

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

**Lisbon, Portugal
6-7 November 2023**

Contribution by Gambia

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 [26th 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?

Answers:

Major Contributors:

- **Informed Decision-Making:** Data plays a crucial role in providing evidence-based information to guide policy and decision-making processes related to sustainable development goals.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Data allows for the measurement and assessment of progress toward the various targets and indicators of the 2030 Agenda.
- **Identifying Patterns and Trends:** Data analysis can reveal patterns, trends, and potential correlations that aid in identifying areas that need more attention or intervention.

Risks:

- **Data Privacy and Security:** The collection and use of large amounts of data can lead to privacy breaches and security vulnerabilities, putting personal and sensitive information at risk.
- **Data Inequality:** There’s a risk that certain groups or regions may be left behind in benefiting from the data revolution, exacerbating existing inequalities.
- **Misinterpretation:** Incorrect analysis or interpretation of data can lead to misguided policies and actions that hinder sustainable development.

2. How can developing countries benefit from the data revolution while considering risks?

Answers:

- **Capacity Building: Providing training and capacity-building programs to enhance data literacy and analytical skills in developing countries.**
- **Data Infrastructure: Developing the necessary technical infrastructure to collect, store, and manage data effectively.**
- **Partnerships: Facilitating partnerships between developed and developing countries to share knowledge, resources, and technology.**
- **Cooperation: Facilitate cooperation within developing countries itself (south-south) cooperation and between developed and developing countries.**
- **Local Relevance: Tailoring data collection efforts to address specific local challenges and priorities.**

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?

Answers:

- **Data Governance: Establishing clear regulations and guidelines for data collection, sharing, and usage to ensure responsible and ethical data practices.**
- **Data Quality: Promoting standards and best practices for data collection, validation, and verification to ensure accuracy and reliability.**
- **Data Capabilities: Investing in education, training, and technology to enhance data analysis and interpretation skills.**
- **International Cooperation: Encouraging international collaboration for data sharing, technology transfer, and capacity building.**

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?

Answers:

- **Policy Guidance: The CSTD can provide guidance and recommendations on best practices for data-related policies that align with sustainable development goals.**
- **Capacity Building: Organizing workshops, training sessions, and knowledge-sharing events to enhance data literacy and capabilities in member states.**
- **Advocacy: Raising awareness about the importance of responsible data practices and the potential benefits of data for sustainable development.**
- **Collaboration: Facilitating partnerships between member states, organizations, and stakeholders to foster international cooperation in data-related initiatives.**

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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) by **15 August 2023**. We look forward to receiving your valuable inputs.

Sincere regards,
CSTD secretariat