How are national statistical offices contributing to managing the COVID-19 disaster?

Virtual discussion on 10 June 2020 at 14:00 CEST

Background

The current COVID-19 pandemic is undoubtedly leading to significant human and economic losses and impacts, thus fulfilling the criteria to be a "disaster" according to the terms of the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030* (Sendai Framework).

The information needs for managing this disaster are manifold. Decision makers and policy advisers require a wide range of data about health, population, critical infrastructure and the economy. To contain the virus spread and save human lives, policy decisions have to be adaptive and responsive on a daily and weekly basis. They have to be informed by a set of high quality data.

Trustworthy information is also essential for communication to the public and increasing public acceptance of strict protection measures, such as business lockdowns and mobility restrictions, which have many direct and indirect impacts

Data is also needed for measuring the economic and social impacts and to get better prepared for managing similar disasters in the future. This may require adjustments of existing data collections, or in some cases the development of specific surveys.

Against the flood of data from all kinds of sources, official statistics bear the hallmarks of accuracy, reliability, independence, transparency and rigour that make them trustworthy. And now more than ever official statistics have a crucial role to play to ensure that major, life-changing decisions are based on the best available information.

However, National Statistical Offices (NSOs) are facing some challenges in making all the required official statistics available with short time lags and for small-scale analysis. NSOs also are confronted with new tasks, such as being involved in disaster risk analysis and using new data sources, for example mobile phone data.

In recent years, the UN has developed tools to better define the roles of National Statistical Systems in managing disaster risk and in producing the necessary statistics, such as the [Conference of European Statisticians (CES) Recommendations on the Role of Official Statistics in Measuring Hazardous Events and Disasters](#) and the [ESCAP Disaster-related Statistics Framework](#). The current situation provides an opportunity for NSOs to put this guidance into practice, at the same time learning from the current challenges and ensuring they are better prepared if and when other disasters hit in the future. By gathering and disseminating the experiences of NSOs, this moderated panel discussion is facilitating mutual learning, helping all countries to learn from one-another's successes and shortcomings.

Data generated right now and in the near future on the impacts of the COVID-19 disaster are needed for national disaster-risk management, but also provide an important basis for measuring related targets of the 2030 Agenda and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

If you are interested to exchange experience in providing data to help manage COVID-19, please join us for this virtual discussion.

Virtual discussion on 10 June 2020 from 14:00 – 16:00 CEST

Experts from national statistical offices who are directly involved in the production and analysis of data needed for managing the COVID-19 disaster will be invited to share their practical experiences and plans in form of a moderated discussion. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss with the panellists.

The **main objective** of the event is to share NSO's experiences of providing data and other services to help manage the current situation and to discuss plans for assessing the impact, including reporting for measuring the targets of SDGs and the Sendai Framework. This will help in NSOs' planning of next steps in the short-, mid- and long-term and to be better prepared for future events.

Our aim is **not** to discuss measures to keep regular production of statistics ongoing under difficult circumstances caused by measures to contain the virus spread (e.g. difficulties to carry out in-person surveys, NSO staff working from home office etc.).

The selection of **guiding questions** for the discussion is driven by the proposals made by participants in the registration process (see online registration form) and may include:

- Challenges and solutions for producing and disseminating the required data;
- Experiences with existing institutional arrangements;
- Approaches and plans to measure the impacts of this disaster and to make data more fit for purpose in the future;
- Other related activities by NSOs than providing data (e.g. analytical support);
- Use of new data sources (e.g. mobile phone data);
- Main lessons learned.

The **main target audience** for this event are experts and managers from NSOs interested in learning from and sharing of experience about production, analysis and dissemination of information needed for disaster risk management in general and managing the COVID-19 disaster in particular. The event also aims at experts from other parts of the National Statistical System producing relevant data, and at disaster-risk management authorities.

The discussion will complement the country examples on NSOs involvement in managing COVID-19 collected and published at the UNECE platform *COVID-19 and Official Statistics*.

A follow-up event could be organised if wished by participants to cover more topics of interest.

This event is organised in close collaboration with the *UNECE Task Force on Measuring Hazardous Events and Disasters[1]*.

Registration

Participants are invited to register by 1 June 2020 with this online registration form.

The registration form allows to express your interest to participate as panellist and to submit questions which you would like to discuss at the event.

For any questions or comments regarding this event or if you would like to share a national example at the UNECE platform *COVID-19 and Official Statistics*, please contact Mr. Michael Nagy (michael.nagy@un.org).

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[1] Participating in the work of the Task Force are experts of NSOs of Germany, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand and Turkey as well as from European Space Agency (ESA), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), Universidad de Extremadura and World Meteorological Organization (WMO).