

6TH SDMX GLOBAL CONFERENCE

SDMX FOR THE DATA REVOLUTION

DAY TWO

2-5 OCTOBER 2017



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SDMX IMPLEMENTATIONS BY INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS *by Xuan Che*

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DAY

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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, October 3, 2017 (ECA) - The customizable yet disciplined and collaborative approaches towards SDMX are key to its successful implementations among international organizations. In the second session on day two of the Global Conference, many organizations shared their experiences, successes and lessons learned with the global SDMX community.

The implementers of SDMX at EuroStat rightly reminded us that, before SDMX and the digitization of data, statistics were done on papers: This is where we all started. Now, SDMX has changed the way we process data: it is one standard combining the best of two worlds: the statistical one and the technical one. Both worlds have to work together collaboratively for the whole framework to succeed. EuroStat shared the valuable lesson of being patient with changes, for the data revolution will not happen overnight. Rather, the structure and facilities of the data system need to update, one small step at a time, through persistency and buy-ins from the entire organization and different projects. Through these small changes, the revolution will eventually arrive. As an example, thanks to the implementation of global DSDs, transmission of data to and from EuroStat has almost doubled in recent years.

In OECD's case, their product, the .Stat Suite – a native SDMX and modular architecture for data development needs – is introduced as a component-based, community driven, open-sourced framework with fully integrated data lifecycles. The Generic Statistical Business Process Model, or GSBPM, is an end-to-end data lifecycles that allow OECD to provide complete data service to end-users. Its easiness for integration and compatibility to other standard has increased its appeals and opened many doors to wider ranges of developers and users.

The World Bank shared experiences on how SDMX has helped automated the data ingestion process for the publications of World Development Indicators. It is evident that SDMX is crucial in every step of the process, from data download, extraction, cleaning, validation and check, to transformation, consolidation, verification, and final publication.

SDMX allowed the World Bank to gain access to over 8,000 datasets for data extraction, and made weekly updates of the Indicators possible.

Other international organizations including ILO, IMF, and the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) also shared their valuable knowledge and processes on SDMX deployment, exchanges, and well as national statistical systems and their collaborations. ■

INTERVIEWS *by Sandra Nyaira*

At the end of the second day of the 6th SDMX conference, we reached out to some of the sponsors for their take on Day 2 of the meeting.



Louis Marc Ducharme,
Director, Statistics
Department, International
Monetary Fund

It is important to have a conference like this one where we bring the technicians of SDMX and the users because we are building a tool to disseminate data timely and transparently and it's important to have that discussion.

In the last two days we have seen a lot of progress in the conversation, it is much more engaged; people understand that we have to do it in partnership; we have to learn from countries that are more advanced; coordination is essential so that we don't build a variative tool.

What we are seeing is that Africa is thirsty for having more transparent and timely information and I think that at the end of the day this conference would have brought together African countries that have made some advances in using the technology and can share with other countries that are at the beginning of the journey.

I was very impressed by the statement from the ECA yesterday challenging the sponsors on working together with African member States on SDMX. Hopefully we will be able to work together on this. ECA can bring something new to this process.



David Barraclough
IT Unit Head in Statistics
Directorate at the OECD
and also Chair of the SDMX
Statistics Working Group

It is great to be here with so many others from many different countries and organizations to discuss SDMX and what it can do, especially in helping people make good decisions and policymakers in particular to enact good policies for the benefit of the people using good data. SDMX allows us to harmonize the data and metadata exchange. SDMX will lead to better validation of data so more correct statistics and more timely data would become available. Statisticians will be able to focus on using the data and analyzing it to create new statistics; to write the stories; to enable people to interpret the data better and to enable policymakers to use the data to enact good policies.

What is great also about this conference is that many African countries are represented here. There are many, many disparate systems on the continent and many different data portals focused on single statistical domain or just very closely related. Through SDMX we will have a single system which will handle different statistical domains. African countries won't have to develop those systems themselves because they already exist. It's a great learning process for us all here, thanks to the conference.

