

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP): GOOD PRACTICES IN TECHNICAL COOPERATION IN STATISTICS

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ABSTRACT

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the [United Nations](#)' global development network. It advocates for change and connects countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life for them. It provides expert advice, training and grants support to developing countries, with increasing emphasis on assistance to the [least developed countries](#). It promotes technical and investment cooperation among nations.

Headquartered in [New York City](#), the status of UNDP is that of an executive board within the [United Nations General Assembly](#). The UNDP Administrator is the third highest-ranking official of the United Nations after the [United Nations Secretary-General](#) and Deputy Secretary-General. The UNDP is funded entirely by voluntary contributions from UN member states. The organization operates in 170 countries, where it works with local governments to meet development challenges and [develop local capacity](#). The following paper discusses about the Good Practices in Technical Cooperation in Statistics followed by UNDP & the upcoming challenges.

Keywords: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Now Initiative, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA),

INTRODUCTION

UNDP remains committed to working even more closely with partners across the UN system. The UNDP Administrator is the Vice-Chair of the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG), which unites the funds, programmes, specialized agencies, departments and offices of the UN system that play a role in sustainable development. The Administrator also convenes the UNSDG Core Group comprised of DESA, FAO, ILO, UNDP, UNFPA,

UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women, WFP, WHO and the rotating chairs of the Regional Economic Commissions.

Created by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and endorsed by the General Assembly, the UNSDG is the main UNDS internal coordination mechanism at the global level. It is instrumental in enabling action on the ground and ensuring that United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) have the support, guidance and impartial oversight required as they assist governments to deliver on the 2030 Agenda. As UNSDG Vice-Chair, the UNDP

Administrator is responsible for the coordination of UNSDG operational work, including the elaboration of program, policy and financing instruments and guidance, the functioning of the UNSDG Strategic Results Groups, as well as day-to-day management of the Resident Coordinator system.

UNDP also administers the UN Capital Development Fund, which helps developing countries grow their economies by supplementing existing sources of capital assistance by means of grants and loans; and UN Volunteers, which fields over 6,500 volunteers from 160 countries, serving with 38 UN partners in support of peace, security, human rights, humanitarian delivery and development through volunteerism worldwide.

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The UNDP is funded entirely by voluntary contributions from UN member states. The organization operates in 177 countries, where it works with local governments to meet development challenges and develop local capacity.

Statistics published in United Nations resources may come from a variety of sources. Various UN bodies may be involved in determining the indicators and methodology to be used.

The UN Statistical Division website includes a section on the Principles governing international statistical activities.

UN data and other UN statistical publications include a section on the indicators collected and the methodology used. In UN data, the **metadata** section lists sources and links to the responsible UN division, department or agency.

The **United Nations Statistical Commission** is the "highest decision making body for international statistical activities especially the setting of statistical standards, the development of concepts and methods and their implementation at the national and international level." The Commission reports to the Economic and Social Council.

DATA4 NOW INITIATIVE

A new global effort to close the gap on data for development was launched on 25 September on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly by the Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed. The United Nations Statistics Division, the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, The World Bank and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network/TRENDS are the operating partners of the Data 4 Now Initiative which will match the countries' data priorities with partners who bring innovative solutions to address the data needs.

Bearing in mind that statistics are essential for sustainable economic, environmental and social development and that public trust in official statistics is anchored in professional independence and impartiality of statisticians, their use of scientific and transparent methods and equal access for all to official statistical information, the Chief Statisticians or coordinators of statistical activities of United Nations agencies and related organizations, agree that implementation of the following principles will enhance the functioning of the international statistical system.

In doing so, they note the endorsement of these principles by the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities on 14 September, 2005; they further recall the adoption by

the *United Nations Statistical Commission* of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics in its Special Session of 11-15 April 1994, and the endorsement of the *Declaration of Good Practices in Technical Cooperation in Statistics* in its 30th Session of 1-5 March 1999.

They are as follows:

1) High quality international statistics, accessible for all, are a fundamental element of global information systems

Good practices include:

- Having regular consultations with key users both inside and outside the relevant organisation to ascertain that their needs are met
- Periodic review of statistical programmes to ensure their relevance
- Compiling and disseminating international statistics based on impartiality
- Providing equal access to statistics for all users
- Ensuring free public accessibility of key statistics

2) To maintain the trust in international statistics, their production is to be impartial and strictly based on the highest professional standards

Good practices include:

- Using strictly professional considerations for decisions on methodology, terminology and data presentation
- Developing and using professional codes of conduct
- Making a clear distinction, in statistical publications, between statistical and analytical comments on the one hand and policy-prescriptive and advocacy comments on the other

