



# COUNTING PEOPLE TO MAKE PEOPLE COUNT

*Better DATA is needed to ensure that NO-ONE is left BEHIND!*



Photo by IISD/Kiara Worth ([www.iisd.ca/undata/forum1/17jan.html](http://www.iisd.ca/undata/forum1/17jan.html))

***The plenary session served as a platform for the political message that Agenda 2030 is not achievable unless we have more and better quality data. The ‘leave no-one behind’ agenda gives a clear message – if you want to know who is left behind you have to count people. You must have population data if you want to know who is missing. National averages won’t tell you, by definition, who is left out of progress. Disaggregated data is necessary to know who has been included, and who hasn’t.***

The session had a large and eminent panel, who spoke to the needs of various interest groups, gave real-world examples of how disaggregation of data is possible, and the positive impact of the availability of disaggregated data on addressing the issues faced by human beings who are so often hidden behind “the average”.

Human beings are more than vulnerable or special interest – I am not my age, my gender, my disability, my employment status. Policies, services and datasets tend to deal with a particular aspect of people, focusing on only one aspect of the whole. SDG target 5.2 relates to violence against women, and it is excellent that this scourge is being highlighted and reported on. However, there appears to be a lack of data related to older

women’s experience of domestic violence. Both males and females are experiencing elder abuse, yet there is very little data that addresses these issues.

We are complex human beings. Issues like age, gender and disability intersect in our lives. A life-course approach is needed for the setting of targets, and the measurement of these targets across data systems, within which we can integrate different datasets about different aspects of people’s lives.

There is an urgent need for communication about Agenda 2030 across all stakeholder groups. How we communicate is possibly more important than what we communicate. Those who are furthest behind, i.e. the 20% of the world’s population that fall into the lowest quintile, must be kept at the forefront of people’s minds. If we are truly committed to achieving Agenda 2030, then those who are furthest away in terms of the attainment of the goals should be prioritised.

***Data is an asset. There is a wealth of data available; sufficient data, in fact, to provide the type of disaggregation needed to inform the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The statistical fraternity, however, still seems to be stuck on the 20th-century concept of the average. A paradigm shift is needed to ensure that the available data is mined to the level of granularity required by the SDGs to ensure that no-one is left behind.***

# FINDING THE FACTS!

## Capturing the 21<sup>st</sup> century through data and algorithms

**The aim of this panel discussion was to look at the implications of changes in the data landscape and the rise of algorithmic analysis for the measurement, monitoring and promotion of societal development, including the following questions:**

- **In 10-15 years and beyond, how will the health and progress of societies be measured, monitored, and promoted?**
- **What new and old indicators (social cohesion and trust, societal resilience, etc.?) will be produced, how, by and for whom?**
- **Under which institutional and legal arrangements, in a context where private companies hold and often legally own most personal data?**
- **What are the risks of 'elite capture' associated with this new ecosystem and how can they be mitigated, including through certified Open algorithms and privacy preserving technologies?**
- **What are the implications for the official statistical and international development communities?**

Dan Rundee, moderator of the first plenary session on day two, opened by asking three important questions: as statisticians and data analysts, why do we measure things? Do we have the right tools to measure things? And what do we do about the conundrum of private data? The role of the panel was to discuss the implications of changes in the data landscape and the rise of algorithmic analysis for the measurement, monitoring and promotion of societal development.

Ola Rosling, president and co-founder of the Gapminder

Foundation, was the first panelist to tackle these questions, with an impassioned plea that we strive to create a world view that is fact based and understandable. Most people hold deep misconceptions about what is actually going on in the world around us. **Asking the audience to raise their hands in response to three multiple choice questions, Ola showed how even data professionals such as ourselves hold views of the world that are not based on fact, but a rather shaped by our cultural biases and what we were taught as children.**

Migration and mortality was the next topic of the session as Dr Pali Lehohla, Statistician-General of Statistics South Africa, provided an insightful look at migration patterns in South Africa.

