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Background document
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**Items for discussion and decision: data and indicators for the 2030 Agenda
for Sustainable Development**

**Preliminary report on the results of the second round of the survey on the
implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan
for Sustainable Development Data**

Prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division, PARIS21 and the The World Bank

Preliminary report on the results of the second round of the survey on the implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data

United Nations Statistics Division

PARIS21

The World Bank

February 2023

Introduction

This background document presents a preliminary report of the results of the second round of the survey on the implementation of the CTGAP. The survey was conducted by the World Bank, the United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD), and PARIS21, with the aim of informing actions by decision makers and international partners to implement, monitor, and finance the CTGAP.

The High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development decided in February 2021 to assess the situation regarding the financing and implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data (CTGAP) through a survey of national statistical offices, and to use the results of the survey to inform any changes to the Plan. In accordance to this decision, a first round of the survey was conducted in 2021, and a second round was launched in November 2022.

The survey built on the experience of the Survey of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) during COVID-19 and of the first Survey on the Implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan, and was aimed to identify challenges, priorities, and constraints as NSOs continue to build on their response to the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, monitor progress along the strategic areas of the CTGAP, and explore capacity and resource needs and priorities of NSOs to inform action by the international statistical community, including the Clearinghouse for Financing Development Data and the World Bank's Global Data Facility.

The survey was conducted during December 2022 and January 2023. It was sent to 195 National Statistical Offices, of which 87 submitted a response. This included 29 responses from high-income countries, 26 from upper-middle-income countries, and 32 from low and lower-middle-income countries.

This report provides a summary of the survey results and the distribution of responses by geographic region, including Central and Southern Asia, Eastern Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Northern Africa and Western Asia, Oceania, and Sub-Saharan Africa. The participation of National Statistical Offices in is greatly appreciated, as the information provided is essential to guide global statistical capacity development efforts and to advance the implementation of the CTGAP.

The following is a short overview of key preliminary findings. A complete report of the results will be published online soon.

Preliminary findings

Most statistical operations that had to be postponed due to COVID-19 have been resumed. Since the declaration of COVID-19 as a global pandemic in March 2020, two thirds of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) had to stop or postpone the field work of censuses or major survey programs. However, as of December 2022 - January 2023, almost 80% of NSOs that had to suspend census or survey field work had already resumed it. In other words, most of the statistical operations that had to be postponed due to COVID-19 have been successfully resumed. This information shows that despite the disruptions caused by the pandemic, NSOs have been able to adapt and continue their work, which is critical for the generation of reliable and timely statistical information.

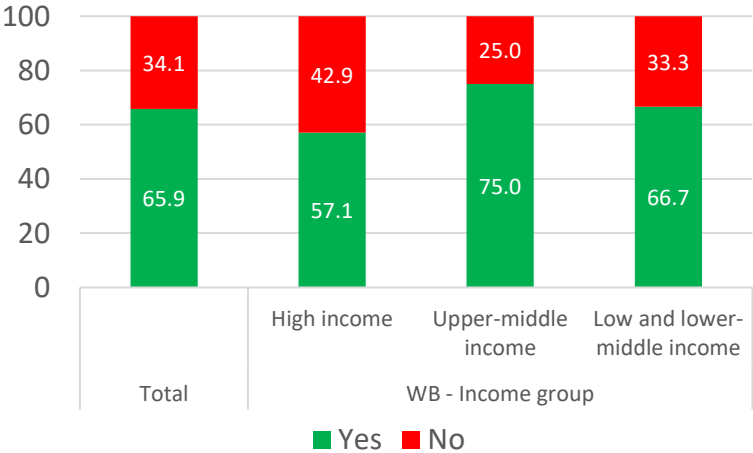


Figure 1. Since the COVID-19 pandemic was declared in March 2020, did you have to stop or postpone the field work of any census or major survey programmes?