3) The public has a right to be informed about the mandates for the statistical work of the organisations

Good practices include:

- Making decisions about statistical work programmes publicly available
- Making documents for and reports of statistical meetings publicly available

4) Concepts, definitions, classifications, sources, methods and procedures employed in the production of international statistics are chosen to meet professional scientific standards and are made transparent for the users

Good practices include:

- Aiming continuously to introduce methodological improvements and systems to manage and improve the quality and transparency of statistics
- Enhancing the professional level of staff by encouraging them to attend training courses, to do analytical work, to publish scientific papers and to participate in seminars and conferences.
- Documenting the concepts, definitions and classifications, as well as data collection and processing procedures used and the quality assessments carried out and making this information publicly accessible
- Documenting how data are collected, processed and disseminated, including information about editing mechanisms applied to country data
- Giving credit, in the dissemination of international statistics, to the original source and using agreed quotation standards when re-using statistics originally collected by others

- Making officially agreed standards publicly available

5) Sources and methods for data collection are appropriately chosen to ensure timeliness and other aspects of quality, to be cost-efficient and to minimise the reporting burden for data providers

Good practices include:

- Facilitating the provision of data by countries
- Working systematically on the improvement of the timeliness of international statistics
- Periodic review of statistical programmes to minimise the burden on data providers
- Sharing collected data with other organisations and collecting data jointly where appropriate
- Contributing to an integrated presentation of statistical programmes, including data collection plans, thereby making gaps or overlaps clearly visible
- Ensuring that national statistical offices and other national organisations for official statistics are duly involved and advocating that the *Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics* are applied when data are collected in countries

6) Individual data collected about natural persons and legal entities, or about small aggregates that are subject to national confidentiality rules, are to be kept strictly confidential and are to be used exclusively for statistical purposes or for purposes mandated by legislation

Good practices include:

- Putting measures in place to prevent the direct or indirect disclosure of data on

persons, households, businesses and other individual respondents

- Developing a framework describing methods and procedures to provide sets of anonymous micro-data for further analysis by bona fide researchers, maintaining the requirements of confidentiality

7) Erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics are to be immediately appropriately addressed

Good practices include:

- Responding to perceived erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics
- Enhancing the use of statistics by developing educational material for important user groups

8) Standards for national and international statistics are to be developed on the basis of sound professional criteria, while also meeting the test of practical utility and feasibility

Good practices include:

- Systematically involving national statistical offices and other national organisations for official statistics in the development of international statistical programmes, including the development and promulgation of methods, standards and good practices
- Ensuring that decisions on such standards are free from conflicts of interest, and are perceived to be so
- Advising countries on implementation issues concerning international standards
- Monitoring the implementation of agreed standards

9) Coordination of international statistical programmes is essential to strengthen the quality, coherence and governance of

international statistics, and avoiding duplication of work

Good practices include:

- Designating one or more statistical units to implement statistical programmes, including one unit that coordinates the statistical work of the organisation and represents the organisation in international statistical meetings
- Participating in international statistical meetings and bilateral and multilateral consultations whenever necessary
- Working systematically towards agreements about common concepts, classifications, standards and methods
- Working systematically towards agreement on which series to consider as authoritative for each important set of statistics
- Coordinating technical cooperation activities with countries between donors and between different organisations in the national statistical system to avoid duplication of effort and to encourage complementarities and synergy

10) Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in statistics contribute to the professional growth of the statisticians involved and to the improvement of statistics in the organisations and in countries

Good practices include:

- Cooperating and sharing knowledge among international organisations and with countries and regions to further develop national and regional statistical systems
- Basing cooperation projects on user requirements, promoting full participation of the main stakeholders, taking account of local circumstances and stage of statistical development

- Empowering recipient national statistical systems and governments to take the lead
- Advocating the implementation of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics in countries
- Setting cooperation projects within a balanced overall strategic framework for national development of official statistics

SOURCES / DATABASES

- AIDS info
Statistical resource on AIDS and HIV worldwide.
- DESA - Statistical Databases
Collection of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Statistical Division databases, including commodity trade statistics, census knowledge, disability statistics, good practices, joint oil data, millennium data indicators, population, and social indicators.
- ECE - Statistical Database
Statistical database of ECE, the Economic and Social Commission for Europe. Includes country overviews and statistics on economics, forestry, gender, transport, and other areas.
- ECLAC - CEPALSTAT
Statistical database of ECLAC, the Economic and Social Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. Includes social, demographic, economic, environmental, and other statistics.
- ESCAP Data Centre
Statistical database of ESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific). Includes population, health, education, labor, infrastructure, finance, trade, environment, gender, and other statistics.