**Migration trends are a function of age and race group in South Africa, with young black South Africans often migrating to Gauteng and Western Cape in search of jobs. Much older black South Africans move back to their provinces of origin once they retire, with white retirees moving to the coastal province of Western Cape.**

Emmanuel Letouzé, the Director and Co-founder of Data-Pop Alliance, provided a fascinating look at the theory of measurement. Why do we measure? And whom do we measure for? The final panelist, Anne Jellema, Chief Executive of the World Wide Web Foundation, pointed out the risk that the rise of big data could result in elite capture. **More and more socially relevant data is being held by the private sector, rather than the government, reducing citizen rights and control over data.**



Photo by IISD/Kiara Worth ([www.iisd.ca/undata/forum1/17jan.html](http://www.iisd.ca/undata/forum1/17jan.html))

# OPEN DATA: INFORMING NATIONAL STATISTICS

***The Open Definition defines open data as “data that can be freely used, re-used and redistributed by anyone -- subject only, at most, to the requirement to attribute and share alike”. This openness in data is a key ingredient to ensure its real-time use, says Mr Philip Tigo of Kenya, who was one of the more than 100 delegates and experts attending the session on Open Data and National Statistics.***



The usefulness of open data was demonstrated when it helped deal with challenges presented by climate change in Kenya. “Open data (from various data sources) was used to analyse and develop responses to the effects of the El Niño,” says Mr Tigo. This is just one example of the myriad applications possible with open data. Dr Eric Swanson of Open Data Watch argued that National Statistical Offices (NSOs) have an interest in and responsibility for open data. Governments need to realise the need for transparency, as open data will enable governments to reach the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To honour citizens’ entitlement to public information, relevant statistics should be made available to all on an impartial basis.

Experts attending the session identified several challenges that need to be eliminated to enable NSOs to fully embrace open data. These included: the lack of political will and support, capacity, and prohibitive legislative frameworks.

Solutions to challenges prohibiting data openness were proposed:

- *NSOs should make microdata from censuses available for further analysis;*
- *Governments should partner with civil society organisations in making data open;*
- *Governments should engage in legislative reform and modify legislative frameworks that makes data*

*openness difficult, while ensuring data privacy and confidentiality;*

- *NSOs should increase their open data inventories.*

Dr José Rosero, Deputy Director of the Division of Statistics at the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations and former head of Ecuador’s National Institute of Censuses and Statistics, says before Ecuador became one of the leading open data countries in South America in 2016, the country faced some challenges, including the fact that the role of the Systems of National Accounts (SNA) coordinator was not fully implemented; some members of the national statistical system (NSS) did not comply with open data principles; and there was inefficient management of web publishing.

Ecuador was able to rise to its current position by implementing the following responses: improved website, a new dissemination tool to improve access, and improved links to other NSS members, amongst other initiatives.

However, there are many other countries that still face various challenges towards making data open. Ms Yeama Thompson of Sierra Leone detailed how in her country legislative reform still needed to be completed and emphasised the need for capacity development to ensure open data, and for a multi-partner system of statistical production to enable better measurement of progress on Agenda 2030.

# COMMUNITY-BASED DATA COLLECTION

## A VEHICLE FOR BUILDING TRUST

***The first ever UN World Data Forum has been characterised by the sharing of lived experiences of using data to improve lives. In this session, delegates from Uganda, Zimbabwe and Kenya shared their experiences of the benefits and challenges of community-based data collection.***

The Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) runs a government programme to ensure that communities generate, own and use their own data for their own benefit. This programme has been in operation since 2006/7. Four registers, namely the Community register, Household register, General Parish Information, and Micro Finance and Cooperatives are used to generate data at household, parish and sub-county levels.

Communities are trained in data generation and collection and equipped with computers to capture data. Where there are challenges, e.g. inconsistent supply of electricity, solutions (e.g. solar power) are found and implemented. One person, preferably the political head, coordinates the data register.

In Zimbabwe, the initiative was started by an organisation that recognised that data should be readily available to inform development interventions even before the development agenda

