

#2030 IS NOW

MAKING DATA COUNT



... for evidence-based decision-making.

In 2021-2022, UN DESA helped put data to the task of effective decision-making, supporting Member States to build their capacities for collecting official data, tapping existing data sources, and developing new ones.

UN DESA ...

- Monitored progress and gaps in global efforts to achieve the SDGs, highlighting the on-going impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Published updated global population estimates that reflect the impact of COVID-19 and collaborated with WHO to estimate global excess mortality from COVID-19.
- Supported Member States' efforts to compile and disseminate crucial, innovative, detailed, disaggregated, and geo-referenced

- data on the pandemic's impact on society, economy, and government and continued to respond to the increasing need for data for decision-making.
- Developed opportunities for members of the international statistical community to connect, coordinate, collaborate, and strengthen capacities, using hybrid approaches where appropriate as events moved back towards in-person networking.

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MAKING DATA COUNT

To respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and other global crises, countries need up-to-date, disaggregated, and fit-for-purpose data and statistics. UN DESA answers this call with its technical expertise in data collection and analysis, global convening power, and capacity development work.

Monitoring progress towards the SDGs

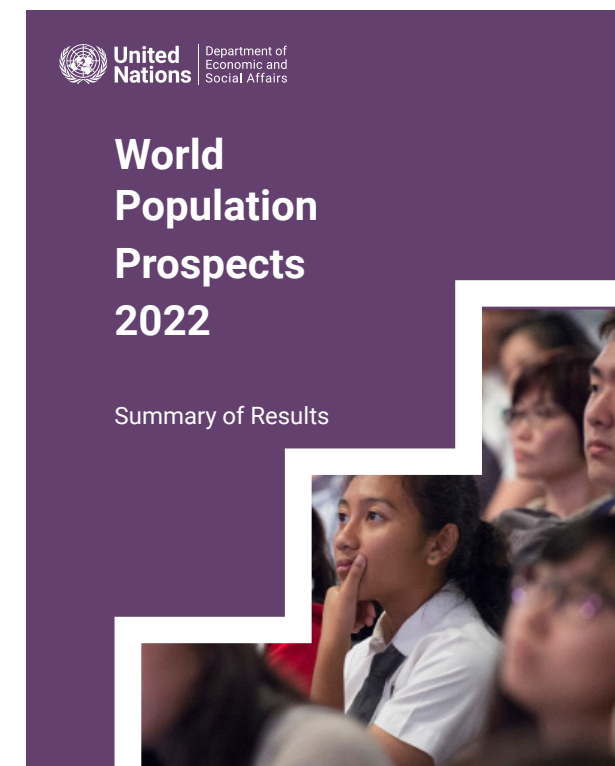
UN DESA led preparation of the annual *Sustainable Development Goals Report*, as central coordinator of the global SDG indicator framework and monitoring process. The *Sustainable Development Goals Report* and other monitoring tools provide policy makers and stakeholders with the latest SDG data to identify areas for targeted policy interventions and enable informed decision-making. The 2022 report demonstrates how COVID-19 continues to disrupt development activities for the SDG implementation across the world and set back years of progress made on the Global Goals. The annual report is based on data from the global SDG indicator framework developed by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG indicators and is prepared in collaboration with over 200 experts from over 50 agencies, funds, and programmes. The annual Sustainable Development Goals Report is among one of UN DESA's most accessed publications.

The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022



Monitoring the growth of the global population

In July 2022, UN DESA launched *World Population Prospects 2022*, the official United Nations population estimates and projections, showing that global population would reach an estimated 8



billion in mid-November 2022. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected all components of population change, including fertility, mortality and migration. Global life expectancy at birth fell to 71.0 years in 2021, down from 72.8 in 2019, due mostly to the impact of COVID-19. The evidence on the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on fertility levels remains mixed. In low- and middle-income countries, the availability of and the demand for contraception, as well as reported numbers of unintended pregnancies and births, have remained relatively stable. In high-income countries, successive waves of the pandemic may have generated short-term fluctuations in numbers of pregnancies and births. The pandemic severely restricted all forms of human mobility, including international migration. Also, the COVID-19

pandemic has affected many data collection operations worldwide. Countries and development partners should give priority to the ongoing 2020 round of national population censuses, as such data provide critical information to inform development planning and to assess progress towards the achievement of the SDGs.

Measuring the full impact of COVID-19 on mortality

In 2021, UN DESA co-convened with WHO the Technical Advisory Group on Covid-19 Mortality Estimates (TAG). In May 2022, estimates based on the TAG's work were launched, finding that 14.9 million excess deaths (range 13.3 million to 16.6 million) were directly or indirectly attributable to COVID-19 between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2021, nearly 3 times the number of deaths officially reported as attributable to COVID-19. The work of the TAG brings to light the full mortality burden of the pandemic and underlines the need to better integrate national health information systems and civil registration and vital statistics systems. UN DESA will continue to support countries in strengthening statistical systems and improving evaluation and analysis of demographic data.

Global excess deaths associated with COVID-19, Jan 2020 - Dec 2021

+14.91 million
Estimated excess mortality

+5.42 million
Reported COVID-19 deaths

0 Baseline: Expected mortality under normal circumstances

Source: World Health Organization, April 2022



Drawing attention to the issue of early adolescent fertility

In 2022, for the first time, UN DESA included estimates of birth rates for adolescents aged 10-14 years in its annual update for SDG Indicator 3.7.2. Reducing adolescent fertility and addressing the multiple factors underlying it are essential for improving sexual and reproductive health and the social and economic well-being of adolescents, but data on fertility among younger adolescents were previously very limited. UN DESA undertook methodological and analytical studies to report reliable estimates for this younger age group. The data show that early adolescent childbearing is much more common in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean than in other parts of the world. Most countries with measurable levels of early fertility recorded a reduction in early adolescent fertility since 2000. The closure of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic raised concerns that adolescent girls could be at increased risk of early marriage or childbearing. Data to assess the impact of COVID-19 on adolescent fertility are not yet available.



