

**INTERSESSIONAL PANEL OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION  
ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD)**

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Contribution by Belize

to the CSTD 2023-2024 priority theme on “Data for Development”

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## **PRIORITY THEME 1: Data for Development**

### **United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD)**

Dear CSTD Member,

The [26<sup>th</sup> CSTD annual session](#) selected “Data for Development” as one of the priority themes for its 27th session (2023-24 period).

Data, including for scientific and research purposes, are becoming a key strategic resource for sustainable development. If well managed, data can help overcome major global development challenges, such as poverty, food security, climate change, disaster risk management, and pandemics. If badly handled, they can generate unequal development outcomes. General Assembly’s resolution 77/150 of 14 December 2022 noted that the Commission on Science and Technology for Development could explore the connection between data and sustainable development, including data governance, while taking into account the multiple dimensions of data. The development implications of data, including data quality, data capabilities, and responsible data handling should also feature prominently in discussions about the Global Digital Compact and in the Summit of the Future, adding to the relevance of the CSTD’s perspectives on this issue as the UN focal point for STI for development.

Under this theme, the Commission will consider issues such as major contributions and risks of data in relation to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; how to ensure that developing countries benefit from the data revolution while considering risks; national and international policies and support measures that can help address the challenges of the developing countries in the area of data relevant for sustainable development, while taking into account the multiple dimensions of data.

The CSTD secretariat is in the process of drafting an issues paper on the theme to be presented at the CSTD inter-sessional panel meeting to be held in the second half of October 2023 in Portugal. In this context, we would like to solicit inputs from the CSTD member States on this theme. We would be grateful if you could kindly answer the following questions based on your experience in your country or region.

1. What are the major contributions and risks of data in relation to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?
  - The success or failure of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can only be measured if data is available for the various indicators. Hence, in Belize, we aim to collect data on multiple indicators to measure the country’s success (track progress) towards its commitments to the 2030 Agenda. This data is then used to set new priorities (evidence-based) for the country following its achievements or non-compliance to the 2030 Agenda. Several initiatives are drafted in alignment with the 2030 Agenda, but this can only be successful if the data collected is accurate and timely.
  - The risk associated with data for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Belize is a need for coordination between the various line Ministries responsible for implementing the goals. Having all ministries report their successes on multiple indicators on time is so often challenging. However, some level of coordination exists, but non-compliance is often noted.

2. How can developing countries benefit from the data revolution while considering risks?
  - The 'data revolution' can be pinned as a critical prospect for quality data for evidence-based decision-making and increased accountability. Developing countries often lack the human and financial resources to implement quality standards in data management/governance, production, capacity building, etc. The 'data revolution' can close this gap as this much-needed revolution can provide greater access to technical and financial resources to developing countries. Although developing countries risk delayed access, a government's commitment to quality statistics for decision-making can speed up the process.
  
3. What national and international policies and support measures can help address the challenges of the developing countries in the area of data relevant for sustainable development, including scientific and research purposes, data quality, data capabilities and data governance, while taking into account the multiple dimensions of data?
  - Developing countries must create a department within their government to fully coordinate, implement, guide, and monitor initiatives relevant to sustainable development. This body must have the legislated authority to force parent ministries to comply with the commitments signed by the government, thus, increasing transparency and accountability. One of the significant commitments is data sharing on time. Additionally, the legislated department must be able to train and support the various stakeholders in data governance, production, and dissemination.
  
4. In your country's view, what role could CSTD play in respect of data for development, including in the context of the Global Digital Compact?
  - The CSTD could support capacity-building initiatives in Belize and other developing countries to enhance their ability to collect, manage, analyze, and leverage data effectively for development purposes. This could involve training programs, workshops, and knowledge-sharing events. Additionally, to establish best practices while committing to data sharing for the tracking of the SCDGs

Please indicate contact person(s) responsible for projects/policies and international collaboration in this context in case we need clarification on the inputs.

Please send your responses and any further inputs on the theme to the CSTD secretariat ([stdev@unctad.org](mailto:stdev@unctad.org)) by **15 August 2023**. We look forward to receiving your valuable inputs.

Sincere regards,

CSTD secretariat