



Concept Note of the HLPF Side Event on Strengthening Government Data4Recovery Capacity with a Focus on Public Health

Date: 15th July, 2021 | Time: 7.30-9.00 hrs. (EDT)

Organized by: Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations, a2i, Government of Bangladesh, Government of Peru, New York City Mayor's Office, United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), South-South Network for Public Service Innovation (SSN4PSI), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and Vital Strategies.

Context

The COVID-19 pandemic is the greatest crisis of our time, claiming more than 2 million lives and causing the biggest shock to the global economy since the second world war. The social and economic restrictions that have been implemented in many countries to control the virus have exposed and exacerbated inequalities. Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals has stalled, and in some cases may have reversed.

Despite all these challenges, the Government of Bangladesh brought together private sector, civil society, academia, media and development partners from around the world to form an unprecedented partnership and establish a novel, Collective Data Intelligence System that enables:

1. Syndromic surveillance
2. Mortality surveillance
3. Contact tracing
4. Epidemiological modelling
5. Health response planning and management

There are other remarkable examples from countries which have also responded successfully to the crisis. An example is Rwanda, a country that has successfully managed the response to the pandemic. Thanks to pre-existing investments in building a smart data management system, Rwanda was able to administer all of the nearly 350,000 vaccine doses it received through the COVAX Facility within two weeks despite only given a few days' notice before the doses arrived. Singapore introduced a state championed, citizen-driven 'TraceTogether' contact tracing system 'Aarogya Setu', an Indian, open source COVID-19 contact tracing, syndromic mapping and self-assessment mobile app reached more than 100 million installs in 40 days and was lauded by the World Health Organization for helping health departments to identify COVID-19 clusters. Bangladesh is another example where the country's Health Ministry is using a locally developed, intelligent data dashboard that aggregates, integrates, and analyzes data from government sources, telecoms services providers, NGOs, researchers and journalists to pinpoint geographic locations where disease progression is the fastest in order to conduct epidemiological analysis and prioritize medical response resulting in COVID-19 hotspots being identified 7 to 10 days ahead of RT-PCR tests, helping save lives.

Rapid total mortality surveillance offers another example of the useful insights data can yield during the pandemic. In the course of such all-cause mortality analysis, multiple data sources are



utilized to measure excess total mortality in 2020 and 2021, compared to preceding years. The focus on total mortality can also capture the pandemic's indirect mortality burden, which may be caused by disruptions to the access, use and provision of health-care services. Data on causes of death can also be mined for confirmatory evidence of the direct and indirect toll in excess mortality associated with the pandemic. In Peru, for example the National Death Information System (SINADEF) has played an important role in monitoring excess mortality and to track the spread of COVID-19. This electronic system, already in place before the pandemic, enabled Peru to have a clearer understanding of the most affected regions throughout the country.

Also, housed in the NYC Department of Health, the Bureau of Vital Statistics has developed an electronic vital statistic reporting system that provides a near complete count of all deaths that occur in NYC. Rapid reporting of the event of death using this electronic system allows timely surveillance of all deaths in NYC (i.e., all-cause mortality).

What does this mean from a public health standpoint? Excess mortality data, as actionable public health intelligence, can overcome the ambiguities of just measuring cases and deaths linked to the infectious disease causing the epidemic. Measuring excess death is therefore a valuable indicator in the response of countries to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Telemedicine offers interesting avenues to knowing the extent of the prevalence of the pandemic and its impact on communities (there is estimated that approx. 95% of people who are not hospitalized), before things reach a critical level. It can also be used for long-term follow-ups and collecting re-infection information which can indicate the extent to which immunity is taking hold in a population. This constitutes incredibly important data given suggestions from experts that the protection granted by vaccines may wear off after 6 to 8 months and the increasing focus on herd immunity.

Beyond COVID-19, successful deployment of systems that can capture all-cause mortality data, can serve as a blueprint for rapid response, such as outbreak response, for countries working with challenges of resource constraints and limited testing capacity. Such challenges can also be addressed with novel data streams and analytics in collaboration with a comprehensive set of partners.

However, walking the talk will likely be much harder. Case in point, national ID systems and civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS). Many countries around the world have already been working on these. But despite their well-documented benefits, including more efficient, customized service delivery, emergency relief transfers and potentially forming the basis for shared health records, many countries do not yet have adequate systems in place.