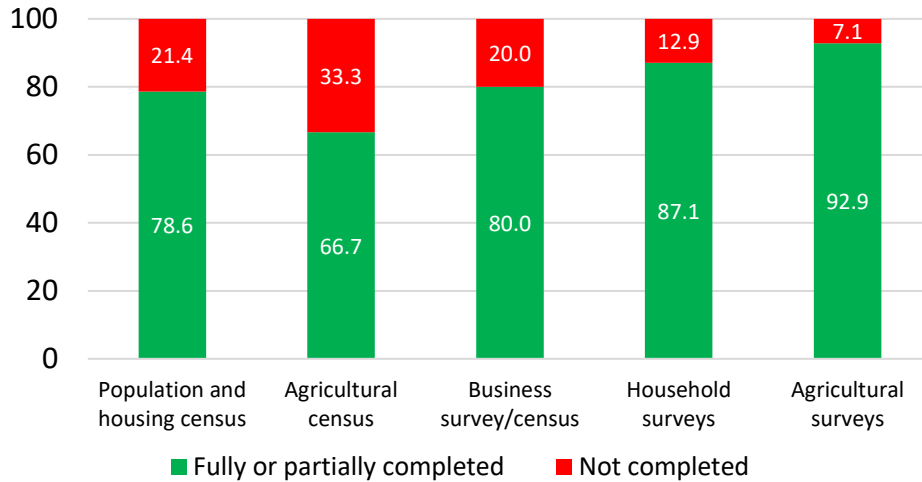


Figure 2. Have you already conducted the field work of the census or survey programmes?

Most respondents consider their NSOs well prepared to effectively respond to another major disruption like COVID-19 – but preparedness is lower in LMIC. In general, NSOs in low- and lower-middle-income countries have less confidence in their ability to handle another disruption like COVID-19, with only 22% reporting strong confidence in their preparedness and 16% not believing they are prepared to respond effectively to another similar disruption.

NSOs in high-income countries are more likely to allow staff to work from home or remotely, with 72% allowing all staff to work at least part of their time from home (in comparison to 25% in low- and lower-middle-income countries). Additionally, only 25% of NSOs in low- and lower-middle-income countries have specific mandates or recommendations regulating the modalities for their staff to work from home, compared to the higher percentage of NSOs in high-income countries.

This information highlights the disparities in preparedness and remote work policies between NSOs in different income countries, which can have significant implications for the ability of NSOs to respond effectively to future disruptions.

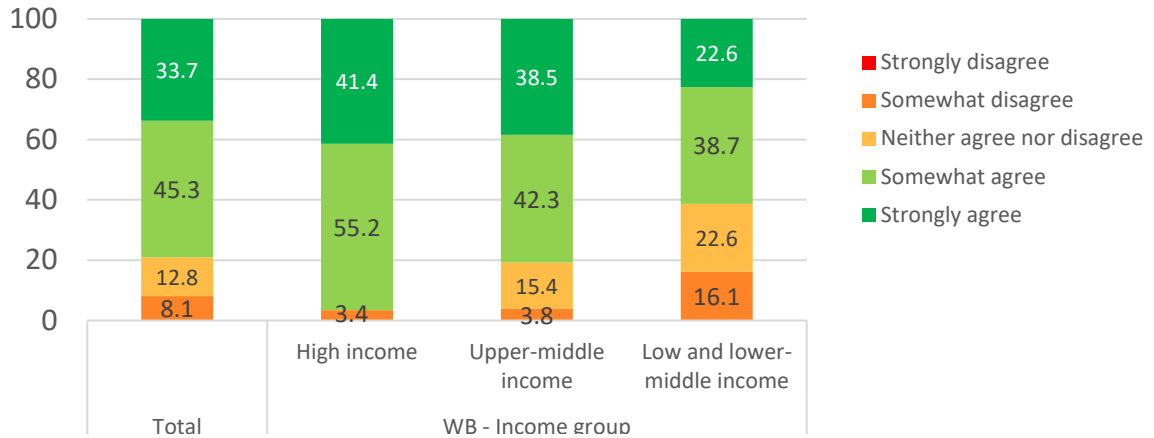


Figure 3. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "In 2022, my organization is well prepared to effectively respond to another major disruption to regular operations, similar to the recent COVID-19 pandemic"?



Figure 4. Do you have specific mandates or recommendations regulating the modality with which the NSO staff are allowed to work from home?

Climate change and environment rank as the top new measurement challenges among NSOs.

According to the responses to the survey, 60% of NSOs consider climate change as one of their biggest reporting measurement challenges, with 44.4% also mentioning the environment as a challenging topic. In more traditional domains such as education, population, health, and work and employment, measurement and reporting are less challenging for NSOs. This highlights the need for increased attention and capacity development support in the fields of climate change and environment statistics, which often require the use of non-traditional data sources, such as geospatial information.

