

First UN World Data Forum for Cape Town

Data leaders from government, business, science and civil society to collaborate on challenges and initiatives in Cape Town, 15 - 18 January 2017, at the inaugural United Nations World Data Forum.



Image by 123RF

Over 1,000 data experts including from national statistical offices, the private sector, international organisations, the scientific and academic communities, and civil society organisations, as well as political leaders and sustainable development advocates, will attend. Speakers will be posted online as they are confirmed.

The United Nations World Data Forum will spur the exchange of innovative ideas and data solutions through a range of keynote statements, presentations, panel discussions, knowledge sharing and learning spaces, innovation labs, exhibits and digital events.

Key challenges to be addressed include:

- Launching new approaches to strengthen capacity for better data.
- Spurring innovation and synergies across data ecosystems, building bridges between official statistical systems, the private sector, and the geo-spatial information and scientific communities.
- Counting minorities and vulnerable groups to “leave no one behind” and ensure the protection of human rights.
- Understanding the world through data, including data literacy, data visualization and data journalism.
- Developing sound data principles, standards and governance mechanisms to address trade-offs and incentives around openness and transparency, privacy and confidentiality, data-sharing.
- The way forward: a global action plan for data based on global, regional and national partnerships; consolidating initiatives launched and solutions proposed to improve data for sustainable development.

“We cannot achieve what we cannot measure. 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 agreed by world leaders at the UN in September 2015.

“Better data is needed to track progress and inform policy decisions from the local to the global levels. Rapid expansion in new sources of data is creating large-scale opportunities for innovative solutions, which need to be integrated with strengthened official data mechanisms and structures,” the press release read.

The first UN World Data Forum will be hosted by the Government of South Africa and Statistics South Africa, with support from the Statistics Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

A number of partners - from governments, the private sector, civil society, the UN system and the scientific and academic communities - are collaborating to organise 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'.

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