

Celebration of the World Statistics Day

The Ministry of Transport and Communications in Qatar celebrates with the rest of the world celebrates the World Statistics Day, which falls on 20 October every five years. This year's celebration, however, falls in exceptional circumstances that the whole world is going through due to Covid-19 pandemic, which have clearly demonstrated the importance of official statistics and their accuracy and transparency as well as their immediate sharing among relevant entities. These emergency conditions have also accelerated the application of technology in the areas of data collection, big data analysis and information exchange. The ability of countries to face this pandemic has become often linked to their ability to track active and close contact cases via modern and smart technologies, in addition to building computerized statistical models with superior analytical capacity. From this standpoint, the Ministry of Transport and Communications affirms its keenness to support high-quality official statistical information, and to benefit from statistical reports in conducting analyses and making informed decisions on public policy in support of sustainable development.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications plays a major role in achieving the pillars of Qatar National Vision 2030. It also contributes to the implementation of the projects of the second National Development Strategy 2018-2022. In order to ensure the Ministry's success in achieving its goals, the development of the transport and communications sectors is monitored and progress is measured to reach the sustainable development goals that fall within the Ministry's jurisdiction .

Official statistics rely on a variety of data sources, some of which are traditional sources such as questionnaires and administrative data, and non-traditional sources such as big data. In this context, the Ministry has conducted several questionnaires to update the comprehensive transport plan, in order to better understand the causes of traffic congestion, and to assess the digital transformation for individuals and private and public institutions. The Ministry of Transport and Communications is keen to share the results of the questionnaires with the Planning and Statistics Authority, ministries, agencies and concerned individuals, in order to make informed decisions and policies. The Ministry is also keen to share its statistics with the relevant international bodies such as the Maritime Safety Authority, the International Telecommunication Union and other United Nations organizations concerned with transport and communications sectors. The Ministry issues, for example but not limited to, Qatar's ICT Landscape, which provides various reports and statistics on ICT in a number of important sectors in Qatar, as well as the launch of Qatar's ICT Observatory initiative, which provides various statistics for these two vital sectors and makes them available to the public. Last but not least, the Ministry posts many of its reports online on its official website and via modern communication channels and social media to ensure the information is disseminated on the largest scale.

On this occasion, it is worth noting that the Ministry of Transport and Communications had issued an open data policy in November 2014, which is a formal step forward in the State's commitment to open government. Opening government data is crucial to increasing the transparency of government work, enabling citizen participation in order to improve the quality of public service and encouraging individuals and public and private institutions to develop new innovative opportunities using government data. The government of the State of Qatar produces and keeps hundreds of data sets that provide

information on the environment and meteorology, population and vital statistics, health, education, economics, employment and social affairs .

Data has become the most valuable resource in the world, or as they say, data is the new oil or the new gold mine. Many countries have been keen to make use of data generated by smart technologies to extract actionable future visions and make better decisions. At the international level, the United Nations Statistical Commission has emphasized that the use of big data and other non-traditional data sources has become imperative to modernize national statistical institutions. Therefore, the UN Global Working Group started a vision of using the data extracted from the Internet of Things (IoT), social networks and Internet data to produce official statistics and compile data for SDG indicators .Realizing the importance of big data for producing official statistics, the Ministry of Transport and Communications has launched a pilot project called “Media Analytics Services”, which aims to analyze public opinion that is being shared on social media channels. This would help policy makers in the Ministry to make evidence-based decisions and improve government transparency.

In conclusion, and based on the slogan of this year's World Statistics Day: “Connecting The World With Data We Can Trust”, the Ministry of Transport and Communications pledges to continue its efforts in publishing accurate and updated data, and to share it with policy makers and beneficiaries for information-based decisions that lead to a better life for all.