

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

MESSAGE ON WORLD STATISTICS DAY

20 October 2015

Good data and statistics are indispensable for informed decision-making by all actors in society. This was explicitly acknowledged in 2014, when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics to promote citizen's entitlement to public information.

As countries and organizations embark on implementing the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, reliable and timely statistics and indicators are more important than ever. For that reason, World Statistics Day this year is being observed under the theme "Better data, better lives."

We need to ensure that everyone is counted, especially the most poor and vulnerable. No child's birth shall remain unregistered. No incidence of disease, no matter how remote the location, shall remain unrecorded. We need local statistics to ensure that every child has access to education and we need global statistics to monitor the overall effects of climate change.

Over the past 15 years, many countries have made considerable efforts to strengthen their national statistical capacity under the leadership of their national statistical offices. The 2010 Population and Housing Census Round, numerous national survey programmes, as well as administrative data, have contributed around the world to improving the information base for monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, and have contributed significantly to their success.

At the United Nations, the Statistical Commission has for almost 70 years led the global statistical system. Through its standards and guidelines, the Commission has created a language which enables us to communicate data and to share practical experiences globally. Today, the Commission stands ready to play a key role in developing and implementing a solid global measurement process for the Sustainable Development Goals.

However, the monitoring requirements for the success of the Sustainable Development Goals pose a significant challenge to even the most developed countries. We need a data revolution. We need to strengthen statistical capacity and tap into the potential of new technology. We need the contributions and expertise of data producers and users, academia, the private sector and civil society.

On this World Statistics Day, I urge all partners and stakeholders to work together to ensure that the necessary investments are made, adequate technical capacity is built, new data sources are explored and innovative processes are applied to give all countries the comprehensive information systems they need to achieve sustainable development.