Building Sustainable Capacity Through the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training (GIST)

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Abstract

Progress and development depend on access to robust data. The present COVID-19 pandemic tearing across the globe brings into focus the urgent need for statistics, as well as the relative inequities in statistical capacity to measure its impact. Many national statistics organizations (NSOs) were already challenged to deliver on the 2030 Agenda with the indicators to measure the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the pandemic has added further complications. In addition, even for NSOs in relatively high-income countries, the increasingly complex data ecosystem presents both opportunities and challenges as they seek to harness the power of big data. While multiple international organizations and institutions have been building statistical capacity for decades, the progress has often been faltering, duplicative or out of synch with NSO needs. Furthermore, the focus on mainly building the capacity NSOs has also highlighted the lack of coordination and capacity at the National Statistical System (NSS) level and its importance in the delivery of the SDG indicators.

Recognizing these gaps, in December 2018 UN Statistical Division (UNSD) brought together the major institutions providing statistical training to form the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training (GIST). The goal of the GIST is to build sustainable capacities in countries through efficient, effective, and harmonized delivery of training at global and regional levels that will enable production and use of quality data and statistics including monitoring and implementation of SDGs. Over the last two years, GIST partners have worked on three task teams, each focusing on related but specific subjects – Addressing NSO needs; Online Gateway and Community of Practice; and Statistical Literacy.

The presentation will highlight the challenges faced by NSOs and the NSS in the delivery of statistics, especially drawing on the experiences of the U.S. Census Bureau International Programs in building statistical capacity. Sen will then discuss the membership of GIST and describe broadly the results of the work done the task teams over the last two years to help with the coordination and harmonization of training – both in-person and online- and future directions.

Key words-
Statistical training; capacity building; GIST; harmonization; sustainable statistical training; coordination