While progress has been made in promoting gender balance in NSOs, there is still a significant gender gap, particularly in LMIC. The data indicates that one third of the NSOs that participated in the survey have a gender-balanced composition of staff, with staff gender balance being more typical in NSOs of high-income countries. Among the remaining two thirds, more NSOs have a predominantly female staff (46%) than predominantly male (22%). In addition, the survey shows that in low- and middle-income countries, fewer women occupy leadership positions, with only a small portion of such positions (up to 20%) occupied by women in most NSOs (57%). In contrast, in one third of NSOs in high-income countries, at least 60% of management positions are held by women. These facts warrant increased attention and support to address the underlying barriers and promote greater gender equality in National Statistical Offices, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

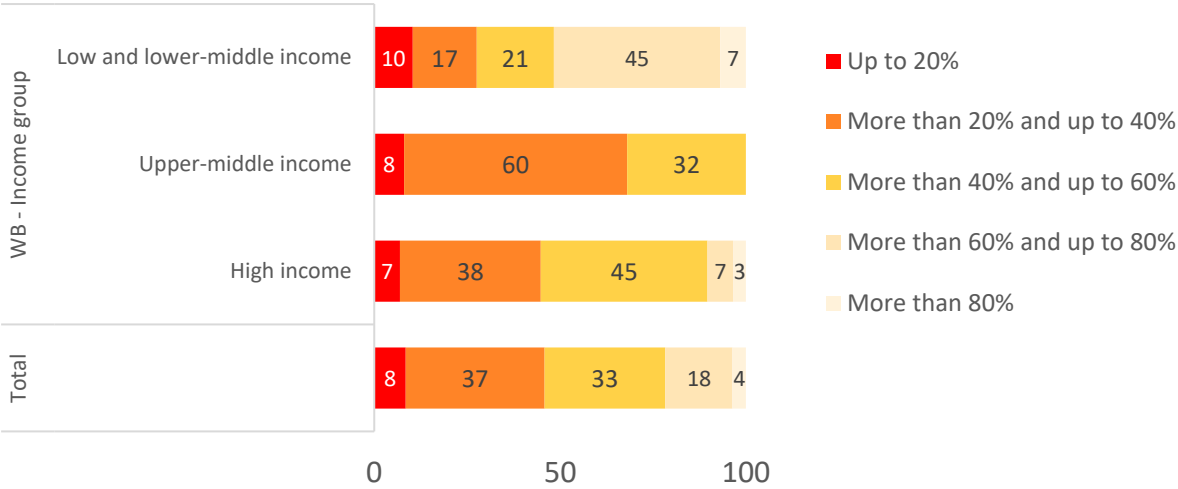


Figure 5. Of the total number of staff indicated above, what is the share are male staff?

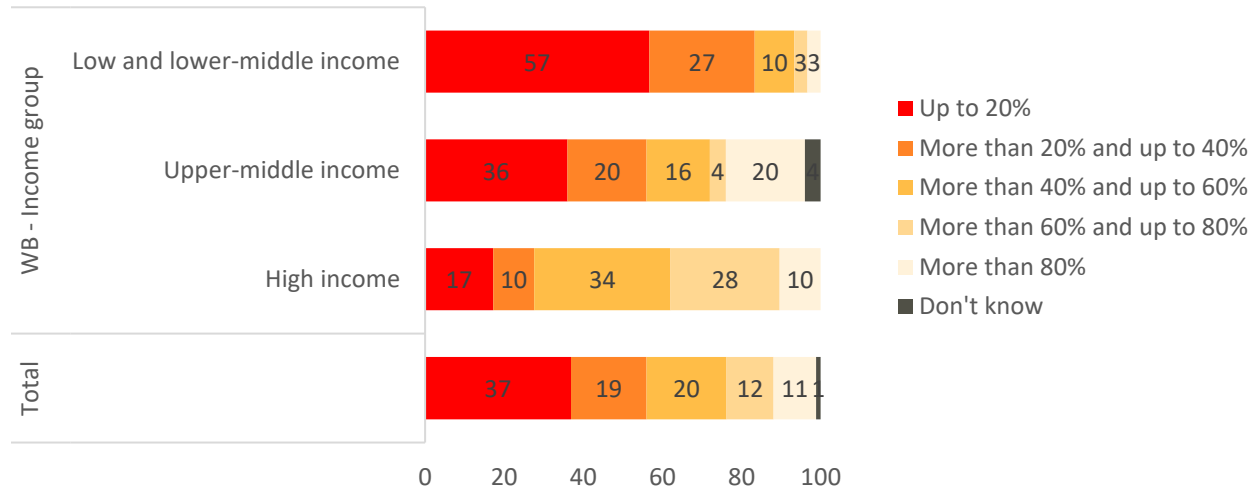


Figure 6. What percentage of your staff in managerial positions are women?

