



MAKING DATA COUNT

UNDP PERU/MÓNICA SUÁREZ GALINDO

... for evidence-based decision-making

Robust and accessible data empower policymakers, researchers, and the public to make informed decisions and drive progress towards a more sustainable and equitable world.

UN DESA...

- Offered comprehensive assessments on SDG progress and actionable recommendations to address global challenges through the *Sustainable Development Goals Report*.
- Boosted partnerships and engagement with the launch of the UN Data Platform in collaboration with Google's Data Commons, fostering collaboration and data accessibility across the UN system.

- Released new estimates and projections of the global population, with a focus on population trends of countries in special situations.
- Supported consensus agreement on a political declaration marking the 30th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development and committing to promote the availability of, and access to, high-quality, timely, relevant, disaggregated and reliable population data.
- Advanced gender equality initiatives, shed light on global gender disparities and advocated for inclusive

policies and actions through *The Gender Snapshot 2023* published in partnership with UN Women.

- Drove innovation in data usage by engaging a diverse global audience to generate innovative data-driven solutions for sustainable development challenges through the highly successful UN Datathon.
- Enhanced coordination and collaboration through the expansion of the Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians, facilitating knowledge-sharing and cooperation among data ecosystem stakeholders.

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High-quality data serves as the bedrock of effective policymaking and strategic action. Accurate, timely, and comprehensive data based on internationally agreed standards plays a vital role in identifying priorities and responding to interlinked global challenges. Data illuminates critical areas for intervention, ensuring that efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals are both targeted and effective. To support countries in addressing these challenges, UN DESA has a critical role in setting standards, as well as data collection and reporting to monitor and assess progress.

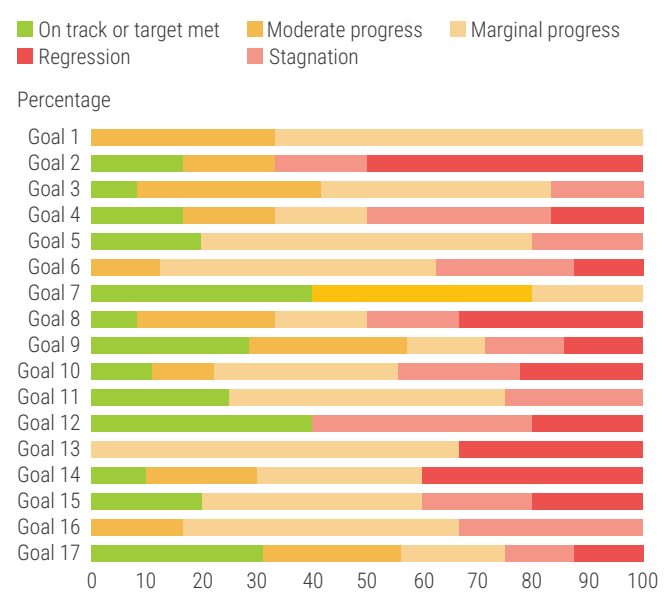


Introducing the new UN Data Platform

The new UN Data Platform signifies a pivotal advancement in leveraging data for global progress. A collaborative effort between UN DESA and Google's Data Commons, it empowers policymakers, researchers, and the public, leveraging cutting-edge technology to provide easy access to authoritative data and information across the UN system. The Platform directly responds to the Secretary-General's Data Strategy and is informed by the Roadmap for Innovating UN Data and Statistics. Serving as a centralized hub for accessing official data and statistics collected by the entire UN system, this transformative initiative underscores the UN commitment to data-driven solutions. To showcase the Platform, UN DESA organized the UN 2.0 Week side event "Bringing Together UN System Data in One Place: Introducing the New UN Data Platform" in April 2024. The first phase of the project, "UN Data Commons for the SDGs," was launched at the 2023 SDG Summit and

the UN Data Platform has since expanded to include WHO data, with plans for further integration of data across the UN system.

Progress assessment for the 17 Goals based on assessed targets, by Goal



Press Conference with the Secretary-General on Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024. | UN PHOTO/ESKINDER DEBEBE

As the central coordinator of the global SDG indicator framework and monitoring process, UN DESA continued to deliver data, analysis and monitoring tools to inform the latest SDG progress, enabling policymakers and stakeholders to identify areas for targeted policy interventions.

In June 2024, UN DESA launched the *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024*, detailing the significant challenges the world is facing in making substantial strides towards achieving the SDGs based on the latest data and estimates. It features areas with setbacks while also showcasing where tangible progress has been made, for instance, in reducing global child mortality, preventing HIV infection, and access to energy and mobile broadband. The report also highlights where action must accelerate, particularly in critical areas undermining SDG progress – climate

change, peace and security, and inequalities among and between countries.

