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Items for information

World Statistics Day

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, which was prepared in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2020/211 and past practices, provides a description of the activities undertaken by the statistical community for the observance of the third World Statistics Day, which was marked on 20 October 2020, in line with the five-year schedule set out in General Assembly resolution [69/282](#). The third Day was celebrated with the theme of “Connecting the world with data we can trust”. Described herein is the coordination work undertaken by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, and an overview of activities undertaken around the world is provided.

The Commission is invited to take note of the report.

* [E/CN.3/2021/1](#).



I. History and mandate

1. On 3 June 2015, the General Assembly adopted resolution [69/282](#), in which it decided to celebrate World Statistics Day every five years on 20 October. The first Day was celebrated on 20 October 2010 with the theme “Service, professionalism, integrity: celebrating the many contributions and achievements of official statistics”. The second Day was celebrated on 20 October 2015 with the theme “Better data, better lives”. The third Day was celebrated on 20 October 2020.

2. In its decision 51/126, the Statistical Commission expressed thanks for the slogan “Connecting the world with data we can trust”, prepared by the Bureau. Through consultations, the Bureau had decided to centre the slogan around the theme of trust, authoritative data, innovation and public good, as a modern national statistical office should have all those elements. The slogan was prepared by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, with the help of communication experts from Statistics Canada.

3. A logo, designed by the Graphic Design Unit of the Department of Global Communications, was formally unveiled at the fifty-first session of the Commission. The Commission took note of the planned events and requested the secretariat to continue the preparations for the Day, including by promoting events on the dedicated website (<https://worldstatisticsday.org>).

II. Preparations and resources provided by the Division

A. Informing countries, United Nations agencies and national statistical offices

4. On 2 September 2020, the Secretary-General wrote to Heads of State and Government in order to bring the Day to the attention of all Member States. He indicated that he was encouraged by the efforts made in recent years in many countries to strengthen their statistical capacity, under the leadership of national offices, including to monitor progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, improve data stewardship, develop new data sources and ensure high-quality population and housing censuses. He invited Governments, as the primary producers, users and beneficiaries of official statistics, to lend their full support to the efforts in 2020.¹ In addition, within his delegated authority, the Director of the Division informed chief statisticians by letter and email.²

B. Logo

5. The Graphic Design Unit of the Department of Global Communications designed the logo for the Day in 2020. It was made available in the six official languages of the United Nations and launched at the fifty-first session of the Commission. It was also used and adapted by national statistical offices and associations for a wide range of promotional materials and banners and translated into at least an additional 33 languages.³

¹ See <https://worldstatisticsday.org/2020/blog/Secretary-General-of-the-United-Nations-invites-governments-to-celebrate-World-Statistics-Day-2020.html>.

² See <https://worldstatisticsday.org/2020/blog/UN-Statistics-Division-Director-excited-for-World-Statistics-Day-2020.html>.

³ All logos shared or requested by the Division are publicly available for download and use from <https://worldstatisticsday.org/2020/resources/index.html>.

6. The Unit also prepared designs for promotional materials, including a gate banner, buttons, stickers and stationery. In line with past practice, the Division produced promotional buttons displaying the logo, but, owing to the cancellation of events brought about by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, there was limited distribution of them, mainly to staff of the Division. They will therefore be made available at future events. A banner produced by the Division was displayed at the gate to Headquarters in October 2020.

C. World Statistics Day website

7. A dedicated website (<https://worldstatisticsday.org>) was officially launched on 13 July 2020. In the lead-up to 20 October, it served as a platform to showcase and exchange ideas on ways to celebrate the Day. More than 133 national statistical offices, international organizations and university and research centres, among others, contacted the Division regarding the Day. Many shared information about events in their respective countries or organizations. Posts were added to the website to inform the public about resources and plans for celebrations around the world. Following the Day, the website remained online, serving as a repository for activities and materials produced by partners to mark the Day.

8. On the Day, the official website generated close to 18,000 page views. For the week of 19 October 2020, there were 31,000 page views and close to 17,000 users. There were more page views and users in 2020 than in 2015, with close to 180,000 page views compared with 157,000 and 17,000 users compared with 13,000 (see [E/CN.3/2016/18](#)). The website was accessed and referenced from around the world. The top five users came from the United States of America, India, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Australia and Canada.

D. World Statistics Day videos

9. To mark the Day, the Secretary-General addressed the global community through a short video message in which he said that the Day was an opportunity to recognize the statisticians worldwide who worked to provide reliable data, adhered to the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and built a more resilient and insightful data ecosystem. The Director of the Division also prepared a video message. Both are available on the website.