The work programs of only 1 in 9 NSOs globally are fully funded, with larger gap in LMIC, while about half of NSOs expect funding situation to improve in the next fiscal year. More than half of NSOs in low and lower-middle income countries report a funding gap of more than 40%. However, there is a general sense that the funding situation will either remain stable or improve in the next fiscal year.

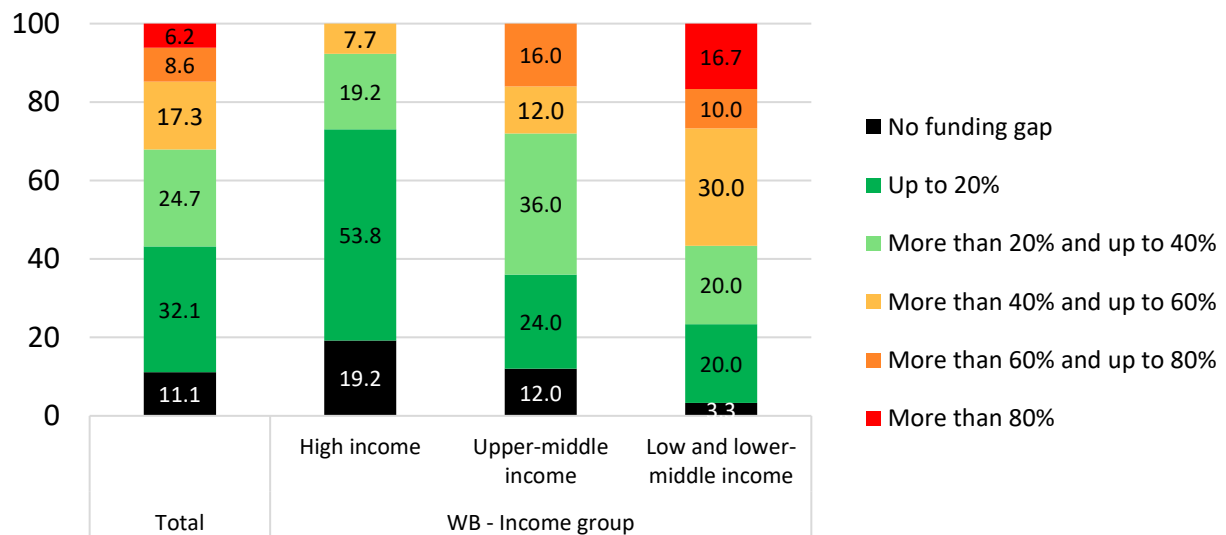


Figure 7. Thinking about the current funding situation of your work program, how big is the funding gap? (% of total funding needed)