Considerable progress has been made in improving internationally comparable data for SDG monitoring. In 2016, when the global indicator framework for the Goals and associated targets was initially adopted, only about one-third of indicators had good data coverage (that is, data were available for more than 50 per cent of countries), and 39 per cent of the indicators lacked internationally established methodologies or standards. As of June 2024, 68 per cent of indicators have good data coverage. Since 2020, all 231 indicators have had well-established and internationally agreed methodologies. Reliable trend data are available for 51 per cent of the indicators (at least two data points since 2015) in more than half of all countries.

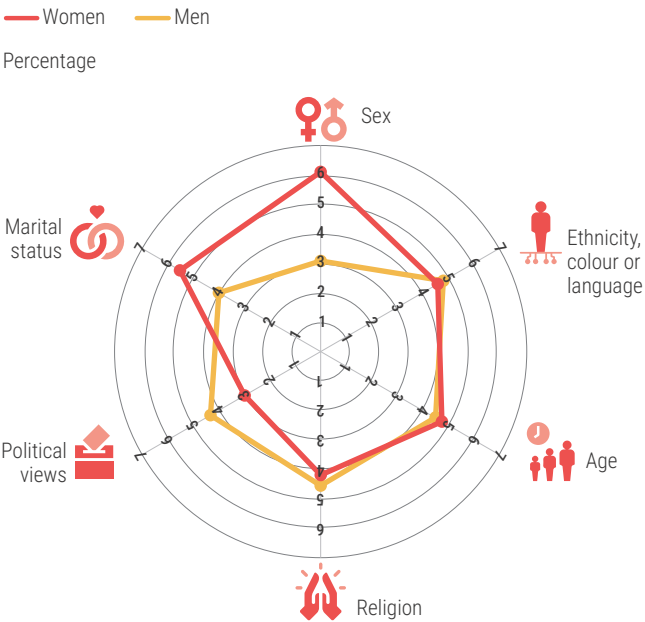
Commemorating the 30th anniversary of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

UN DESA supported a gathering of Chief Statisticians from close to 100 countries at the 55th session of the Statistical Commission in March 2024, which celebrated the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics by ECOSOC and its 10th anniversary as a General Assembly resolution. At the Commission, discussions focused on fundamental principles of official statistics, national accounts, SDG indicators, social statistics, data science, climate change statistics, environmental-economic accounting, economic statistics, and many more topics. UN DESA also supported over 50 side events in conjunction with the Commission, both in person and online. Topics included data collection methodologies, gender statistics and women’s empowerment; SDG monitoring; environmental statistics and indicators; statistical capacity-building; population and housing censuses; digital transformation and data innovation; data governance and privacy; as well as statistical literacy and education.

Shedding light on global gender disparities and challenges towards gender equality

UN DESA and UN Women jointly published *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2023*, highlighting alarming gaps in gender equality and women’s well-being, with an estimated additional \$360 billion per year needed to achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment. The report provided a comprehensive overview of global gender disparities and identifies key challenges hindering progress towards gender equality, including conflict, climate change, resistance to equality, and inadequate investment. It also sheds light on the often-overlooked needs of older women, emphasizing the importance of inclusivity in gender equality initiatives. The report urged policymakers to dismantle discriminatory laws, address the climate crisis, and ensure fair representation of

Proportion of the population experiencing discrimination, by selected grounds and sex, 2015–2022



Source: United Nations, 2023

women in leadership roles. It emphasized the pivotal roles older women play in sustainable development and calls for commitment to promote their well-being, financial security, and protection from violence. These insights underscore the need for comprehensive solutions to achieve gender equality globally.

Taking stock of gender statistics on care economy in Africa

UN DESA provided an opportunity to take stock of and learn good practices in gender statistics and data management in Africa at the 9th United Nations Global Forum on Gender Statistics in August 2023 in Johannesburg, organized in collaboration with Statistics South Africa. Under the theme “Measuring what we value - gender statistics for an informed care economy”, the forum discussions focused on gender equality and the care economy; unpaid work and time use; violence



9th Global Forum on Gender Statistics, Johannesburg, South Africa. | STATISTICS SOUTH AFRICA

against women and girls; legal identity and gender equality; and ways to improve data and evidence on the growing challenges and opportunities offered by the care economy, including gender mainstreaming efforts of the National Statistics Systems. The forum brought together 240 in-person participants (both producers and users of gender statistics) from national and international statistical offices, other government agencies, international organizations, academia, civil society, and the donor community. Panellists and audience members strategized on how to make the best out of existing data, including by mainstreaming a gender lens into existing data processes, climate change statistics, and business and trade statistics.