- **FAO Statistics**

Links to various statistical databases of the Food and Agriculture Organization, including Agro-MAPS, AQUASTAT, Country STAT, FAOSTAT, Fishery and Aquaculture Statistics, Forestry Country Profiles, GLIPHA, PAAT Information Systems, and TERRASTAT.

- **ILO Statistics and Databases**

Collection of statistics and databases compiled by the International Labour Organization: core labour statistics, country-level data, child labour statistics, occupational health and safety, conventions and recommendations documents, reference literature, and labour legislation.

- **IMF - eLibrary - Data**

This database gives access to international financial data and statistics collected by the IMF, the International Financial Statistics (IFS) and the AFR Regional Economic Outlook.

- **ICT-Eye**

ICT-Eye is an ITU resource for telecommunication/ICT indicators and statistics, regulatory and policy information, national tariff policies and costing practices, and more.

- **Principal Global Indicators - Economic & Financial Statistics**

The PGI is hosted by the Inter-Agency Group on Economic and Financial Statistics and presents data for the Group of 20 (G-20) to facilitate the monitoring of economic and financial developments for these systemically important economies.

- **Standard Country or Area Codes for Statistical Use**

The list of countries or areas contains the names of countries or areas in alphabetical order, their three-digit numerical codes used for statistical processing purposes by

the Statistics Division of the UN Secretariat, and their three-digit alphabetical codes assigned by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). The designations employed and the presentation of material at this site do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

- **Stat Base - Economic Commission for Africa**

Browsable and searchable statistical database for ECA (Economic Commission for Africa).

- **UN Data**

UNdata brings UN statistical databases within easy reach of users through a single entry point. Users can now search and download a variety of statistical resources of the UN system from a wide range of departments and subject matter.

- **UNCTAD Statistics**

Collection of statistical databases offered by UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), including commodity price statistics, foreign direct investment, information and communication technology statistics, and trade control measures.

- **UNESCO - Institute for Statistics**

The Institute for Statistics Data Centre of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) contains over 1,000 types of indicators and raw data on education, literacy, science and technology, culture and communication. Custom tables may be generated, and predefined tables are also available.

- **UNICEF - Country statistics**

Economic and social statistics provided by the UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) on the countries and territories of the world, with particular reference to children's well-being. The statistics are published annually in the organization's flagship publication. It includes tables combining statistics for all countries.

- UNWTO e-Library

Information source offering access to research and information in the area of tourism. The UNWTO Elibrary contains books, journals and statistical reports by country and by indicator.

- UPU Postal Statistics

The Universal Postal Union's (UPU) statistical database provides a dynamic overview of postal development in each member country. It includes approximately 100 indicators of postal development, grouped in 12 chapters.

- UN-Habitat Urban Data

Free and open access to data about countries and cities around the globe. Data available analyzed, compiled and published by UN-Habitat's Global Urban Observatory

- WHO Global Health Atlas

In a single electronic platform, the World Health Organization's (WHO) Communicable Disease Global Atlas is bringing together for analysis and comparison standardized data and statistics for infectious diseases at country, regional, and global levels.

- WHO Regional Office Statistics

Statistical information provided by World Health Organization's regional offices in Africa, the Americas, Eastern Mediterranean, Europe, Southeast Asia, and Western Pacific.

- WIPO GOLD

WIPO GOLD is a free public resource which provided by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) offering a one-stop gateway to WIPO's global collections of searchable IP data. Includes links to resources for patents, brands, domain name, designs, statistics, law and treaties, classifications, and standards.

- WTO Statistics Database

The WTO statistics database allows for retrieval of statistical information through four presentations: Trade Profiles, Tariff Profiles, Services Profiles and the Time Series section.

CONCLUSION

This is a critical time for the world. At UNDP, this period is seen as a huge opportunity to advance the global sustainable development agenda. In September 2015, world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. UNDP is working to strengthen new frameworks for development, disaster risk reduction and climate change. They support countries' efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, or Global Goals, which will guide global development priorities through 2030.

UNDP's Strategic Plan (2018-2021) has been designed to be responsive to the wide diversity of the countries they serve. The diversity is reflected in three broad development contexts:

- Eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions
- Accelerate structural transformations
- Build resilience to shocks and crises

To respond to these issues, and better focus its resources and expertise to deliver on the 2030 Agenda, UNDP has identified a set of approaches that we call our Signature Solutions:

- Keeping people out of POVERTY

- GOVERNANCE for peaceful, just, and inclusive societies
- Crisis prevention and increased RESILIENCE
- ENVIRONMENT: nature-based solutions for development
- Clean, affordable ENERGY
- Women's empowerment and GENDER equality

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