

UN World Data Forum 2018 launched, to advance innovative data solutions in Dubai, 22-24 October

More than 1,500 leaders and experts from government, business and civil society to collaborate to improve lives through better data

(New York, 6 June 2018) -- The United Nations World Data Forum has launched the programme and registration for its 2018 Forum, taking place in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on 22-24 October.

Over 1,500 data experts from more than 100 countries are expected for the Forum, including national statisticians, data scientists from the private sector and academia, international organizations, and civil society groups. Highlights of the programme are posted online at UNdataforum.org, and the full schedule and speakers will be made available as they are confirmed.

The Forum, to be held at Madinat Jumeirah in Dubai, is uniquely positioned, under the United Nations, to bring together major producers and users of data to collaborate and launch innovative initiatives that will deliver better data on health, migration, refugees, education, income, environment, human rights, and other aspects of sustainable development. In more than 80 sessions, ranging from interactive data labs to more traditional panel discussions, participants will have the opportunity to break down silos and cross-fertilize ideas.

“The UN World Data Forum 2018 will build upon the excellent collaboration across the statistics and data communities generated at the first Forum in Cape Town in January 2017, and advance cutting edge, practical solutions to current challenges,” said Mr. Liu Zhenmin, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, who heads the Secretariat for the Forum. “With concerns about data high on everyone’s agenda, I am confident that the Forum will boost the support and partnerships required for improving statistics and data capacity in countries and harnessing the power of data for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.”

The opening plenary session on 22 October will feature high-level political representation and set the stage for the Forum, which will include several additional high-profile sessions.

A High-Level Plenary on Improving Migration Statistics will examine the unprecedented and growing demands for migration data and statistics, and review strategies and innovative approaches to improve migration data from national statistical systems, the private sector and research community.

A High-level Plenary on Health Statistics, being organized by Bloomberg Philanthropies’ Data for Health Initiative, will focus on improving public health data, including innovative ways of collecting data on deaths and births to ensure all people are registered; monitoring major risk factors for early death; and improving the ability to track public health trends in order to inform policies and plan interventions.

Core issues

Other plenary sessions and dozens of panel discussions will focus on core issues under six main areas agreed by the organizing committee, including:

- New approaches to building and financing national capacity for better data;
- Bringing data sources together and furthering the integration of non-traditional data sources;
- Leveraging data and statistics to ensure visibility and voice for everyone, leaving no one behind;
- Increasing data and statistical literacy and communication, including through data journalism;
- Building trust in data and statistics, including by applying data principles and governance to new and existing data sources and implementing open data practices;
- Reviewing how far we have come in implementing the Cape Town Global Action Plan agreed at the first UN World Data Forum, and in addressing emerging challenges.

The UN World Data Forum 2018 will be hosted by the Federal Competitiveness and Statistical Authority of the UAE, with support from the Statistics Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. A number of partners – including governments, the World Bank, UNICEF, Paris 21 (OECD), ESCWA, the UN Foundation and several civil society organizations and institutes -- are collaborating to organize the Forum.

The Forum was agreed by the UN Statistical Commission based on a recommendation by the UN Secretary-General's Independent Expert and Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development. Improved use of data and statistics will be crucial to achieving the transformational vision of a better future for people and the planet, set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by world leaders at the UN in September 2015.

The UN cites estimates that 90 per cent of data in the world has been created in the last two years, and that the volume of data is set to increase by 40 per cent annually. This expansion in new sources of data, arising mainly from mobile, digital and satellite technologies, is creating large-scale opportunities for innovative solutions, which need to be integrated with strengthened official data mechanisms and structures.

For Media: Media wishing to cover the Forum should register online as participants in the Media category. More information can be found at UNDataForum.org, or on Twitter [@UNDataForum](https://twitter.com/UNDataForum). Plenary sessions will be livestreamed. Details of facilities and press briefings will be posted on the Forum website media page.

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