Using innovative data solutions to tackle local sustainable development challenges

Following the success of the past three Hackathons, UN DESA hosted the UN Datathon 2023 in November, in which participants used data to tackle local

sustainable development challenges. Held synchronously online and in Uruguay alongside satellite venues in the United Arab Emirates, China, Rwanda, Australia, and Switzerland, the event attracted significant global interest, with registrations from more than 500 teams worldwide. Nearly 2,000 participants from 110 countries signed up to take part. More than 50 online and on-site mentors from all over the world guided the participants during the Datathon journey. Under the theme “SDG localization – the need for local responses and monitoring to achieve the SDGs”, Datathon participants unveiled hundreds of innovative solutions, including data models, interactive dashboards, algorithms, data maps, and other inventive data solutions. The Ghana Statistical Service Data Science Team won the event with an entry that suggested localizing SDG indicators by leveraging both census data and non-traditional data sources. The event was organized in partnership with the United Nations Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics, partnered with the UN Major Group for Children and Youth, Uruguay’s National Institute of Statistics, and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data.



The Ghana Statistical Service wins the 2023 UN Datathon. | JOYNEWS

Growth in the Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians

In 2023, the Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians — launched by UN DESA in October 2020 — grew to more than 3,100 members from over 180 countries and territories. The network provides capacity-building and encourages collaboration among peers and organizations working in different areas of statistics, data, and geospatial information. Since its launch, it has played a key role in improving the coordination within and among national statistical systems, United Nations country teams, and international and regional organizations. 50 per cent of the network’s members come from national statistical offices and governments, and 41 per cent from the UN System and other international organizations. During 2023, 15 Global Network webinars were organized on the platform, attracting 1,870 participants

worldwide. Currently, there are 18 active topic-specific groups, with six new groups created during 2023.

Spotlighting population trends for countries in special situations

UN DESA delivered its first ever in-depth examination of population trends and outlook for countries in special situations. The report *Population Prospects of Countries in Special Situations*, launched in January 2024, compares population dynamics in LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS and related implications for sustainable development. Diverse trends — with youthful populations in LDCs and LLDCs for decades to come, compared to rapid population ageing in most SIDS and some Asian LDCs and LLDCs — will influence policy policies. Country case studies in the report help identify critical policy responses to population issues, while gaps in data



Young girl at the beach, Solomon Islands. | WORLD BANK/ALETA MORIARTY

availability add uncertainty in population estimates and projections. The report notes that international migration adds complexity to the demographic realities faced by countries and stresses that advancing gender equality improves the lives of women and increases opportunities for sustained economic growth.

Drawing on the report, UN DESA also hosted a dynamic Global Policy Dialogue on the demographic outlook for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), on the last day of the fourth International Conference on SIDS (SIDS4) in Antigua and Barbuda and online. The dialogue took stock of the challenges and opportunities posed to these island nations by demographic shifts, including ageing populations, youth migration, and changing family structures. Experts from UN DESA and other SIDS stakeholders drew inspiration from the new



Speakers at the UN DESA Global Policy Dialogue on “The Demographic Prospects of SIDS” at SIDS4 discuss ways to address ageing, migration and changing demographics in small islands. | UN DESA



Speakers participate in the CPD opening and UN General Assembly commemorative session. | UN DESA

Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) agreed by the international community at the Conference and explored the complex demographic picture for SIDS.

Reaffirming the importance of population and development to fulfil the vision of the 2030 Agenda