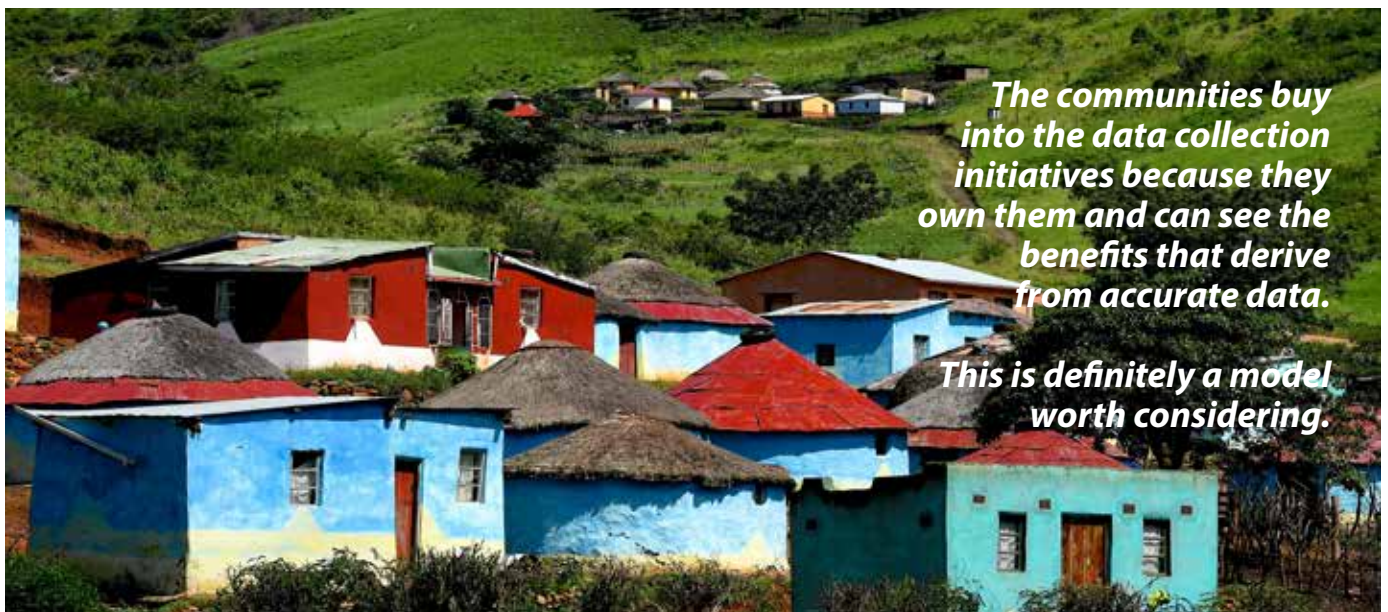
has been set. ZimStats was consulted for guidance on questionnaire development and to ensure the comparability of data across data sets.

The Electronic Village Register (EVAR) is a tool for continuous recording of selected information using handheld devices. Traditional authorities are mandated by an Act of Parliament to maintain a register of names – this has now been broadened to include demographic, socio-economic and environmental data.

The project initially focused on rural areas. The intention is to make data collection a norm, part of the community lifestyle and culture. The data collection, analysis and utilisation process needs to be integrated into existing institutions. Despite the inclusion and enthusiasm shown by government ministries at the beginning of this project, that has now waned and needs to be rekindled.

The “Tweeting Chief” as he is internationally known manages 42 tribes in his area and uses Twitter as a cheap means of communication (hence the nickname). Community data collection has shown that there are 12 000 households and almost 50 000 persons in the area, as opposed to the 7 500 households as per the last Kenyan census.

Using this data, he was able to contact an international NGO and advocate for the installation of water filters for all the households in the village, thereby meeting Goal 6, which speaks to clean water and sanitation.







# DO STATISTICIANS KNOW HOW TO PARTY?

*Disclaimer: the person writing this article is not a statistician, so any claims in this article are not supported by statistics of any kind; much of this is pure supposition. The conclusions are, however, based on direct observations and photographic evidence.*



*Do statisticians know how to party? I am not sure if that question has ever been asked. Google doesn't know the answer, and Google is supposed to know everything...*

There is a supposition amongst the general public that statisticians are scary people. They work with numbers all day; they understand concepts like chi-square and regression and why correlation does not equal causation; they speak a language all their own that is often incomprehensible to the man on the street. They are so much more than ordinary human beings.

So much so that no one has even bothered to ask (according to Google anyway) if statisticians know how to party; I guess everyone assumes that they don't.

The above hypothesis was proven wrong last night at the Gala Dinner, which was sponsored by MTN, held to celebrate the first-ever United Nations World Data Forum (UNWDF), being hosted by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) in the City of Cape Town. After the formal proceedings had run their course, Yvonne Chaka Chaka, a true child of Africa and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, took to the floor.

The crowd of statisticians were entertained by the vocal stylings of the Statistician-General, Dr Pali Lehohla, the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division, Mr Stefan Schweinfest (who was resplendent in one of the SG's yellow suits), and Deputy Director-General, Mr Risenga Maluleke.

Ms Chaka Chaka soon had the crowd on their feet and dancing to the beat of Africa. The award for outstanding dancer of the night goes to Mr Ola Rosling from Gapminder, who took to the stage for a dance-off. In the words of Ms Chaka Chaka: "That white boy can dance" – high praise indeed.

***South Africa - Stats SA have once again delivered a world-class conference, complete with entertainment so engaging it got this group of over 1000 data enthusiasts jiving.***

The UNWDF drum was given to Director Schweinfest to hand over to the next host country, which is yet to be identified. Last night will be a hard act to follow...

