IMPROVING DATA LITERACY TO ADVANCE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION

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STATISTICAL LITERACY

- **How well do ordinary citizens comprehend statistics?**
  - Knowledge of numbers/statistics
  - An understanding of the implication(s) of the statistics produced
  - A comprehension of statistics and their meanings in a way to correctly convey the underlying information to others

- **Public sector workers are no ordinary citizens**
  - They inform policies and programmes
  - They sometimes collect and have custody of administrative data
  - They provide service to fellow citizens which may be based on opinions rather than facts

STATISTICAL LITERACY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

- **Administrative Data**
  - Many MDAs handle administrative data but do not have statisticians on staff
  - The manners in which data are collected, archived and retrieved have implication for its use and value, e.g., continuous vs. discrete; proportion vs. percentage:
    - Should information on age be recorded as actual age or as age categories?
    - Does 0.1 5 represent 15% or 0.15 % tax rate?
  - The value of administrative data to inform policy is undermined if those in custody of the data have limited knowledge of statistics

STATISTICAL LITERACY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

- **Engaging the public**
  - Facts about government programmes and policies could help promote it, e.g. the SDGs
  - Transforming information into relevant statistics requires a minimum level of statistical expertise

- **Service to fellow citizens**
  - Unintentional but erroneous action/advice/opinion based on faulty statistics could be costly
  - Reliance on "the expert" does not encourage the development of minimal statistical skills

A PROPOSAL FOR ADVANCING STATISTICAL LITERACY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

- **Short/Medium-term**
  - Implement short courses in Basic Statistics for public sector staff without prior training in statistics but who have responsibility for handling administrative data
  - Encourage greater interaction of MDAs with the NSO (through policy or public sector enlightenment) especially ahead of a survey being conducted and throughout the processes of data collection and analysis
  - Invest in infographics to make statistics more appealing in the public sector

A PROPOSAL FOR ADVANCING STATISTICAL LITERACY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

- **Long-term**
  - Have at least a statistician or staff adequately trained in statistics assigned to any MDA that handles administrative data
  - Make dissemination of public data/statistics the default except where confidentiality concerns preclude same
    - Feedback from data users could help convey the value attached to the data