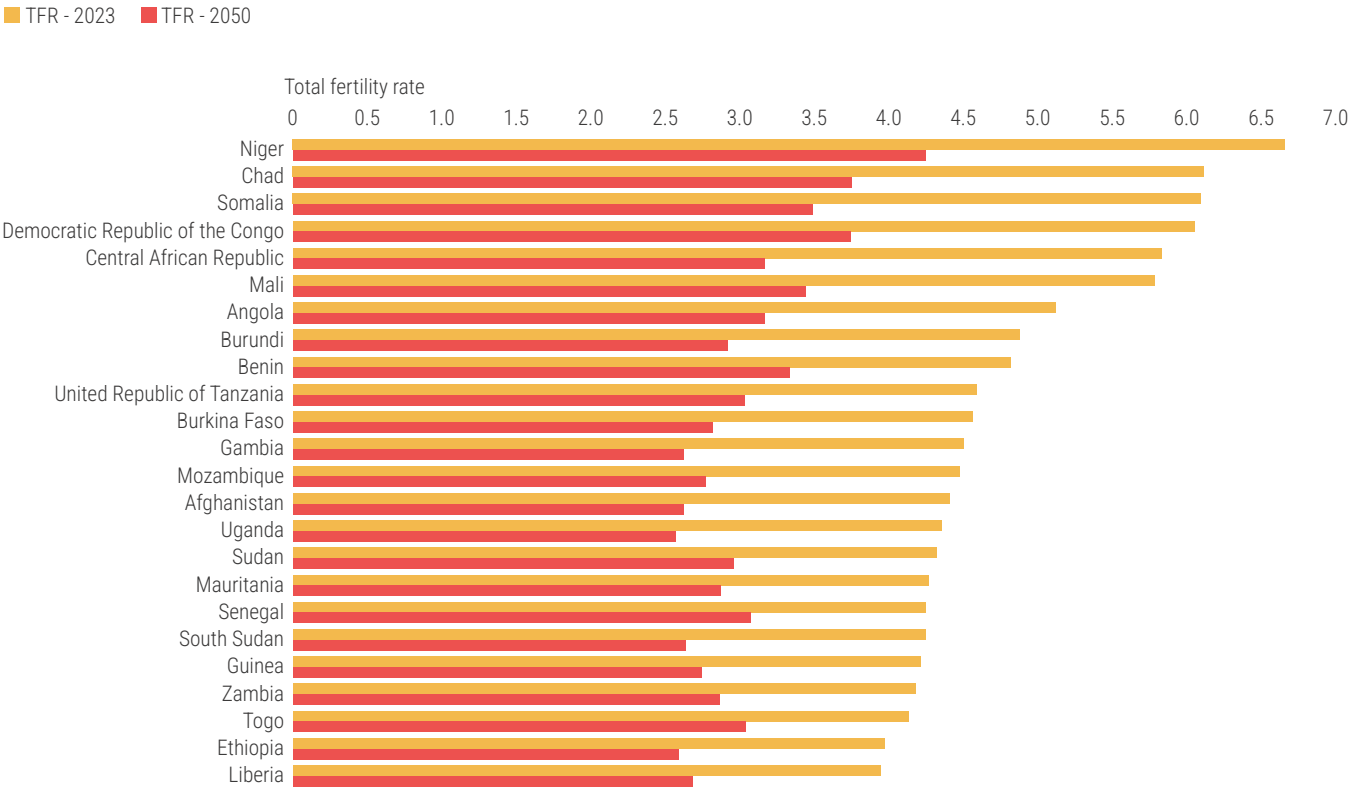
UN DESA supported Member States in their unanimous adoption of a political declaration recognizing that, in a demographically diverse world, population dynamics, including differences in the pace of population growth or decline, changing population age structures, urbanization and international migration, will continue to shape the world for present and future generations. The declaration stressed that the full implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action is crucial to fulfil the vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and that the two agendas are mutually reinforcing and must be boldly translated into effective action, while seeking to realize the human rights of all as well as gender equality and the empowerment of

all women and girls. The declaration was delivered at the opening of the 57th session of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD) in April 2024, on the 30th anniversary of the ICPD, where the President of the General Assembly also convened a commemorative session to mark the anniversary.

Maximizing the demographic dividend to better prepare for population ageing in LDCs

UN DESA noted the progressive population ageing that has begun in LDCs and shared key recommendations for addressing the shift. While most LDCs are still in the early stages of the demographic transition, an accelerated pace of change is expected beyond mid-century according to the *World Population Ageing 2023: Challenges and opportunities of population ageing in the least developed countries* report, released in December 2023. Most LDCs still have an opportunity to experience a multi-decade period with a rising share of working-age population, which can boost the rate

Total fertility rates of countries at the early stage of the demographic transition, 2023 and 2050



Source: World Population Ageing 2023: Challenges and opportunities of population ageing in the least developed countries.

of economic growth on a per capita basis. However, to harness the demographic dividend, LDCs need to put in place enabling policies in education, health, employment, economic reform and good governance, and thereby develop economically before their populations become much older. Three case studies (Angola, Bangladesh and Rwanda) in the report provide insights into the challenges and opportunities that arise at various stages of the demographic transition.

Training countries in best practices for population projections

Population projections are an essential tool for understanding future population age structures and for

guiding potential policy responses. Countries of the Asia-Pacific region, for instance, are currently experiencing substantial demographic shifts, and population ageing is a paramount concern for many governments. UN DESA, in collaboration with the Asia-Pacific regional office of UNFPA and the U.S. Census Bureau, held a capacity-building workshop in Bangkok, Thailand, in November 2023, to train government officials from the region in population estimation and projection, after years of COVID-19-related disruptions. Participants included 31 officials from national statistical offices and planning ministries from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Timor Leste.