# DATAVoices

***Delegates at the historic United Nations World Data Forum, being hosted in South Africa at Cape Town's CTICC, share their view of this innovative union***



**WANDA GUMA**  
**CEO and Editor in Chief,**  
**Ishishini Lam**  
**SOUTH AFRICA**

***How did you hear about the 1st World Data Forum?***

I was actually informed by an associate of mine - I am based in Cape Town.

***What have you learnt from being here?***

I have basically learnt that data is more than what we actually know it to be. It is important to have data with integrity as part of the ecosystem due to the fact that data is used by all industries. New innovations, systems and processes and also the fact that different agencies have learnt to collaborate with others in sharing and the cross verification of the authenticity and integrity of data that they provide.

***Have you heard about the International Population Conference (IPC) taking place in South Africa, Cape Town?***

Yes, I heard about the IPC at this conference. There is a very high possibility that I will attend this conference as the topics of discussion are very relevant to our readers.



**YOKA IKOMBO**  
**DIRECTOR OF CO-ORDINATION OF**  
**THE NATIONAL STATISTICS OFFICE**  
**CONGO, BRAZZAVILLE**

***How did you hear about the 1st World Data Forum?***

I was in Abidjon in December 2016 at the meeting of Director General STATCOM.

***What have you learnt from being here?***

I learnt that some countries have developed a lot of innovative products to collect data. Comment certains pays utilisent les big data et les données ouvertes.

***Have you heard of the IPC?***

Yes, of course - I am planning to attend. If I could submitted an abstract it would have been under theme six - EDUCATION AND LABOUR FORCE



# DATA POETS AND KNOWLEDGE GARDENS

## *Data Republica Goes Global*

**Data Republica is a digital platform oriented to connect citizens to data and to strengthen the skills of the development actors for evidence-based decision-making and communication based on data, connecting the dots and producing inputs to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.**

In [www.datarepública.org](http://www.datarepública.org), it is possible to see which institutions (governmental and non-state) give and use data related to the SDGs at the national level, identify existing tools to work with big data, share articles and stories based on data and visualise them in innovative ways, and access online courses and content to learn about data and the 2030 Agenda for Latin America.

Data Republica took the opportunity of being at an international conference to launch their tool to a wider audience. Working with National Statistical Offices and other experts, 1185 data sources that speak to the monitoring of the SDGs have been identified for Mexico, Columbia and Costa Rica. While the bulk of these data sources (978) are from the public sector, other stakeholder groups are being engaged to ensure that as much data as possible is made available.

Data gaps were identified by an interdisciplinary group

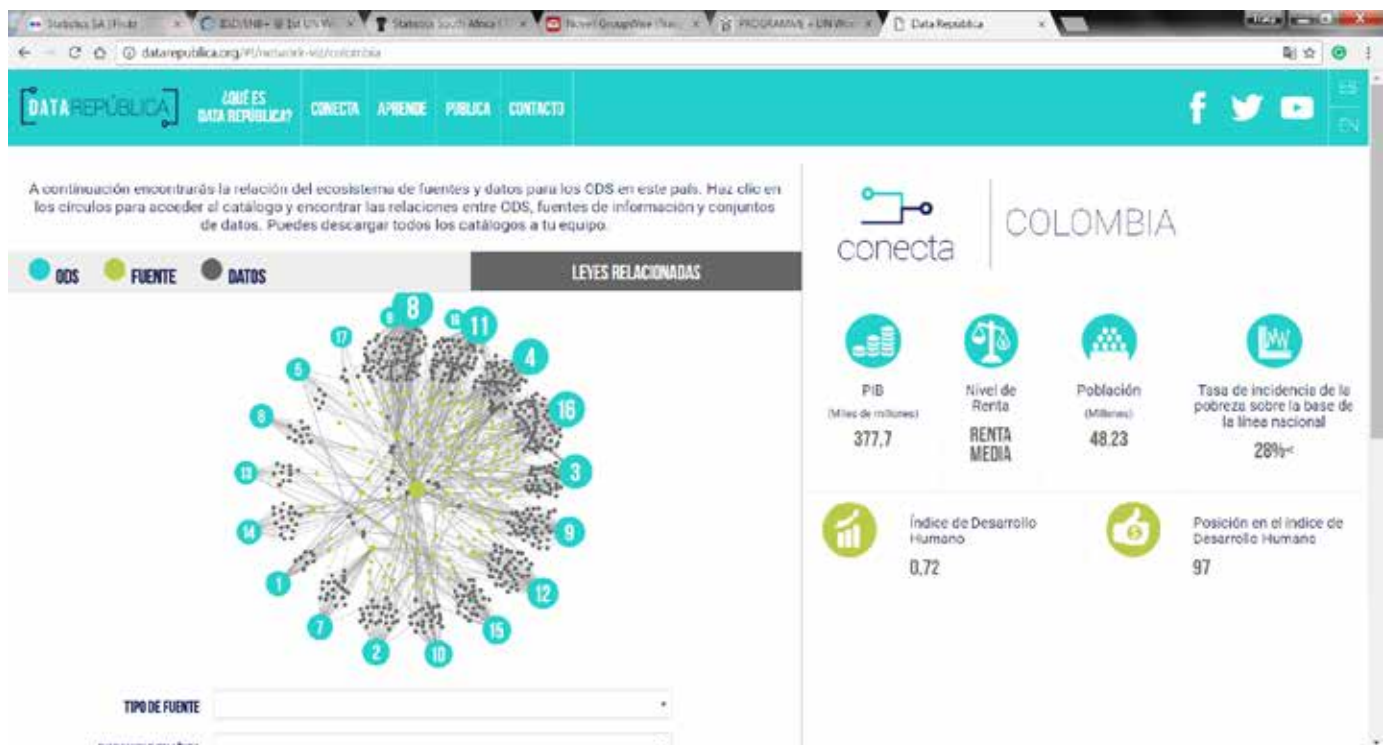
using multi-dimensional levels. The mapping of these data sets onto the SDGs is the start of establishing the data ecosystem needed to monitor the SDGs. Development financing of the data revolution is another area that the tool helps to address.

