

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

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

Contribution by UNESCO

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)**

To whom it may concern

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 international organizations, UN entities and agencies, and regional commissions on this theme. We would be grateful if you could kindly answer the following questions based on your organization’s work at the global, regional, and/or national levels:

1. What are the major contributions and risks of data in relation to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?
2. How can developing countries benefit from the data revolution while considering risks?
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?
  - Indigenous and local knowledge (ILK) provides valuable sources of insight and innovation for addressing complex environmental challenges. National and international policies can embrace the diversity and transdisciplinarity of ILK systems and foster dialogue and collaboration with national science capacity, for equitable natural resources governance, climate change adaptation and natural disaster responses. This can be achieved through the enhancement of community-led ILK research, application and transmission, as well as capacity-building and enabling ILK policy development.
  - The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) is the official and trusted source of internationally-comparable data on education, science, culture and communication. As the official statistical agency of UNESCO, the UIS produces a wide range of indicators in UNESCO’s fields of action by working with national statistical offices, line ministries and other statistical organizations. UIS is developing the methodologies, standards and indicators needed to achieve SDG 4–

Education 2030 and key targets in science and innovation, culture and communication in close consultation with partners. (contact [a.persic@unesco.org](mailto:a.persic@unesco.org))

- In line with the 2021 UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science, UNESCO is promoting open research data, adhering to the FAIR and CARE principles, as key for the advancement of knowledge needed for the achievement of SDGs. (contact [a.persic@unesco.org](mailto:a.persic@unesco.org)).
4. What could be the role of the CSTD as part of the overall work on the UN in the field of digital data?

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