

## To make the world better connected by statistics



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This year, the third World Statistics Day (WSD) will be celebrated on 20 October all over the world. I hope the opening of this blog will contribute to global promotion of the WSD.

Our slogan this time is “Connecting the world with data we can trust”. What implications do you find in it? Perhaps, everyone has different interpretations. Let me share my views in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The slogan was conceived well before the emergence of the pandemic. But I think it is still quite valid even now in terms of two aspects: statistics as a field of science and statistics as public data. The WSD is meant to focus mainly on official statistics, but here, I extend the scope to statistics in a broader sense.

As for the first aspect, statistics plays essential roles in broad areas of medical science. Typically, in epidemiology, data of infections and the mechanism of the spread of virus is analyzed by statistical methods. Statistical methods are also rigorously applied to medical analyses such as determining the effective measures to prevent contagions and testing effectiveness and safety of medicines and vaccines.

Discoveries from statistical analyses of this kind are exchanged globally, and collective knowledge of the disease and effective measures are constantly updated and enhanced among experts in the world. To outsmart the formidable virus, intensive global collaboration is essential. In this way, the world is connected by statistics in order to win the fight against COVID-19.

As for the second aspect, disseminating reliable and easy-to-understand information to the public is essential in order to contain the spread of virus, because the citizens are the key players, and success of preventive measures requires strong support from the citizens.

Many countries have had mandatory or voluntary lockdown, with gradual relaxation recently. Under an isolated situation, people tend to feel anxiety or doubt about the situation, and there is a high risk that they could be misled by “fake news”. But by disseminating reliable statistical information on the status of the pandemic and the measures for coping with the problem, the citizens will be able to understand the current situation appropriately, and many will make

concerted efforts to prevent spread of virus more effectively. In this way, statistics can connect isolated people together to encourage cooperation in the fight against COVID-19.

Statistics also has many other important roles, such as identifying those in need of help under the pandemic situation, supporting good planning of rapid economic recovery after the pandemic, etc.

To sum up, we can say statistics bears important roles in the stressful time of the pandemic, as well as the normal time. We should also note that reliable data is essential, but that is not sufficient. Sound analyses and interpretations should be applied, and the findings should be well communicated to the citizens. Furthermore, we should also keep in mind that value of official statistics will be enhanced if they are used together with other statistics and analyses produced by academia, the private sector and other institutions, depending on the situation.

These are my personal views, and I am sure readers also have their own views about the WSD and its slogan. I would be happy to hear them in this blog, if possible. Such an exchange of views will make a good dedication to the World Statistics Day.

<https://worldstatisticsday.org/2020/blog/make-the-world-better-connected-by-statistics.html>