



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

02 September 2020

Excellency,

I write to draw your attention to World Statistics Day on 20 October 2020, celebrated every fifth year according to United Nations General Assembly resolution 69/282.

In establishing this observance, the Assembly invited all Member States, the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations, as well as civil society, research institutions, media and all producers and users of official statistics, to do their part to highlight the value of statistics in meeting the challenges of our time.

Current, reliable, timely and trusted data are necessary to understand the changing world in which we live. Statistics are critical for evidence-based policymaking across all sectors and all societies, regardless of cultural and historical backgrounds or level of development. The unprecedented Coronavirus pandemic has elevated the importance of data and statistics, and demonstrated how linking data to geospatial information can help us to track the dynamics of a rapidly changing global situation.

Earlier this year, I launched the United Nations Data Strategy, entitled “Data we can trust”, aimed at strengthening the Organization’s ability to provide more and better data to address global challenges. Investing in data and statistics is the only way in which we will be able to make the decisions needed to respond and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and get on track to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

In addition to World Statistics Day, the global statistical community will hold a virtual United Nations World Data Forum from 19 to 21 October 2020 – a timely opportunity to recognize and support the hard work of statisticians worldwide to make available reliable data, adhere to the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, and build stronger and more resilient data ecosystems.

I am encouraged by the efforts made in recent years in many countries to strengthen their statistical capacity, under the leadership of national offices, including to monitor progress towards the SDGs, improve data stewardship, develop new data sources, and ensure high-quality population and housing censuses.

All Permanent Representatives and  
Permanent Observers of Member States  
to the United Nations  
New York

I am also heartened by the success of the observance of World Statistics Day in 2015, which included activities organized in more than 110 countries by at least 20 international and regional entities.

In order to make World Statistics Day 2020 a similar success, I invite your Government, as the primary producer, user and beneficiary of official statistics, to lend your full support to this year's efforts.

The Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs maintains the website to share information on how World Statistics Day this year will be celebrated around the world (<https://worldstatisticsday.org>). I encourage your Government to inform us about your plans, so that your information can be made visible for the global community.

As the United Nations marks its seventy-fifth anniversary and the world deploys data to face a common challenge, let us use World Statistics Day to spotlight the role of statistics in advancing sustainable development for all.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'António Guterres', with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

António Guterres