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Unlocking the power of Data Initiative: How to strengthen the Geneva data community? at 10 October 2023

Protocol of the discussion - 13.10.2023

Initial situation

On 26. January 2023, the Swiss Confederation in cooperation with the World Health Organization, organized an event [Can we beat the chimps with data and statistics?](#) with the intention to aimed to bridge the gap between the data and statistical community and a diversity of stakeholders to advance data ecosystems and provide the information needed for a fact-based worldview. The outcome of this event was to bring closer together the different data and statistics producers in Geneva to build-up a community to learn more from each other and to strengthen International Geneva as one of most important data producers. Joining forces is important to look beyond the halfway mark of the 2030 Agenda and to accelerate progress towards sustainable development which is the objective of this exchange to start a dialogue among the different stakeholders based in Geneva.

Discussion on 10 October 2023

The data world witness changes with the digital revolution, the concept of data has broadened. In 2020, the Secretary General of the UN integrated a data strategy developed by the chief statisticians: [Data Strategy of the Secretary-General for Action by Everyone, Everywhere with Insight, Impact and Integrity](#). Members States of the UN are part of a much complex world with civil society, private sector, international organizations. Lot of reports have been produced within the UN agencies to think, help build digital infrastructure and innovate further. While developing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the first global social contract ever, a quick recognition of a huge amount of this has not been defined statistical before, it was discussed politically but not statistically. Administrative systems suffer from poor data quality as their use by local government is limited. Good quality administrative data is needed. However, the SDG process was in general positive: For the first time the statistical community came together in an independent process to develop the framework by focusing on data and using novel sources, with a particular focus on leaving no one behind. All these elements show us the importance of management of data and data governance.

In addition, data and digitalization can't be seen separately. For a successful digital transition, we need good quality data. The 2030 Agenda is half point towards the SDGs, and the world is off track. A vision and a concept have been developed for sustainability data exchange. The world needs to accelerate, invest in data and make his digital transition. As a whole, we'll need a good data architecture and a good data governance. The use of data is paramount to informing individual decisions and addressing major global challenges. Data governance is already important but will be even more important with the time. Today, there is a need to go "beyond statistics" and incorporate the data community.

The vision of a Sustainable Data Exchange platform is not just to help connect data but the people behind in a larger effort, build a physical hub that connect the wealth of sustainability and data in support the community. All organizations are facing the same challenges from data, e.g., interoperability, adopting intelligence artificial (IA). The localization of the hub should help connect the global community (north-south), have a research background and connects both public and private sectors. Geneva resumes some good reasons to be a good localization: the fusion of UN presence, the presence of international

organizations as private sector, the research excellence, a civil social network and strong commitment to make the hub Geneva a leader in the digital space. Moreover, a large community of data practitioners are present in various sectors in Geneva. The private sector believes in the strong power of ecosystem. However, this problem is too complex to be solved by single governments, agencies or NGOs. The competences of various players need to be put together.

Summary and next steps

The discussion on October 10 in Geneva was open and useful. It showed that there is interest in such an exchange. The following three points can be taken away and included as possible future discussion points:

- **Data Governance:** this topic is a big issue in countries as well as many international organizations. Among others, the UN Statistical Commission will most likely take up this topic at the next session in February / March 2024. This topic is closely related to Trust in Data.
- **Knowledge sharing in the Geneva area:** many international organizations, NGOs, private sector, etc. are working on the topic of data and statistics. There are similar challenges and interest. But important in all these discussions is not to forget that this should have an added value for the local and national level;
- **2030 Agenda and the SDGs:** Data is already important today and will have it after 2030. There are open points on how data can help on the one hand to measure progress but also to implement the Targets.

These three points can be discussed in more depth. In order to gather further discussion points, we are launching a questionnaire from 13 to 23 October. Please feel free to send this link to other interested parties.

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