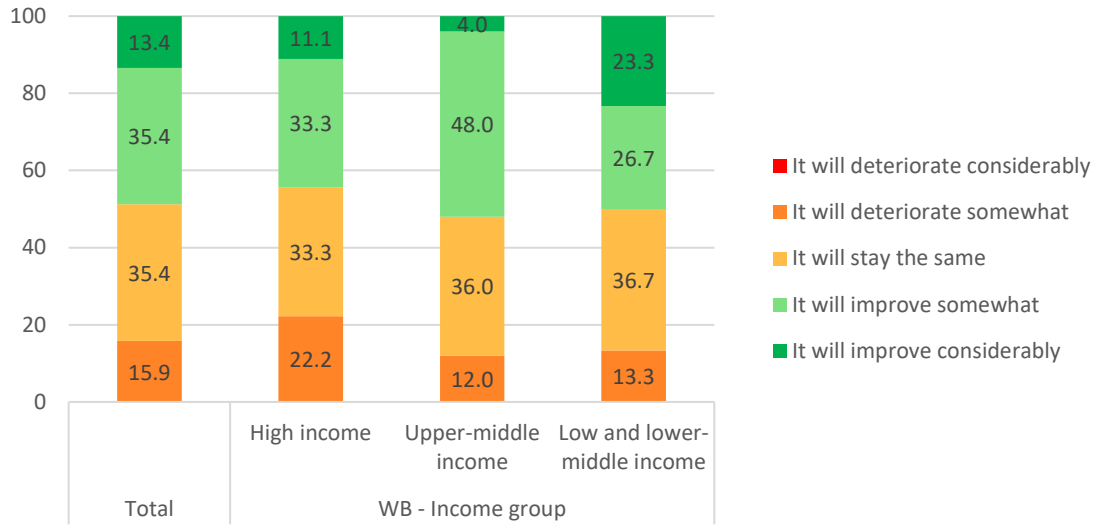


Figure 8. How do you expect your funding situation to change in the next fiscal year?

Most NSOs face moderate or severe shortages in financial resources and training/capacity development resources. Almost 90 percent of all NSOs that responded to the survey indicated that they face a gap in financial resources that prevents them from responding to the demand for statistical outputs. This was particularly acute in the case of low- and lower-middle income countries. A similar picture emerged when considering needs for training and capacity development.

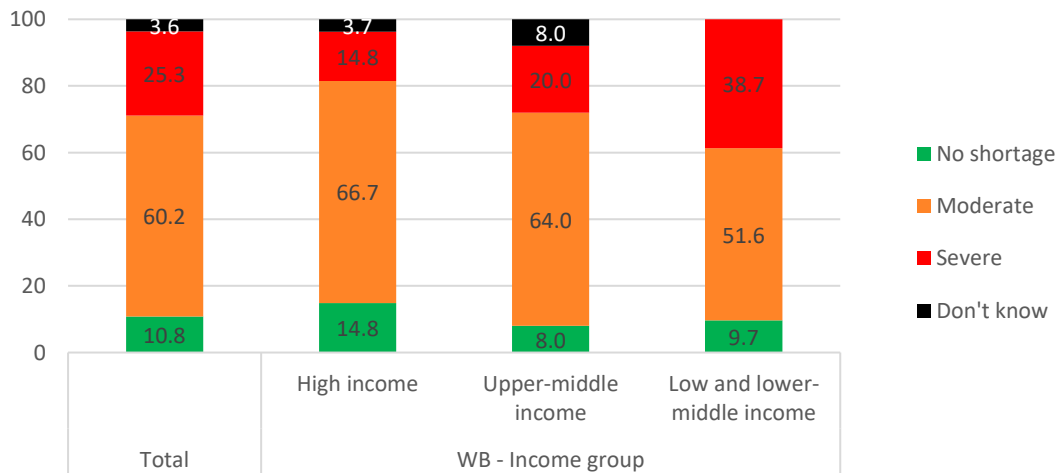


Figure 9. Does your organisation currently face a shortage in the following resources to respond to demand for statistical outputs? - Financial resources

Just over 20 percent of NSOs find it easy to hire new staff with adequate skillsets while few NSOs consider pay levels at their organizations competitive with the market. The majority of NSOs face challenges in finding employees with the necessary skills, although the level of difficulty in hiring competent staff varies greatly between countries and by staff role. Specifically, NSOs in low- and lower-middle income countries are more likely to struggle to offer competitive salaries to statisticians and methodologists, with 37% feeling that their remuneration is not competitive and 17% believing that it is relatively uncompetitive.

In contrast, in high-income countries, only 3.4% of NSOs believe that their salaries for statisticians and methodologists are not competitive at all, and 27% see their pay as somewhat uncompetitive. From these facts, we can conclude that the level of difficulty in hiring qualified staff varies greatly between NSOs in different income countries, with remuneration being a significant factor, particularly in low- and lower-middle-income countries. This underscores the need for targeted efforts to attract and retain skilled staff.

