



Contributions to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

ECOSOC functional commissions and other intergovernmental bodies and forums, are invited to share relevant input and deliberations as to how they address goals and targets from the perspective of “*Ensuring that no one is left behind*”.

Inputs could follow the following template, inspired by the report of the Secretary-General on Critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level (A/70/684).

Submissions will be publicly posted online at the United Nations Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, at sustainabledevelopment.un.org, as input to the 2016 meeting of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

Please send the completed form no later than **16 May 2016** to the Secretariat’s e-mail pietracci@un.org

Submission Form

1. An assessment of the situation regarding the principle of “ensuring that no one is left behind” at the global level:

During the forty-ninth session of the Commission on Population and Development in April 2016, Member States reaffirmed that the Commission’s primary purpose is to monitor, review and assess the implementation of the Programme of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development. The Commission also proposed that it will contribute to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, within its existing mandate.

The Programme of Action states under Principle 1 that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.” Furthermore, Principle 2 observes that “Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature. People are the most important and valuable resource of any nation. Countries should ensure that all individuals are given the right to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate food, clothing, housing, water and sanitation.”

This vision of sustainable development based on the achievement of universal human rights and equality, universal access to health including sexual and reproductive health,



non-discrimination that embraces gender equality and women's empowerment, high-quality education, security of place, economic opportunity and the dignity of all persons remains at the centre of any debate in the Commission on Population and Development. In this context, the Commission plans to follow up and review the 2030 Agenda in an integrated matter and to contribute to the process of global review of the SDGs. During its forty-ninth session in April 2016, the Commission made an assessment of how to strengthen the demographic evidence base in support of the 2030 Agenda.

A review of the Commission's recent resolution on this topic reveals that the Commission called for actions that would contribute to the achievement of 25 targets distributed across six of the Goals: SDG3 (8), SDG5 (6), SDG10 (1), SDG11 (2), SDG16 (1) and SDG17 (7). The discussion highlighted the importance of demographic data and analysis across a broad range of topics that are fundamental to the 2030 Agenda, with a special emphasis on issues of health and equality. The Commission stressed in particular the importance of gathering data and producing analyses that are disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts, as a means of ensuring that no one is left behind.

2. The identification of gaps, areas requiring urgent attention, risks and challenges:

Because the Commission on Population and Development will review the implementation of the Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda in an integrated manner, its assessment of the principle embodied in "ensuring that no one is left behind" will continue to be linked to the special theme of an annual session. The focus of its most recent session was on the role of demographic data and analysis in addressing this and other aspects of the 2030 Agenda. Similarly, future sessions will examine this principle from a thematic perspective, as part of a broader discussion. In that context, the Commission will seek to identify gaps, areas requiring urgent attention, risks and challenges.

During its forty-ninth session, the Commission emphasized that the availability of reliable and timely demographic data is essential for planning and implementing interventions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and to monitor progress towards their achievement. However, the demand for disaggregated population data for planning, evaluation and the monitoring of progress presents a major challenge for many countries in the world. Moreover, building the evidence base requires not only data collection but also data analysis.



The Commission drew attention to the urgent need to strengthen national data systems, with an emphasis on the traditional forms of demographic data, in particular, data from population censuses, civil registration systems, and household surveys. A holistic approach is needed in building national statistical capacity to ensure that institutions have the ability and the flexibility to integrate data from various sources for use in documenting population trends and understanding their implications for sustainable development. Lack of data or lack of access to existing data will impede the full review and follow-up that are necessary to ensure that no one is left behind during the implementation phase.

Regarding gaps and areas requiring urgent attention for the purpose of strengthening the demographic evidence base, the Commission highlighted three topics in particular:

- It noted that special efforts will be required to strengthen civil registration, vital statistics and health information systems, as well as censuses, household surveys, population registers and other relevant administrative data sources.
- It stressed the importance of gathering data disaggregated by relevant individual characteristics, with respect for confidentiality.
- It emphasized throughout the discussion the imperative of building national statistical capacities for both the collection and the analysis of demographic data.

3. Valuable lessons learned on ensuring that no one is left behind:

During its latest session, the Commission on Population and Development benefitted from reports of the Secretary-General prepared by the Population Division and the United Nations Population Fund, and from presentations by invited speakers including the Chair of the Statistical Commission. These reports and presentations drew attention to the latest thinking from experts in the field on means of strengthening the demographic evidence base.