10. Another short video was created by the Strategic Planning and Communications Service of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and hosted on the Department's YouTube channel.⁴ The video debuted at the virtual United Nations World Data Forum on 20 October in a plenary session entitled "Trust, privacy and governance during pandemics and disasters".⁵ As at 9 December, the video had been viewed more than 600 times on the channel, and more than 5,800 times on Twitter, with 47 retweets and 109 likes.

E. Social media presence

11. The celebrations for the third Day had a significant presence on social media. Once again, a specific hashtag, "Stats Day 2020" (#StatsDay2020), was used to promote awareness of the event and help users to find and disseminate related messages. The hashtag was heavily used to track activities by national statistical

⁴ Available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=427P9NKX9wM.

⁵ Available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJRg6eaDq_Q.

offices and other partners around the world. More specifically, it was used in more than 2,500 tweets. The top five contributors that used the hashtag contributed to the some 1,500 retweets, which allowed for greater outreach and more engagement, providing a very significant impression⁶ of the event in the Twitter sphere.

12. Overall, the third Day generated significant traffic to the Division's Twitter account (@UNStats). In particular, organic tweet impressions ticked up to 38,300 on 20 October, the highest in that month. The video remarks by the Secretary-General on the Day were the top media tweet on the Division's account, garnering some 7,000 impressions and 1,300 media views. The hashtag has been used to amplify the messages of the Day by several organizations. The European Commission and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) used it, generating a combined total of close to 700 retweets.

III. Country activities

13. Overall, owing to the pandemic, activities to celebrate the Day were more focused on virtual events. However, events were planned by national statistical offices, statistical associations, universities and other partners in more than 100 countries and areas.⁷ They included virtual meetings, podcasts, online surveys and launches of data portals and publications. A global event organized by the Division aimed at bringing the global statistical community together on the Day was a virtual run around the world. Community members were invited to share their runs through an online platform.

14. The Day was used in many countries and areas as an opportunity to raise awareness about the work of national statistical offices and the value of trusted data connecting the world. Some reported the results of recent surveys or censuses and released new statistics of interest to the general public as a way to draw media attention. In some countries, there was outreach from Heads of State to national statisticians to share congratulatory messages honouring civil servants and statisticians. In one country, the national statistical office signed a cooperation agreement with a university. Another national statistical office expressed thanks to citizens for placing their trust in the national statistical system through a media campaign. Another country surveyed heads of national statistical offices and organizations and presented the results using an online platform. In one country, national statisticians gathered for in-person activities and to hold a special celebration on the Day to promote high-quality statistics that are indispensable, trustable, reliable and impartial. Celebrations there were launched by the Vice-Minister of Finance. Some countries held virtual panel discussions on the importance of reliable data for policymaking in specific domains, such as water or environment. In others, local newspapers included stories about the celebrations. Promotional videos were produced by some national statistical offices on the theme of the Day.

15. In many countries, the observance of the Day was also linked to a national or regional statistics day celebration, such as African Statistics Day or Caribbean Statistics Day, or to the anniversary of the establishment of the national statistical office.

⁶ An "impression" is defined as the number of times that a user is served a tweet in timeline or search results.

⁷ Based on information available to the Division as at 3 December 2020.

IV. Activities by international or regional organizations, academia and the private sector

16. More than 20 international and regional entities observed the Day. Activities included the organization of seminars and the release of publications and press releases by heads of organizations or chief statisticians. In addition, activities were organized by universities and local or regional associations. They included webinars focusing on the theme of trusted data. Seven private sector entities shared information about activities planned to mark the Day, including podcasts, social media posts and the inclusion of the Day in trivia quizzes.

V. Conclusions

17. Amid the global pandemic, trusted data have never been as important. The focus in 2020 on connecting the world with data that can be trusted proved to be very timely, with the world grappling with an unprecedented amount of data on the dynamics of the pandemic. The value of the Day is not measured simply by the number of posts or celebrations, but by the in-depth discussions carried out on the value of trusted data and the increased awareness of the role that national statistical offices play in guiding the world on this path.

18. Given the decision by the General Assembly to celebrate the Day every five years, the Division will continue to maintain the Day website and update it with information from partners as it becomes available. Preparations for the celebration of the fourth Day, in 2025, will begin in 2024, when the Commission will again consider the agenda item, in accordance with its multi-year programme.

VI. Action to be taken by the Statistical Commission

19. **The Commission is invited to take note of the present report.**
