The COVID-19 pandemic has made clear that the availability of trusted, timely, and disaggregated data is of critical importance to save lives and protect the livelihoods of millions of people around the world. At the same time, the global health crisis has shown how vulnerable key data collection operations, such as population censuses and household and business surveys, can be.

But the experience of the last two years has also shown an impressive ability of national statistical systems to innovate and adapt, developing and deploying new methodologies, leveraging non-traditional data sources, learning to work remotely using new information and communication technologies, and partnering with national and international stakeholders.

Nevertheless, the pandemic has also exacerbated inequalities in access to funding, technology and resources across national statistical systems, leading to significant disparities in their capacity to produce the data and statistics that are critically needed by policy and decision makers to mitigate the effects of the crisis and recover from it.

In this context, and with less than ten years left to achieve the 2030 Agenda, the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data (CTGAP) is more relevant than ever – as our roadmap to strengthening the national statistical capacities, especially of low- and middle-income countries, in order to produce the necessary information that guides policies and action towards achieving the SDGs. It is vital to understand how the global community has implemented the CTGAP so far, to better inform actions moving forward.

This side event will be an opportunity to see beyond the immediate crisis and to reflect on the insights gained through a series of global surveys of national statistical offices (NSOs) conducted over the last two years, including the recent Survey of NSOs on the Implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data (conducted by the World Bank, the United Nations Statistics Division and PARIS21), as well as four rounds of surveys of NSOs to monitor the evolving impacts of the pandemic on statistical operations (implemented by the World Bank and United Nations Statistics Division, in collaboration with the Regional Commissions of the United Nations). By examining several key aspects of national statistical systems, including strategic priorities, legal frameworks, ITC readiness and resources, the surveys revealed the extent to which national statistical systems are resilient, fit for purpose, and ready for future challenges. They also provide valuable information on financing needs expressed by countries to implement CTGAP.
The session will consist of a presentation of highlights from the most recent survey followed by a panel discussion with representatives from NSO and a UN regional commission, who will examine how to better collect and share timely, actionable information on the capacity and financing needs of NSOs and other members of the national and international statistical systems, with the objective of being able to better monitor and strengthen the preparedness and resilience of national statistical systems.

Suggested Format:
- Opening (5 min) UNSD
- Presentation: Highlights from Survey (10 min) World Bank
- Panel discussion with takeaways from UNSD, World Bank and PARIS21 (30 min)
  - Moderator: PARIS21
  - Panel members:
    - Cameroon (TBC)
    - United Kingdom
    - UNECA (TBC)
- Q&A (25 min) - Moderator: PARIS21
- Closing (5min) – UNSD