

ASA, GLOBAL STATISTICS ORGANIZATIONS CALL FOR ‘A TRUE DATA REVOLUTION’ IN WORLD STATISTICS DAY STATEMENT

More and Better Data Needed to Attain UN’s Sustainable Development Goals

ALEXANDRIA, VA, OCTOBER 19, 2015 – As part of its observance of World Statistics Day 2015, the American Statistical Association (ASA) joined nearly 50 global statistical organizations, including the Royal Statistical Society and International Statistical Institute, to issue [a statement calling for support of a “data revolution”](#) and recognition of “the importance of data for policy making and for accountability in all countries of the world.”

Marking the second World Statistics Day, which will be celebrated worldwide October 20, the statement emphasizes that national statistical systems are central to overcoming the data challenges of the recently adopted [United Nations \(UN\) Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs), which in part emphasize ending poverty around the world.

In order for poverty to be abolished—everywhere and in all forms—it is essential everyone is counted, progress is monitored and information is made available as widely as possible. Above all, the statement concludes useful and useable information must be put into the hands of everyone who needs it.

“The signatories to this statement support the call for a data revolution and recognise the importance of data for policy making and for accountability in all countries of the world. The challenges of the new development agenda require new approaches including a much greater emphasis on open data and the use of new data sources,” reads a key line of the statement.

While the global statistical organizations’ joint statement notes significant progress has been made internationally in strengthening national statistical systems, its signatories assert more must be done to meet the data challenges of the SDGs. Among the key actions the statement calls for are the following:

- Finance all national statistical systems properly
- Support the development of statistical skills and expertise
- Provide access to new tools and technology
- Develop open data and the use of new data sources
- Support the transformation of data into actionable information

“The ambitious and laudable objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals need defensible, supporting data to ensure progress is being made and the lives of people everywhere are being

improved. Strengthening national statistical agencies will provide this assurance. These agencies also offer critical guidance in improving the programs and processes put into action by world and national leaders trying to alleviate and ultimately end poverty. ASA urges the leaders of the UN, national governments and national legislative bodies to support the key actions outlined in the global statistical organizations statement,” said David R. Morganstein, ASA president.

The SDGs were unveiled during the UN General Assembly in September. These goals—such as wiping out poverty, fighting inequality and tackling climate change—form part of an ambitious agenda for world development from 2016 to 2030. Seventeen goals with 169 targets and more than 300 indicators were put in place to monitor progress.

Lead partners on the statistical organization statement:

The **American Statistical Association (ASA)**, founded in 1839, is the world’s largest community of statisticians. The ASA supports excellence in the development, application and dissemination of statistical science through meetings, publications, membership services, education, accreditation, and advocacy. Its members serve in industry, government, and academia in more than 90 countries. www.amstat.org/

The **Royal Statistical Society (RSS)** founded in 1834 is one of the world's most distinguished and renowned statistical societies. It is a learned society for statistics, a professional body for statisticians and a charity which promotes statistics, data and evidence for the public good. Today the Society has 6000 members around the world. www.rss.org.uk

The **International Statistical Institute (ISI)** is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation and has consultative status by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations since 1949. Officially, the ISI was established in 1885, though the initial international gatherings of statisticians started earlier - back in 1853. www.isi-web.org/

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Note to editors and reporters:

[Significance magazine](#), an ASA and RSS joint publication, will soon publish an article about the data revolution written by Claire Melamed, director for poverty and inequality at the Overseas Development Institute. This article will be available to reporters on request. Email your request to Magdalen Wiley, RSS press & policy officer, at m.wiley@rss.org.uk.