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Eighth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Quito, 17-19 November 2015

Substantive seminar

**THE DATA REVOLUTION AND THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES
FOR NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTES**

Quito, 17 November 2015

Organized with the support of



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BACKGROUND

2015 has been a momentous year in the intergovernmental processes to formulate the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, which were adopted at the seventieth session of the United Nations General Assembly, in September 2015, and will guide national, regional and global efforts over the next 15 years. Monitoring is a key aspect of this Agenda, as is the measuring and follow-up of targets and indicators associated with the Sustainable Development Goals.

This highlights the need for countries around the world to carry out a “data revolution”. While this term covers various issues and has many meanings, it does imply that, on the one hand, there is an exponential increase in the volume and type of data available and, on the other, that society has a growing need for information that is increasingly disaggregated, up-to-date and timely.¹

There has been a data volume explosion in both traditional and new data sources. Using administrative records, compiled by various public bodies as part of their everyday operations, is seen as one of the most promising methods of improving statistical coverage and efficiency. Moreover, the continuous and widespread use of telecommunications and other technological devices is producing an endless stream of digital information that is potentially useful for official statistics. Data can now be generated constantly and at high speed by individuals, machines and sensors, electronic transactions and Internet use, among other things.

In parallel, and as a result of growing public demands for greater transparency, access to information and effective accountability mechanisms, and due to the technical need to take advantage of the data produced, various open data initiatives have been developed, in an attempt to promote public ownership of these public assets. Being able to use, reuse and disseminate data freely, according to certain standards, will enable society to make better use of those data, by allowing any person or organization to put them to good and innovative uses and develop a new idea that could lead to new information, knowledge or even services.

These phenomena are part of the data revolution, which is already a reality, not a possible option. Understanding this revolution is a challenge that public institutions and national statistical offices face; they must be aware of its potential, its risks and challenges and they must adapt in order to harness and promote it.

The public agenda, particularly in developing countries, but also in industrialized ones, must continue to focus on the task of modernizing national statistical systems and official indicators, while, at the same time, taking advantage of the opportunity created by the data revolution. For example, criteria should be established to bring unofficial data into line with quality requirements.

To that end, the leadership of national statistical offices in producing and compiling information will remain crucial. Urgent and intensive capacity-building efforts will be needed to enhance, process and integrate existing data, and to establish clear criteria for collecting, analysing, using and disseminating new data.

¹ Independent Expert Advisory Group on the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development, *A World That Counts: Mobilising the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development*, New York, 2014.

The United Nations system has put the data revolution at the heart of its agenda with national statistical offices. The aim of this seminar, organized by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), is to create, within the framework of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, a forum to discuss how to help member States to use the data revolution to monitor and review the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME

Tuesday, 17 November 2015

11.15 – 11.30 a.m.	Opening session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pascual Gerstenfeld, Chief of the Statistics Division of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) • Esteban Caballero, Officer in Charge of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
11.30 – 11.50 a.m.	Statement by Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the data revolution from the perspective of ECLAC
11.50 a.m. – 12.10 p.m.	Statement by Stefan Schweinfest, Director of the United Nations Statistics Division, on recent progress in the data revolution in the context of the United Nations Statistical Commission
12.10 – 12.30 p.m.	Statement by Rolando Ocampo, Co-Chair of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management and President of the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for the Americas, on geospatial information management in the context of the data revolution
12.30 – 12.50 p.m.	Statement by El-Iza Mohamedou, Deputy Secretariat Manager at Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS 21), on the roadmap for implementing a data revolution led by member States
12.50 – 1.10 p.m.	Statement by Miguel Ángel Cárdenas, Director of the Geostatistics Division of the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) of Colombia, on the modernization of the Geostatistics Information System as a strategy for integration with administrative records
1.10 – 1.30 p.m.	Statement by Carol Coy, Director General of the Statistical Institute of Jamaica, on the challenges facing the Caribbean in relation to the data revolution and monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals
1.30 – 2.30 p.m.	Lunch break

- 2.30 – 2.50 p.m. Statement by Félix Vélez, Vice-President of the Demographic and Social Information Subsystem of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) of Mexico, on Mexico’s experiences of using administrative records for statistical purposes
- 2.50 – 3.10 p.m. Statement by Emmanuel Letouzé, Director of Data-Pop Alliance, on the study “Big Data and National Statistics Systems in Latin America”, prepared in conjunction with DANE of Colombia,
- 3.10 – 3.30 p.m. Statement by Sabrina Juran, Technical Specialist, and Pablo Salazar, Regional Adviser, of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), on the role of international agencies in mobilizing the data revolution
- 3.30 – 4.10 p.m. Discussion
- 4.10 – 4.30 p.m. Closing statement by José Rosero, Executive Director of the National Statistics and Census Institute (INEC) of Ecuador, on the implications of the data revolution for the work of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC and the capacity-building processes