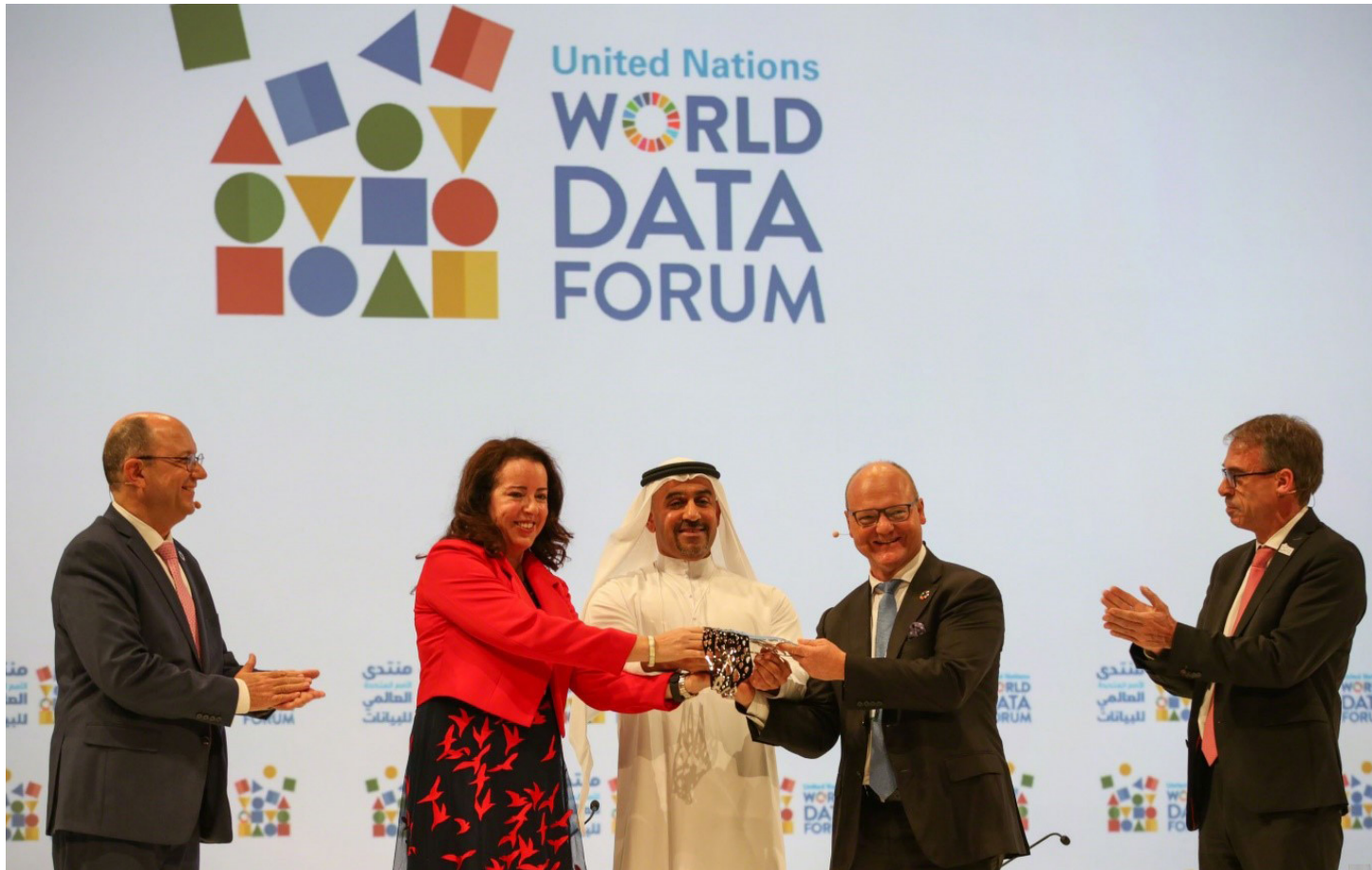
In October 2018, Dubai welcomed the global data community for the second UN World Data Forum, organized by UN DESA. Over 2,000 data experts from 100 countries gathered at the Forum. The Forum launched the Dubai Declaration, which calls for the establishment of an innovative funding mechanism to strengthen national data and statistical systems to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The geospatial way to a better world

The integration of statistical and geospatial information is key to supporting Member States in the modernization of national data systems. UN DESA convened the first United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress in Deqing, China in November 2018. With the theme *Geospatial way to a better world*, the event gathered more than 2,000 participants and exhibitors from all continents to discuss the use of frontier geospatial technologies and the enhancement of private-public partnerships. The Congress culminated in the Moganshan Declaration, which will inform the global geospatial information management agenda for years to come.

Gender statistics – for good measure

Over 150 statistics experts from around 40 countries assembled in Tokyo in November 2018 to discuss ways of improving data for evidenced-based gender policies. The 7th Global Forum on Gender



UN World Data Forum, October 2018 in Dubai, UAE. Photo: IISD/Kiara Worth



World Geospatial Information Congress, November 2018, Deqing, China. Photo: Ministry of Natural Resources, P.R. China



7th Global Forum on Gender Statistics, November 2018, Tokyo, Japan. Photo: Government of Japan, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications



UN DESA supports the United Nations Statistical Commission, the highest decision-making body for international statistical activities, bringing together Chief Statisticians from UN Member States. In March 2019, the Department helped to organize the 50th session of the UN Statistical Commission on the theme *Better data, better lives*, which focused on data and indicators for the 2030 Agenda.