A common message was that the availability of high-quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated demographic data is essential for planning and implementing policies and programmes to achieve the Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda. The various reports and presentations emphasized the importance of the 2020 round of population censuses and urged Governments to make special efforts to strengthen civil registration and vital statistics and health information systems, as well as national capacities to conduct household surveys.

Experts emphasized the need to adopt open-data policies allowing for the dissemination of public-use, geo-referenced and anonymized micro-data from various sources, with respect



for confidentiality. In addition, national authorities were advised to leverage new data sources, including Big Data, and technology to improve the efficiency of data collection, processing and dissemination.

The Chair of the Statistical Commission stressed the importance of demographic data and evidence for implementing the 2030 Agenda. She also called for the two commissions to work together closely and to coordinate their efforts aimed at strengthening the demographic evidence base.

4. Emerging issues likely to affect the realization of this principle:

Each of the major population trends — including population growth, population ageing, international migration and urbanization — is an emerging issue, as each one represents a substantial change in the size or distribution of the human population, or in modes of interaction between populations. Each of these trends presents its own challenges with respect to the principle of “ensuring that no one is left behind”:

- Rapid population growth is occurring mostly in countries facing the largest challenges in ending poverty and hunger and ensuring health, education and equality for all, and may have implications for the reduction of global inequality.
- The benefits and challenges of population ageing will eventually affect all countries, raising concerns about the ability to provide care and support for increasing numbers of older persons, who in some cases will outnumber the younger members of their families.
- The increasing volume and complexity of international migration is overwhelming the capacity of some national governments to meet the demand for mobility, especially in situations of large movements of refugees and migrants spurred by political events and driven by the lack of development and stability in some parts of the world.
- The increasing concentration of human populations in cities and urban settlements is expected to continue, highlighting the need for better planning that is sensitive to the needs of the poor and takes into consideration the environmental risks that interact with patterns of human settlement.

5. Areas where political guidance by the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development is required:

Data systems are expensive and require long-term investment. Similarly, building the statistical capacity of a country demands a significant commitment over many years. The High-level Political Forum should highlight the value to countries of strong data systems



and of well-developed human capacities for data analysis, and advocate for the investments required to achieve these objectives.

During its forty-ninth session, the Commission on Population and Development emphasized the importance of strengthening the demographic evidence base for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In practical terms, upholding the principle of “ensuring that no one is left behind” requires data disaggregated by individual characteristics, which can be used to document the situation of vulnerable groups. With such data, it becomes possible to confirm the presence and the degree of inequality in a population across a range of outcome measures. Without such data, it is impossible to know whether the principle is being upheld or not.

6. Policy recommendations on ways to accelerate progress for those at risk of being left behind:

Disaggregated data do not live in a vacuum. Rather, they exist as part of a larger data system. Before having disaggregated data, one must first collect data on the entire population. For the disaggregated data to provide an accurate picture of reality, the data system as a whole must meet minimal standards of completeness and quality.

For this reason, it is difficult to separate recommendations on population data disaggregated by individual characteristics from general recommendations on how to strengthen the demographic evidence base as a whole. During its most recent session in April 2016, the Commission on Population and Development put forward several recommendations on policies aimed at strengthening the demographic evidence base, all of which are important as part of an overall strategy for ensuring that no one is left behind.

Some of the most important recommendations can be summarized as follows:

- Support fully the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme.
- Strengthen systems for the registration of birth, marriage, divorce, death and other vital events, and for linking the registration of vital events with the production of vital statistics.
- Strengthen health information systems and national capacities to conduct household surveys.
- Leverage new data sources, including Big Data, and technology to improve the efficiency of data collection, processing and dissemination.
- Adopt geo-referencing as a standard practice in all forms of demographic data collection.



- Adopt open-data policies allowing the dissemination of public-use, geo-referenced and anonymized micro-data from various sources, with full respect for confidentiality.
- Implement existing standards and practices of data management, in particular legal and ethical standards and safeguards for the protection of confidentiality and privacy rights.
- Promote collaborative work by governments, international organizations and others to assist developing countries in strengthening their capacities for data collection.
- Encourage the Secretary-General of the United Nations to develop initiatives to improve the demographic evidence base at the national level, including through regional and South-South cooperation, as well as triangular and North-South cooperation.
- Encourage the United Nations Population Fund to continue its work in assisting countries to strengthen the demographic evidence base.
- Request the Secretary-General to continue his substantive work on population and development, including on the interactions between population dynamics, inequalities and the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals.