Objective

The primary objective of this side event is to bring governments, development partners, UN entities, the private sector, and academia together to share best practices and exchange views on how to acquire the knowledge and tools they need to develop collective data intelligence systems that harness data and technology customized and utilized on a national scale to provide evidence for decision making, strategizing and ultimately, accelerating COVID-19 recovery.



The Side Event will focus on data that informs the process of strengthening and rethinking public health policy in the new normal and feature presentations on working models being used by partners.

During the side-event, participants will analyse specific case studies and strategy recommendations pertaining to:

- How can data help us prepare more targeted health response including management of medical resources? How can it help us track the long-term effects of the disease?
- How can we learn from the evolution of our administrative data collection systems, such as vital registration systems, as we move towards modernization of all data systems?
- How can modelling help us predict what's about to happen in the future including outbreaks of COVID and studying the potential impact of the spread of new variants of the disease, massive movements of people within countries and across borders triggered by outbreaks, natural disasters, major religious festivals, holidays, etc.?
- How can rapid total mortality surveillance and resulting excess mortality data help policymakers overcome the ambiguities of just measuring cases and deaths linked to the infectious disease causing the epidemic?
- How can advocacy efforts more effectively promote the crucial role of leadership, governance, and coordination in the CRVS system to ensure that all stakeholders work collaboratively to ensure that everyone count?
- How to access data for targeting when compiling the country's health and socio-economic response measures during post-COVID recovery and, how to ensure that everyone is included?
- What should be the role of academia in supporting the governments to develop strategies and policies to collect and use data to take timely actions during the post-recovery period of COVID-19?
- How can public agencies, the private sector, telecommunication operators and academia work together to mobilize the true potential of the "data revolution" to leave no one behind during post-COVID-19 recovery?

Session Plan

Moderator: H.E. Mr. Masud Bin Momen, Foreign Secretary (Senior Secretary), Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Format – 90 minute duration

- Opening remarks by **H.E. Mr. Masud Bin Momen**, Foreign Secretary (Senior Secretary), Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh– 4 minutes
- Statement by **H.E. Dr. Frank C.S. Anthony**, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Health, Cooperative Republic of Guyana – 4 minutes
- Statement by **H.E. Dr. Óscar Ugarte Ubilluz**, Physician, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Health, Republic of Peru– 4 minutes
- Keynote Presentation by **Mr. Anir Chowdhury**, Policy Advisor, a2i Programme, ICT Division/Cabinet Division/UNDP Bangladesh, Co-founder, South-South Network for Public Service Innovation (SSN4PSI), Future of Work Lab – 8 minutes
- **Panel Discussion in two groups- 66 minutes**



- **First Panel- 20 minutes**
- Moderate by **Dr. Padmini Srikantiah, MD MPH**, Senior Program Officer in Global Health at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. - 2 minutes
- Statement by **Ms. Xiaojun Grace Wang**, UNOSSC Deputy Director for Programme and Operations – 6 minutes
- Statement by **Ms. Jacqueline Fuller**, VP, Google and President of Google.org – 6 minutes
- Statement by **Dr. Pramod Varma**, Chief Architect Aadhaar & India Stack, CTO EkStep Foundation, Cofounder Beckn.org, Volunteer iSPIRT– 6 minutes
- **First Panel Q&A for 13 minutes**
- **Second Panel- 20 minutes**
- Moderate by **Dr. Philip Setel**, Vice President, Vital Strategies – 2 minutes
- Statement by **Dr. Samira Asma**, Assistant Director General, Division of Data, Analytics, and Delivery for Impact, World Health Organization- 6 minutes
- Statement by **Dr. Gretchen Van Wye**, Assistant Commissioner & City Registrar, NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene- 6 Minutes
- Statement by **Ms. Janet Mucheru**, Registrar-General, Civil Registration Services, Kenya - 6 minutes
- **Second Panel Q&A for 13 minutes**
- Concluding remarks by **Ms. Zuena Aziz**, Principal Coordinator (SDG Affairs), Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh– 4 minutes.

Participants:

- All member states will be invited through their missions to the UN.
- Representatives of international organizations, private sector, academia, major groups and other stakeholders will participate.