Statistics, organized by UN DESA, sought ways to fill gender data gaps by using international statistical standards and methods, cutting-edge technologies and by sharing best practices. The Forum discussed the nexus between gender and environment, measuring asset ownership and entrepreneurship from a gender perspective, monitoring international migration and producing data on gender identity, among others.

UN DESA is doing its share to fill data gaps by collecting global data on reproductive health and mortality. The Department is also working to improve data for the SDG indicator on family planning to extend the data coverage to all women, not just those who are married.

Counting the uncounted

Leaving no one behind requires sound disaggregated data for vulnerable groups—including children, youth, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV, older persons, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees and those internally displaced. The lack of disaggregated data exacerbates their vulnerabilities by masking the extent of deprivation and disparities and compromising the ability of Governments and the international community to design effective policies and provide necessary services.

UN DESA provided substantive support to the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) to carry out its work on data disaggregation. UN DESA assisted the IAEG-SDGs to conduct a comprehensive analysis to compile currently available data disaggregates and develop future plans for additional data disaggregation.

Highlighting gaps in inclusion to leave no one behind

In December 2018, UN DESA launched the first comprehensive **Disability and Development Report**, which found that people with disabilities are at a disadvantage across all 17 SDGs. The report analysed globally crowdsourced data on the accessibility of public spaces, covering 1.2 million places worldwide. UN DESA partnered with other entities to compile and analyse the data to highlight best practices in fostering more accessible, and disability-inclusive societies.

Keeping track of people on the move

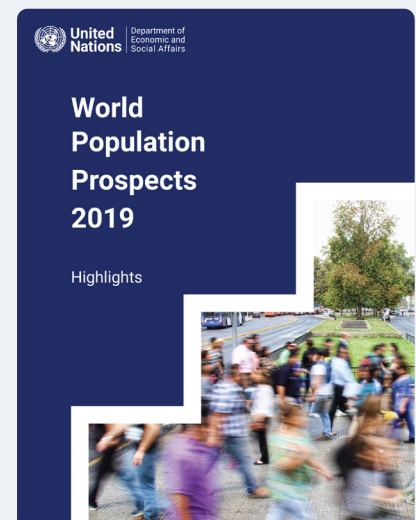
Stronger data can help to highlight the enormous contributions made by the 272 million international migrants to both their host and origin countries. In 2018, migrant workers transferred US\$529 billion in remittances to their families in low- and middle-income countries, exceeding the value of foreign direct investment (FDI) for the first time. Remittances and diaspora investments have helped to lift millions of people out of poverty, contributing to improvements in food security, education, health, well-being and housing for families and communities in countries of origin, as well as promoting their financial inclusion. In February 2019, on the heels of the Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, in Marrakech, UN DESA convened migration experts to review interrelations between international migration and development.

UN DESA and the UN Expert Group on Migration Statistics, in collaboration with the UN Migration Network, are developing and implementing a Global Programme to build and enhance national capacities for migration data. The global programme will boost collaboration between stakeholders at all levels, develop statistical standards and methods, provide training and technical assistance, and build on efforts in other statistical areas, such as harnessing new data sources. The first International Forum on Migration Statistics, convened in Paris, France, in January 2019 by UN DESA, IOM and the OECD, brought together over 500 participants from 90 countries, reflecting the urgent need to improve the availability of quality migration data.

UN DESA is also leading capacity-building activities with countries in Asia and Latin America, producing reliable international migration statistics.



In June 2019, UN DESA released the 2019 edition of **World Population Prospects**, a comprehensive overview of global demographic patterns and trends. The study concluded that the world's population could reach its peak around the end of the current century, at a level of nearly **11 billion**. The report provides updated population estimates for **235** countries and areas, from the year 1950 to the present day. It also projects their population changes from now until the year 2100. The latest assessment uses the results of **1,690** national population censuses conducted between 1950 and 2018, as well as information from vital registration systems and from **2,700** nationally representative sample surveys.





Francesca Perucci, Chief of the Development Data and Outreach Branch and Assistant Director of DESA's Statistics Division, working with colleagues from the National Statistical Office of Viet Nam at an SDG data workshop in Hanoi, Viet Nam. Photo: UN DESA/Linda Hooper



In September 2019, UN DESA published its authoritative set of estimates of the number of international migrants in the world today, including the distribution of migrants by countries of origin and destination, as well as age and sex.

In close partnership with the African Union, UN DESA is working on improving the data ecosystems of African States. From enhancing the statistical legal frameworks, to strengthening national census capacity, to reporting on SDG progress, to integrating new data sources with traditional ones, UN DESA is supporting African countries in producing high-quality information that is timelier and more granular. In the spring of 2019, UN DESA organized the 5th international conference on Big Data for official statistics in Kigali, Rwanda along with several related workshops. The Department also held two thematic conferences on “Managing a statistical organization in times of change” tailored to African Chief Statisticians.

UNDESA's Statistics Work focuses on:

