

REGIONAL FORUM

ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE UNECE REGION

GENEVA | 25 April 2017

REGIONAL ROUND TABLE III

Room XVII, Palais des Nations

15:00-17:00

DATA AND MONITORING

Concept note

Aims

The aims of this round table are:

- to provide an opportunity for dialogue and mutual learning between policymakers, statisticians and other stakeholders on the needs and challenges for SDG data and monitoring. Participants will exchange experiences, propose solutions to address identified problems and anticipate future developments; and
- to identify main lessons and compile a set of key actions areas and good practices that can be shared with a wider audience.

Content

Improving the data situation for reporting on SDGs. The 2030 Agenda underscores the importance of “quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data...to help with the measurement of progress and to ensure that no one is left behind” (Paragraph 48). Statistical capacity for reporting on SDGs among countries in the UNECE region varies widely, with some facing steeper challenges than others. However, measuring and monitoring the implementation of the comprehensive 2030 Agenda remains a significant challenge for all countries.

The needs and expectations of policymakers. Policymakers need timely and reliable data to be able to take informed decisions on the necessary actions for SDG implementation at the national or sub-national level. They are also interested to compare their country’s performance with that of other countries in the region or globally.

The role of national statistical offices. According to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda “national statistical systems have a central role in generating, disseminating and administering data. They should be supplemented with data and analysis from civil society, academia and the private sector” (paragraph 125). Many NSOs in the region are developing plans and strategies related to statistics for SDGs. They will also

play a central role in reporting SDG indicators. However, many other data sources exist, with the private sector and other stakeholders using new and innovative technologies and approaches. Open data and big data create new opportunities for SDG monitoring but they also raise challenges that need to be addressed. NSOs may therefore need to innovate and review their role as data collectors, leaders and coordinators of the national statistical systems.

The need for capacity-building and additional resources. The 2030 Agenda recognizes the crucial role of “increased support for strengthening data collection and capacity building” and refers directly to capacity-building linked to data, monitoring and accountability under Goal 17 “Means of Implementation”. At the regional level, mobilizing resources and coordinating efforts for statistical capacity-building is part of the Regional Roadmap developed by the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) – CES Roadmap on Statistics for SDGs.

Mapping out actions ahead. The Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data (CTGAP), which has been developed by the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (HLG-PCCB), outlines the necessary actions to generate quality and timely data for sustainable development needs at the appropriate level of disaggregation and population coverage, including the more vulnerable and hard-to-reach.

Dialogue between policy makers and statisticians. Overall, generation of data and monitoring SDG implementation require extensive consultation processes and the engagement of multiple actors. The interaction between policymakers and statisticians is necessary so that the statistical work could effectively meet the needs and challenges identified in the CTGAP and the CES Regional Roadmap on Statistics for SDGs. Country experiences can shed light on different ways to facilitate this dialogue, ensure the engagement of other stakeholders and propose solutions to address the challenges.

Organisation

Moderator: **Laurence Monnoyer- Smith**, Commissioner-General for Sustainable Development and Inter-ministerial Delegate for Sustainable Development for the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Seas, France.

In order to encourage the free exchange of views and provide some context for the discussions, the round table will include:

- Short introductory interventions (3 minutes each) by 2 government representatives from different parts of the UNECE region for each cluster of questions.
- The presence of resource persons from international organizations and academia to provide background and comparative information on the issues discussed.

Prior to the meeting, the UNECE secretariat will contact participants to ask about their key concerns and expectations, so that the event is tailored to better meet their demands and facilitate the learning experience.

Reporting back

The round table will be summarized by a rapporteur. This summary will be reported back to the plenary session of the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and will be integrated into the Chair's summary of the Regional Forum.

Rapporteur: **Dan Carl**, Second Secretary, United States Permanent Mission to the United Nations

Potential participants

Policymakers with data needs related to the 2030 Agenda; statisticians and data experts from UNECE countries; national statistical offices; representatives of the regional UN entities; non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders.

Key questions

The roundtable will provide the opportunity to share insights on the questions that participants consider particularly relevant but, in broad terms, the core issues that may be raised at the round table are:

- *What are the role and limits of official statistics for monitoring and reporting on SDGs? How can other data sources be used for these purposes? What mechanisms can be established for the efficient cooperation between policymakers and statisticians? How can the needs of policymakers be identified?*
- *How to prioritize national statistical programmes in view of SDG reporting in a context of resource constraints? What is the role of the UNECE and its Conference of European Statisticians in advancing the statistical capacity of its member States?*
- *How can a coherent monitoring and review process on SDG indicators in the UNECE region be established? How to integrate all the different levels – from national/local to regional/sub-regional to global? How could the coordination between different organizations in the region and regional UN entities be organised?*