The COVID-19 pandemic as a driver of innovation in statistics

Rolando Ocampo
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Content

• The impact of COVID-19 on regional statistical operations.

• The actions of the NSO in this context.

• The accompaniment of ECLAC.

• Statistical innovation. What aspects can be kept in the future?
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The impact of COVID-19 on regional statistical operations:

➢ As SCA Secretariat, the Statistics Division sent 2 questionnaires to the National Statistical Offices and the Central Banks of Latin America and the Caribbean, on the impact of COVID-19 on statistical operations:

1. March 2020: General status of NSOs and impact on censuses, household surveys, business surveys and price indices.

➢ As of June, the information is collected through the global questionnaire of UNSD and the World Bank.
Main results of the 2nd Survey on Consumer Price Index

- 22 countries* participated.
- Survey on the coverage to prepare the CPI for March and April 2020.
- In the first months affected by the health emergency, there were countries that have imputation percentages greater than 30%.
- Food and health goods and services are those with the highest percentage of imputations.
- Alternative to face-to-face modalities reached at least 50% use.

* Countries participating in the survey:
Old and bearded; Argentina; Belize; Bermuda; Bolivia, Plurinational State of; Brazil; Chile; Colombia; Costa Rica; Cuba; Ecuador; The Savior; France (*); Pomegranate; Guatemala; Honduras; Mexico; Nicaragua; Panama; Paraguay; Peru and the Dominican Republic.

Source: Information from 19 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, responded to this query.
Main results of the 2nd Survey on Household Survey

- 18 National Statistical Offices and a Central Bank * responded to the survey.
- 80% had planned to carry out employment surveys between March and April.
- In March, 58.3% had to collect all or part of the information by telephone or web.
- The rest made no changes (33.3%) or had to suspend the survey (8.3%).
- In April, 75% had to collect all or part of the information by telephone or web.

Did you have to make any changes to the collection method due to COVID-19? (April 2020)

Source: Information from 12 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, responded to this query.
Global Survey of the United Nations Statistics Division and the World Bank Development Data Group

- In coordination with the 5 Regional Commissions to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on NSOs, through the chiefs of statistics from more than 100 countries.
- It helps identify areas that require priority support and develop plans for longer-term interventions.

Some key results from the second round of the survey:

- Most offices still operate in emergency mode working from home.
- Short-term statistical output has been most affected in low- and middle-income countries.
- Fewer high-income countries have been affected by greater reliance on alternative sources of administrative data and remote data collection modes.
- The coordination of the National Statistical Systems must be strengthened to respond to the data needs of the pandemic.
- More assistance needed for NSOs particularly in low- and lower-middle-income countries.
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The actions of the NSOs in this context

Some examples:

- Alternative methods of data collection on establishments reached at least 50% use.
- Offices running with work from home.
- Development of portals for visualization and monitoring of COVID-19.
- Telephone survey, with previous samples and calibration models to ensure consistency of results.
- Suspension of statistical operations; postponement of population censuses.
- NSO participation in the COVID-19 test.
- Greater dependence on alternative sources of administrative data.
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ECLAC's Statistics Division has taken several actions to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on statistical operations in Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Within the framework of the Knowledge Transmission Network, technical sessions were held with the countries that were attended by the NSOs:

4. COVID-19 impact on labor force surveys and other household surveys in Caribbean countries - June 11.
Accompaniment in Household Surveys

In accompaniment with ILO, multiple technical sessions were held with officials from the NSOs in charge of labor market surveys, supporting them in adapting the methodology of their household surveys to face the challenges of the pandemic:

1. Bolivia - Continuous Employment Survey (ONE)
2. Chile - National Employment Survey (INE) and CASEN Survey (MDS)
3. Colombia - Large Integrated Household Survey (DANE)
4. Costa Rica - Continuous Employment Survey and National Household Survey (ONE)
5. Ecuador - National Survey of Employment and Unemployment (ONE)
6. El Salvador - Multipurpose Household Survey (Digestyc)
7. Guatemala - Master sampling frame and redesigns of the National Household Income and Expenditure Survey (ONE)
9. Panama - Labor Market Survey (ONE)
10. Dominican Republic - Continuous National Survey of the Workforce (Central Bank)
Recommendations for Household Surveys

It was almost impossible to ensure a complete face-to-face survey in the face of the pandemic, so it was recommended:

1. Publication of official statistics based on probabilistic selection of household samples.
2. Set up a probabilistic monitoring panel to conduct telephone surveys.
3. Use selection and coverage bias correction models.

Countries were able to meet the challenges and conduct telephone or mixed surveys, and publish official labor market statistics.
Accompaniment in Economic Statistics

Direct technical assistance through virtual meetings with teams from ONE and Central Banks

**Capacity building - National Accounts and Prices:**

- Compilation, dissemination and explanation of high frequency indicators.
- Continuity of economic and price surveys, and new data collection modalities.
- Analysis of the effects on economic indicators with and without seasonality.

2 National Accounts Webinars

3 Price Survey Webinars

Over 344 participants in total.
National accounts:
- Evaluate the causes of non-response from companies.
- Support actions for access to administrative databases of tax source or insurance or social security.
- Identify the fiscal policies implemented by the government in the face of the pandemic.
- Inform users in detail about the availability of basic statistics and the imputation methods used.

Prices:
- Develop team capacities to implement remote PCI collection using digital technologies.
- Implement mechanisms to support and supervise the workflows of the new information gathering methods.
Accompaniment in Geospatial Information

Joint UN-GGIM:Americas – ECLAC Virtual Seminar Series:

COVID-19: Strategies for a Geospatial Response in the Americas
May 15, 2020
Attendance: 250 people

Towards the Implementation of the Strategic Framework on Information and Geospatial Services for Disasters in the Americas
04 Aug 2020
Attendance: 210 people

Nineteenth meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas
Accompaniment in Geospatial Information

Geoportal of the COVID-19 Observatory of ECLAC

Types of measures:

- Movements across and within countries.
- Economy.
- Education.
- Employment.
- Gender.
- Social protection.
- Health.

* Visualization to be launched soon
New visualization offers:

- Free software.
- Vision of data at the regional level.
- Easy viewing of the Caribbean.
- Display of graphics and download of tables.
- Percentage of countries taking the measures.
- Number of actions by measures.
- Link by country to the Social Development Observatory.
- Display by subtopics at the country and regional level.
- Automatic update of all products.
- Calendars by measure, by share and comb

* Visualization to be launched soon
Joint exercise with CEPEI to identify the relationship and regional effects of the national measures taken in the face of the pandemic and the 169 targets of the SDGs, as input for future analysis.

Collaborative work with Civil Society

Relationship

Direct
Partial
Indirect

Effect

Contributes to the progress towards the target
Undermines progress towards the target

Direct contribution
Partial contribution
Indirect contribution
Indirect hamper
Partial hamper
Direct hamper
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What aspects can be kept in the future?

- Use of Geospatial information?
- Mixed modalities (face-to-face and telephone) for surveys?
- Use of administrative records to obtain information?
- Others?
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Nineteenth meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
25–27 August 2020