

Data Values: Defining a Fair Data Future in Africa

In-person side-event proposal - Ninth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development
Co-hosted by the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data; United Nations Economic Commission for Africa; and the Government of Kenya

Background

Data is a defining issue of this era. Data is an essential tool to accelerate transformation towards inclusive, sustainable, and resilient societies across Africa. Data leadership, capacities, and innovations are rapidly expanding across the continent. Yet, in the face of interlinking challenges, we are struggling to use the best data available to advance progress on Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063. Declining trust and continued exclusion are creating barriers between data and those who stand to benefit the most from it.

We urgently need to build greater understanding and consensus across governments, citizens, and organizations in Africa about the values that should underpin data and statistical systems. We need stronger continental knowledge exchange and partnerships to build data systems that help and empower people and prevent harm or exclusion. Equally, we must strengthen the regional agenda on data values to inform and shape critical global processes, such as the SDG Summit and the Global Digital Compact.

The [Data Values Project](#) is a movement, coordinated by the Global Partnership, catalyzing action to ensure a fair data future for all. Hundreds of organizations across 65+ countries have developed a new [Data Values manifesto](#), outlining five ways to shift design, collect, fund, govern, and use data.

Session description

The proposed in-person session on the side-lines of ARFSD-9 will bring together representatives from governments, civil society, marginalized communities, the private sector, and multilateral organizations to discuss data values. The session will make practical progress on SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals, as well as contributing insights to SDG 9's focus on innovation and SDG 11 on sustainable communities.

Through roundtable discussions, we will enable participants to share their experiences, best practices, and perspectives around Data Values, with a view to solidifying a common vision of a fair data future across the African continent and outlining key priorities for action. The dialogue will unearth common opportunities and challenges that the Data Values movement will work to support. The insights shared in the discussion will inform national dialogues on data across Africa and global processes and moments, such as the SDG Summit and the Summit of the Future.

We will host an in-person, 1.5-hour meeting on the side-lines of ARFSD-9 to facilitate robust discussion. The format will involve a short panel discussion to frame the Data Values agenda within specific contexts and institutions across the African continent, followed by roundtable discussions and a share back moment. Speakers will include national and local government representatives, private sector leaders, and community activists from across Africa.

Session objectives

- Convene diverse actors interested in data from across Africa to build connections and spark multi-stakeholder partnership ideas
- Facilitate the sharing of experiences and best practices which can inspire action, as well discussion of the remaining challenges which will inform future Data Values Project programming
- Begin solidifying a common, regional stance on data values that can feed into global moments and processes, such as the SDG Summit in September 2023 and the Summit of the Future in September 2024.