The team at Data Republica believes that data producers need to be data poets – people who take big chunks of information, simplify and visualise it, and present concise information in a story that everyone can understand.

Knowledge gardens need to be developed – centralised spaces where experts from various fields can come together in a multi-disciplinary approach to build on existing platforms. **Eventually, everyone should be both users and producers of data.** The panel spoke about the importance of access to data. Data becomes useless if it is not accessible or usable. Citizens should not have to be statisticians to use data.

***Data stories (poetry) and visualisations are two impactful strategies in enabling data literacy amongst citizens.***

Data Republica is open source technology that is accessible to all interested parties. However, it must be used responsibly. It is a tool for collaboration, which is necessary for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.





“Organisation of  
a World Forum  
on Sustainable  
Development Data  
was one of the main  
recommendations the  
UN Secretary-General’s  
Independent Expert  
and Advisory Group  
on Data Revolution  
or Sustainable  
Development.

Twitter: [@UNDataForum](https://twitter.com/UNDataForum)

# The **NUMBERS** Journey in Building a **STATISTICAL** and **DATA** Literate **WORLD!**

*Knowledge through Collaboration = POWER!*

*You Count, I Count... The WORLD Counts!*



***“Statistics is a conduit of TRUST. It is the most publicly transacted currency and therefore has to imbue trust”.***

***Population is not simply a problem of numbers. The growth in Africa’s population in the last decade has not been accompanied by the necessary structural transformation nor has it translated into equitable human development and improved livelihoods. Nearly 50 per cent of Africans still live in poverty even though countries are becoming richer. We are confronted with a global, an African and a South African contemporary population crisis insofar as the population situation in many African countries continues to contribute to or detract from their chances of realising the goals of development, not only for the current generation but also for future generations. Conversely, we still ask the question, how does development affect population growth?***

***Dr Pali Lehohla***  
*Statistician-General of South Africa and Head of Statistics South Africa*



## What you need to know about the World Data Forum

### 1. Conference mobile application

*We have an app! Go to the Google Play Store/App Store, search for Stats SA UNWDF 2017 and install it.*

### 2. Wi-fi connection

*To download the app (and post about the Forum on social media), you need Wi-fi. We have it!*

*UN World Forum*

*Password: @capetown2017*

### 3. Social platforms

*Use #UNDataForum to share your experience of the first ever United Nations World Data Forum*

- Follow @UNDataForum and @StatsSA for regular updates*
- The presentations will be available on SlideShare [www.slideshare.net/StatsSA](http://www.slideshare.net/StatsSA)*
- Videos will be available on the UN DESA Youtube*
- Live Streaming: [www.undataforum.org](http://www.undataforum.org)*
- The presentations will be available on SlideShare: [www.slideshare.net/StatsSA](http://www.slideshare.net/StatsSA)*

### 4. Interpretation units

*These are available outside Auditorium 1. **Please produce your passport/ID to obtain a unit. These are to be returned after use.***

### 5. Find Yourself

*Conference photos are available on the Stats SA flickr account:*

*<https://www.flickr.com/photos/124502081@N02/with/32334613946/>*

*If you have any comments on the newsletter  
please contact the editorial team:  
[tracyd@statssa.gov.za](mailto:tracyd@statssa.gov.za)*