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Intensifying international cooperation on data and statistics

UN DESA delivered the World Data Forum in Bern, Switzerland. Now in its third iteration, the forum continues to bring together various professional groups, such as information technology,

geospatial information managers, data scientists, and users. Over 700 in-person participants and more than 7,000 people joined virtually from over 100 countries around the world. The hybrid event along with the online forum platform supported intensifying cooperation between national statistical systems, international organizations, civil society, academia, and the private sector. Among the highlights from the forum are:

- the launch of the Bern Data Compact for the Decade of Action on the Sustainable Development Goals to define the global data ecosystem needed to use data effectively for people, planet, prosperity, and peace;
- the Clearinghouse for Financing Development Data, a new, free online platform providing access to data on 36,000 projects, allowing aid recipients, donors, and the public at large

to understand data financing flows, identify funding gaps, and connect to new communities of experts; and

- the Global Data Facility, a new World Bank-hosted fund to support data and statistics priorities at the global, regional, national, and community levels designed in collaboration with UN DESA.

Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians

Over the past year, the Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians has seen a 70% increase in users. The share of non-UN users has increased by 15 percentage points, a testament to the success of UN DESA's efforts to expand the scope of the mechanism, opening the network to a wider audience. Since



its launch in 2020, the network has attracted close to 2,400 colleagues from the National Statistical Systems (48% of all users), the global UN system (40%), academia and civil society (9%), as well as NGOs (3%). The Global Network users are based in more than 100 countries and are evenly distributed among both geographical and socio-economical regions. The Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians aims to improve coordination and collaboration among peers and organizations, to better connect existing networks and initiatives, and to provide and share information on capacity building efforts globally.

8th Global Forum on Gender Statistics

Reliable statistics on the situation of women and girls relative to men and boys are vital to monitoring progress toward gender equality. Following the successful launch of the *World's Women 2020* publication, UN DESA convened the 8th Global Forum on Gender Statistics, which was held on 30 September and 1 October 2021, with support from the Swiss Government. The Forum brought together approximately 300 experts on gender equality and gender statistics from national, regional, and international statistical offices, other government agencies, international organizations, academia, civil society, media, the

private sector, and the donor community. Compared to previous forums, the virtual format allowed for greater participation from all regions. The Forum included a keynote address by Tomas Gunnarsson, a gender photojournalist, and contributions from 39 speakers, who discussed the current and future state of gender statistics over six separate sessions. [More information on the Forum and its outcomes](#) is available.

Monitoring the impact of the pandemic on census taking activities

UN DESA is mandated to monitor the 2020 round of World Population and Housing Censuses which requires each country to conduct at least one census between 2015 and 2024. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries delayed or postponed their census activities. The Second United Nations Expert Group Meeting on the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Conducting Population and Housing Censuses and on Census Data Quality Concerns was organized to continue monitoring the challenges in conducting population and housing censuses during the COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss alternative solutions in designing census operations conducted during the pandemic as well as address data quality

and comparability issues resulting from pandemic protocols and recent changes in the design of census operations. The meeting brought together census experts from NSOs, census agencies, international and regional organizations to explore challenges, good practices and lessons learned in conducting censuses during the pandemic, with a focus on the following four main topics:

- i. potential adjustments in census questionnaires to improve the relevance and quality of census data;
- ii. innovative approaches in designing census operations for reducing the adverse impact of the pandemic;
- iii. assessment of the quality of population and housing censuses concerning the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on process quality and output quality; and
- iv. effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on data analysis and comparability overtime.

New Global SDG Indicators Data Platform

Universal access to trustworthy and up-to-date data is critical for SDG monitoring. UN DESA launched the Global SDG Indicators Data Platform in September 2021. The platform improves access to the latest data for SDG monitoring and includes four components: a new, user-friendly interface to the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database, access to the SDG Country Profiles, the entirely new SDG Analytics, and Advanced Access options. Based on user feedback, updates

to the Global SDG Indicators Data Platform were deployed in March 2022, in a second release. These include the ability of users to save and share their queries, improved query navigation and data download in SDG Analytics, and dramatically improved access to SDG indicators metadata in machine-readable format via an SDMX API¹. The SDG Analytics now also includes the ability to review the availability of disaggregated data at the most elementary level. One important 'fix' provides greater clarity in the query selection of countries and areas in the Global SDG Indicators Database.

Building global geospatial capacities

In May 2022, UN DESA and the Government of China officially launched the UN Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre in Deqing, China. The centre will provide opportunities to build and expand global geospatial capacity, competence and capability and strengthen geospatial information management arrangements in countries, especially developing countries.

¹ The Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (SDMX) is a standard to describe statistical data and metadata. It is the preferred standard for statistical data exchange in the United Nations and in many other statistical organizations. Among other things, SDMX defines a common data model and standardized application programming interfaces (APIs) governing data access. More information on SDMX is available via the following link: [Learning | SDMX - Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange](#)

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the implementation of population and housing censuses

1. Countries which had to postpone or extend the enumeration of population for censuses scheduled in 2020 or 2021