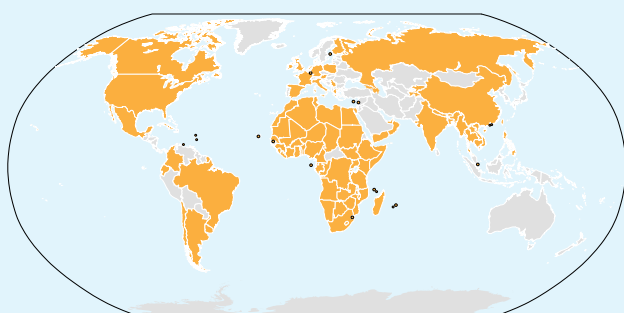
Grant Cameron,
Manager, Data Group,
World Bank



SDMX is important because it endures quality; data has to be of high quality to be of use to policymakers and overtime with the initial investment processes for producing and processing the data become much more efficient so it is great that we are here to discuss SDMX and why is it important. We need to convince those who still haven't adopted SDMX to start taking it on board because there's no doubt that it is successful. A lot of those statistical offices have adopted that micro-data sort-of management tool so I would encourage them to take on SDMX.

From the sponsors side we have already seen something that is very positive which is the high level of interest from Africa in SDMX. There are a lot of people from different African countries which is really great to see. We have to think about how we can support and foster an SDMX community in Africa - that's something we would want to see happen. There's enough activity here and enough interest for us to figure out how we can do that.

As the Sponsors Group we are working on a revised communication strategy as one of our key pillars for the Action Plan because there are a host of different target audience that we can look towards. Making a strong case to policymakers is important and one mechanism to do that well is some of the experiences we have seen here, for example how bulletin boards of the Africa Information Highway have put more data in the hands of policymakers. The best case that can be made of data is by another user who went through the process and benefited from it.



A TRULY GLOBAL EMBRACE OF THE SDMX IS MORE EVIDENT THAN EVER. *by Xuan che*

The 6th SDMX Global Conference is the most widely represented Conference to date.

Over **330 registered** to the Conference, coming **from 90+ countries**, are gathered in Addis Ababa this week, sharing experiences and aspirations of SDMX during 16 sessions, 60+ talks, and 3 side events offered by the Conference.



SCHWEINFEST SAYS REACHING OUT TO POLICY-MAKERS ON BENEFITS OF SDMX CRUCIAL

by Sandra Nyaira

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, October 3, 2017 (ECA) –The 6th Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (SDMX) global conference ended in Addis Ababa last night with United Nations Statistics Division Director, Stefan Schweinfest, urging countries and organizations that have not yet embraced SDMX to adopt the tool for statistical data production as well as data exchange.

Mr. Schweinfest said initially he was skeptical of the tool but has since become a big believer, seeing immense benefits it brings in the statistical production process. He said he was happy with the conference as participants prepared to go into the second phase of the conference which is capacity building for the next two days.

“These conferences are extraordinarily useful because they bring the entire community, which is very diverse, together and I can tell you that we have taken very good notes and we will try to immediately transfer what we heard from you and the conclusions into the action plan,” he told participants from over 90 countries attending the conference.

He said he had two takeaways from the conference.

“One is on improving communication. We do have to explain what this SDMX means and why it is good for policymakers, for a lot of people. That is not easy. I had to travel this process, I told you I was scared at the beginning but now I’m a believer,” he said.

The second takeaway, he said, was that his belief that SDMX is good for the entire statistical system was confirmed at the conference.

“It really helps to put order in the house, to make sure the right people talk to each other the right way so we build a system that is solid and sustainable,” said Mr. Schweinfest.

African Centre for Statistics Director, Oliver Chinganya, in his remarks said the past two days had been very productive with participants now well-acquainted with the use and benefits of SDMX, particularly those coming from developing countries.

“There are challenges that need to be resolved in some countries, like internet access to transmit data even internally and also outside, so that is something that needs to be looked at in terms of putting the right infrastructure in place,” he said.

Mr. Chinganya said there was need for more advocacy to sell SDMX in developing countries, especially at the policy level, with experts explaining to lawmakers why it is important for countries to embrace and join others in using SDMX.

He said a clear roadmap needs to be drawn on how SDMX will be rolled out in Africa, adding the ECA stands ready to work with member States to support them to embrace innovative methods and tools in statistical data production as well as adopting SDMX as primary tool for data exchange.

“It’s a big challenge. At the ECA are committed to make sure SDMX becomes a standard and the primary tool to transmit data,” said Mr. Chinganya, adding the Commission is also ready to use its convening power to enhance its dialogue with member States, research institutions, as well as other sectors to increase awareness and ensure that SDMX permeates through the continent. ■

THE SECOND DAY AT A GLANCE

Photo contributions by:
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