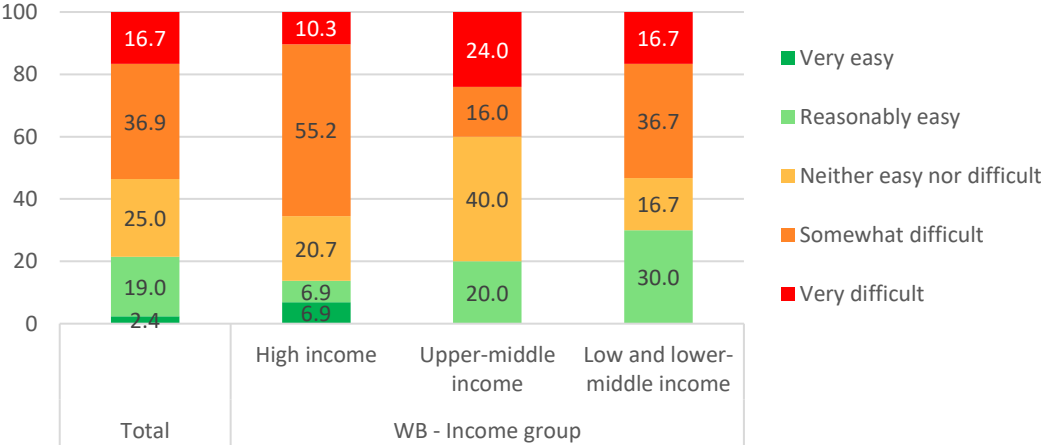


Figure 10. Overall, how easy was it to recruit new staff with the required skillsets in the last year?

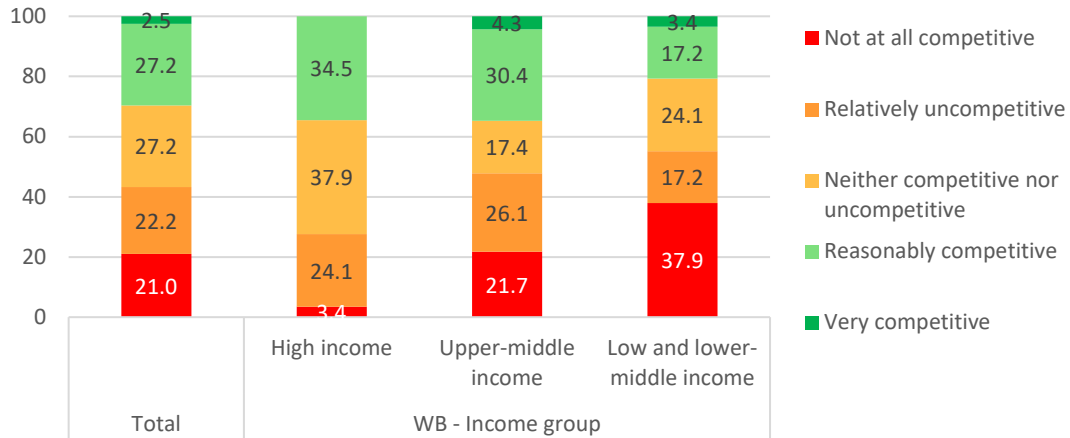


Figure 11. Remuneration: How competitive are the levels of remuneration offered by your office for the following job categories? - Statisticians, methodologists (ISCO88: 212)

The use of administrative data has a highly prominent role in the strategic direction of NSOs. According to the survey, the use of administrative data among NSOs has increased significantly over the last 3 years. Furthermore, the vast majority of NSOs consider administrative data a priority area in which to expand capacity. This trend holds across all income levels, highlighting the growing recognition of the value and potential of administrative data for statistical production. Implications for capacity development efforts include the need for targeted investments in the development of technical expertise, data governance frameworks, and data sharing agreements to ensure the effective and ethical use of administrative data for statistical purposes.

Preliminary conclusions

The second survey on the implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan allowed National Statistical Offices (NSOs) to voice their capacity development challenges and needs with regard to resilience and preparedness. The survey has helped to uncover emerging challenges in meeting new data demands in the fields of climate and environment and highlighted consistent limitations financing for statistical activities.

To address these challenges, it may be beneficial to keep track of them to understand the evolving issues faced by NSOs. However, one lesson learned from the low response rate is that the timing of the survey can be improved to avoid overlapping with NSOs' end-of-year activities. Moreover, the implementation of the survey could benefit from better consultation with regional partners in future rounds.

Overall, the survey provided valuable insights into the implementation of the CTGAP, and the challenges faced by NSOs, which can inform actions by decision-makers and international partners to support and strengthen NSOs' capacity to produce timely, accurate, and relevant statistics for evidence-based policymaking.