



United Nations



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United Nations Expert Group Meeting on

Disability data and statistics, monitoring and evaluation:
the way forward, a disability inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond

UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France
9 July 2014, 9.15am – 11.30 am (Room V)

**Sub-Thematic Session on
Data Collection and New Technological Solutions:
Opportunities and Constraints**

The Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) of DESA will co-organize, with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), an Expert Group Meeting under the theme “Disability data and statistics, monitoring and evaluation: the way forward, a disability inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond” from 8-10 July 2014 in Paris, France. The meeting will invite experts from around the world in their individual capacity, including those with experience in the fields of disability, development economics, and statistics. A special sub-thematic session will be organized to discuss how technological solutions could improve data collection, help to engage different stakeholders and contribute to sustainable development, in particular within the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

Background

Not only has the rapid development of Information and Communication Technologies¹ transformed the way people communicate, learn, and interact with each other, it has also provided new possibilities for data gathering. The Internet is now seen as a data gathering source. New devices such as smartphones and interactive tablets have redefined the way data is collected, and, equally, how participants approach and involve themselves in the data collection process. Data providers are now no longer considered the only official officers of statistics: New actors, namely companies collecting big data, and citizens who generate, share, and utilize data in novel ways, have broadened their participation base. Thus, these changes created new research questions, terms, processes and products which have the potential to impact society on a large scale.

‘Big data’ is one of the commonly used terms within the industry, policy-making, and, academic circles. From a certain perspective, big data and relevant data collection methods can provide richer, up-to-date, flexible and less costly analysis, but from another, it raises many

¹ ICTs are comprised from producers of ICT and telecommunication systems such as broadband networks; hardware and software developments, and those who provide related services and products.

methodological, ethical, political and cultural questions. It is often associated with ongoing discussions about cloud computing, cybersecurity and information ethics. It also requires new data and analytics-related competencies, organizational structures and processes.

Major objectives of the sub-thematic session

The objective of the session is to address the key question of whether Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and the Internet, as conduits for data collection and sourcing, can be used for development purposes, and its prescriptive implications.

The sub-thematic session will address the following questions:

- What is Big Data: new way of thinking about data gathering and its application?
- Big Data versus Official Data: new challenge or opportunity?
- What is the impact of Big Data in official statistics?
- Conservative or contemporary methods of data gathering: cost, time and scope?
- What is the role of the National Statistical Offices and Big Data Providers (BDP)?
- How to ensure the quality of Big Data? Open data?
- What could NSOs and BDP learn from each other?
- What are the key elements of Big Data for strategy development, planning and implementation?

Expected outcomes

The meeting is expected to result in a policy brief analyzing the current status of disability statistics and recommendations for action to strengthen data collection efforts to promote evidence-based policy making. The meeting is also expected to contribute towards the implementation of the outcome document of the General Assembly High Level Meeting on Disability and Development held on 23 September 2013, which stressed the urgent need for accurate data on disability. The recommendations from the meeting are expected to strengthen efforts - by both the international system and national statistics agencies - to address data gaps and revise methods of data collection, synthesis and reporting, with a view to improving coverage of topics, timeliness and data comparability, taking into account the specific situation of persons with disabilities.

Moderator: Mr Reg Brennenraedts, Dialogic Innovatie and Interactie (The Netherlands)

Speakers:

- Mr Reg Brennenraedts, Dialogic – introduction to big data for development.
- Mr Davide Storti, UNESCO Communication and Information Sector, Knowledge Societies Division – Open solutions: experience from the Caribbean region.
- Mr Bhanu Neupane, UNESCO Communication and Information Sector, Knowledge Societies Division - Open access strategy to scientific data.
- Mr Winston Oyadomari, Cetic.br, Coordinator of ICT Household survey and ICT Accessibility Studies and Ms Tatiana Jereissati, Coordinator of Unesco Projects – ICT Household survey and ICT Accessibility Studies.
- Discussion and elaboration of recommendations.

Contact information: Ms Irmgarda Kasinskaite-Buddeberg, UNESCO ([i.kasinskaite\(at\)unesco.org](mailto:i.kasinskaite@unesco.org))