Doha Declaration for Inclusive Data Ecosystems and Effective Decision Making

Endorsed by the participants of the Doha Data Forum for Inclusive Data Ecosystem and Effective Decision Making, which was held on 20-30 October 2023.

Preamble:

We, the representatives of ministries, government institutions, UN agencies, international organizations, national statistics offices, civil society, academia, and the private sector, gathered in Doha on 29-30 October 2023.

Recognizing the transformative power of data and the need for inclusive data ecosystems to foster effective decision-making processes,

Acknowledging the rapid advancement of technology and the increasing role of data in driving sustainable development, economic growth, social progress, and well-being for all,

Underlining that sustainable development requires harmonizing economic progress, environmental protection, climate change mitigation, and social inclusion through the responsible use of data and evidence-based decision-making,

Recognizing the urgent need to collaborate across sectors and stakeholders to address the challenges and harness the opportunities of the evolving data landscape in an ethical, comprehensive, and sustainable manner,

Reaffirming our commitment to the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly SDG 17, specifically the target 17.18 "Enhance the availability of reliable data" by enhancing capacities to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national context.

Affirming the significance of data and statistics as strategic assets for comprehensive and human-centered evidence-based decision-making and policy formulation, promoting inclusive and sustainable development,

Recognizing the importance of inclusive and participatory approaches in the design, collection, collation, and use of data to ensure no one is left behind,

Underscoring the central importance of privacy, data protection, methodological transparency, and ethical considerations in data governance frameworks,

Recognizing the increasing complexity of the data ecosystem starting from the diverse sources generating data in different formats, the increasing volume of big data, to the complex transformation and cleaning procedures, and the higher-order analytics needed to extract useful insights.

Acknowledging that the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data (CTGAP), launched at the First United Nations World Data Forum held in Cape Town, South Africa in January 2017 and adopted by the UN Statistical Commission, and welcomed by member states in the General Assembly

resolution 71/313[1], remains as the strategic document by which this community's efforts are directed in response to the data needs of the 2030 Agenda,

Welcoming the political declaration of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, convened under the auspices of the General Assembly, and endorsed by member states on 18-19 September 2023 and its call for accelerated action on data for sustainable development on all levels and by all stakeholders,

Hereby declare the following:

1. Inclusive Data Ecosystems:

1.1. Recognize the need to foster inclusive data ecosystems that promote the active participation of all stakeholders, including governments, civil society, the private sector, academia, and individuals.

1.2. Encourage the development of multi-stakeholder partnerships and collaborations to leverage diverse expertise and resources in generating, analyzing, and utilizing data.

1.3. Emphasize the importance of capacity-building initiatives to enhance data literacy, data management skills, and data-driven decision-making capabilities.

1.4. Strengthening data literacy across school curriculums.

1.5. Advocate for the establishment of data infrastructure, such as open data platforms and secure central statistical data repositories, to facilitate access, sharing, reuse, and analysis of data for the benefit of society.

1.6. Promote citizen-generated and participatory data approaches that empower communities and individuals to actively participate in and meaningfully contribute to the data ecosystem; and support initiatives that facilitate community-led data collection, management and analysis through approaches such as participatory mapping, citizen science, and crowdsourcing solutions.

2. Data Governance:

2.1. Recognize the need for robust data governance frameworks that ensure responsible, transparent, and ethical use of data while protecting individual privacy and data rights.

2.2. Promote the development and implementation of data protection laws, regulations, and standards that align with international best practices, considering the evolving nature of data ecosystems.

2.3. Support updating statistical laws to promote open data, sharing and exchange of data through generally accepted electronic protocols, and modernizing national statistical systems to meet the evolving needs of the data ecosystem.

2.4. Encourage the establishment of data governance mechanisms that enable efficient and secure data sharing and interoperability across sectors, borders, and jurisdictions.

2.5. Support initiatives that promote data localization policies, data sovereignty, and data ownership rights, while also recognizing the importance of cross-border data flows for innovation and economic growth.

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[1] General Assembly resolution 71/313, available from undocs.org/A/RES/61/313

2.6. Encourage the development and implementation of robust data governance policies to ensure infrastructural sustainability, compliance, and consistency, resilient to personnel and procedural changes, to prevent data management disruption.

2.7. Recognize the importance of designating data stewards at organizational and program levels who are accountable for the short and long-term management of data assets.

2.8. Recognize the need for innovative AI-powered technologies for analyzing, understanding, and transforming data into actional items.

3. Data for Sustainable Development:

3.1. Emphasize the critical role of data in measuring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and fostering evidence-based policymaking for sustainable development.

3.2. Advocate for the integration of data and statistical systems into national development plans, policies, and monitoring frameworks to ensure the availability of high-quality, timely, and disaggregated data.

3.3. Support efforts to improve data collection methods and technologies, including the use of innovative approaches such as big data, geospatial data, citizen-generated data, and emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and machine learning.

3.4. Encourage the development of data-driven initiatives and solutions that address societal challenges, promote social inclusion, reduce inequalities, and advance sustainable development.

3.5. Promote initiatives that apply human-centered design approaches to generate data and solutions that uplift human dignity and empower communities.

4. Doha Data Forum:

4.1. Establish the Doha Data Forum as a platform for dialogue, knowledge sharing, and collaboration among stakeholders in the data ecosystem.

4.2. Envision the Doha Data Forum as a periodic gathering that convenes ministries, international organizations, civil society, academia, and the private sector to discuss emerging trends, challenges, and opportunities in data stewardship, governance, and utilization.

4.3. Task the Doha Data Forum with facilitating the exchange of best practices, experiences, and lessons learned to foster learning and capacity-building in data ecosystems; and keep the pace and spirit attained in the Forum throughout the year through online groups, webinars and virtual collaborations focused on paving the way for the upcoming edition of the Forum.

4.4. Encourage the Doha Data Forum to support research and innovation in data science, data analytics, and data-driven decision making through partnerships, grants, and funding mechanisms.

Conclusion:

We, the participants in the in the Doha Forum for Inclusive Data Ecosystem and Effective Decision Making which was held during 20-30 October 2023. Doha – Qatar, Under the patronage of HE Sheikh Mohamad bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, Prime Minister, and Minister of Foreign Affairs, commit to the principles and actions outlined in this declaration to unlock the potential of data and build inclusive data ecosystems that foster effective decision making, promote sustainable development, and leave no one behind.

Doha – Qatar, 30 October 2023