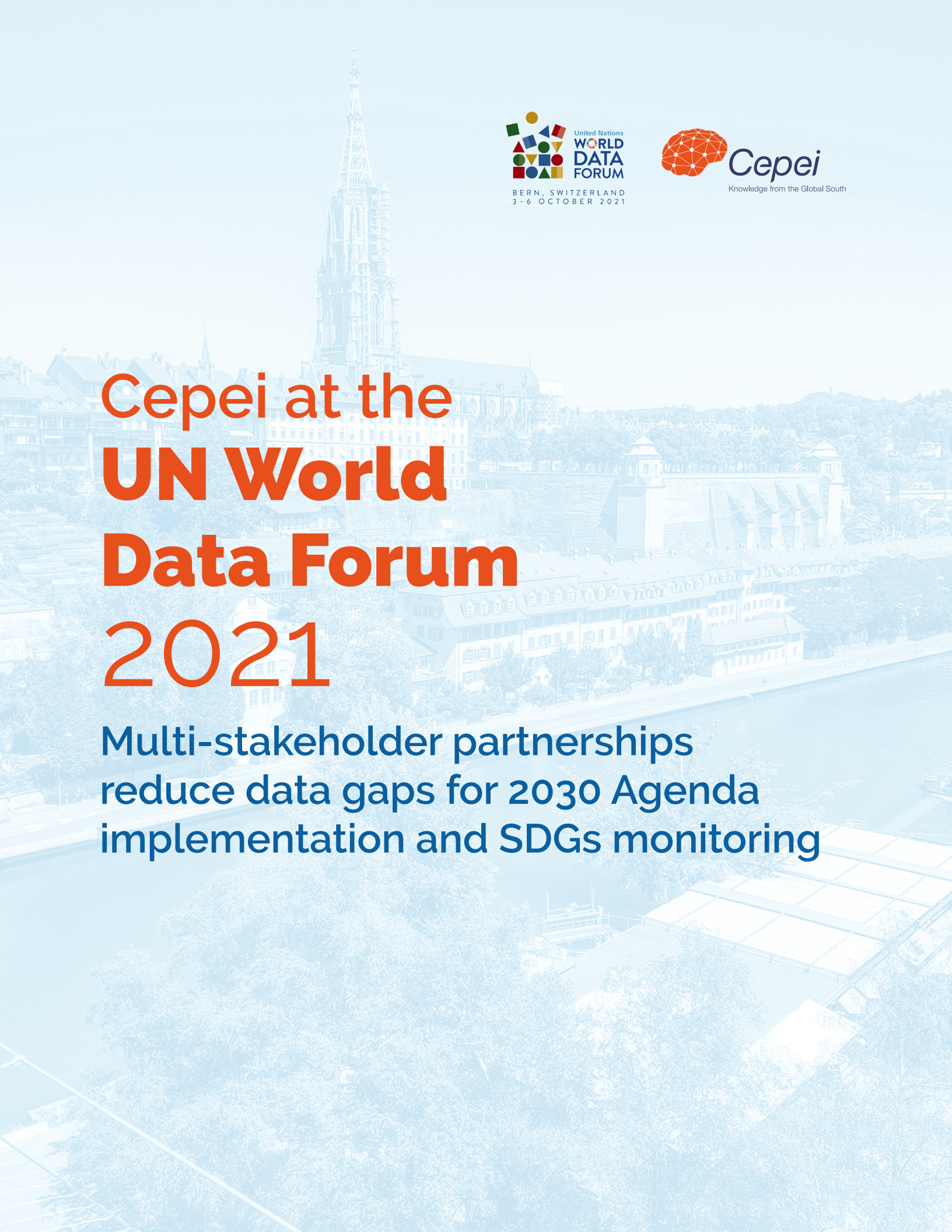

United Nations WORLD DATA FORUM
BERN, SWITZERLAND
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Cepei
Knowledge from the Global South

Cepei at the **UN World Data Forum** 2021

Multi-stakeholder partnerships reduce data gaps for 2030 Agenda implementation and SDGs monitoring

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What is the **World Data Forum?**

The UN World Data Forum (UNWDF) is considered to be the most important world meeting on data. It brings together producers, users, and promoters of data and statistics that are part of Governments, civil society, the private sector, donor and philanthropic organizations, international agencies, the geospatial community, the media, the academic community, and professional organizations. It emerged from an express recommendation stated in the document A World that Counts, describing the need for a "World Forum on Sustainable Development Data", once the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were agreed.

The High-Level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (HLG-PCCB) oversees the organization of the United Nations World Data Forum, under the leadership of the **United Nations Statistics Division** (UNSD) and in close consultation with the Member States, international partners, and other stakeholders.

There have been three editions of the Forum:

- Cape Town, South Africa, January 2017
- Dubai, Arab Emirates, October 2018
- Bern, Switzerland, October 2020. Virtual edition due to worldwide restrictions and implications of the COVID-19 pandemic

The third on-site Forum will be held between 3 and 6 October 2021, in Bern, Switzerland, as a continuation of the virtual Forum held in 2020. The programme for the event includes various themes centered around the Cape Town Global Action Plan and the Dubai Declaration.

Why is participation from **civil society and think-tanks in the Forum so important?**

The multi-stakeholder approach to the SDGs promotes higher participation from stakeholders in research and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda. Thus, generating evidence and knowledge is becoming increasingly relevant for research centers and civil society, as it allows them to follow the progress made in implementing the SDG Targets and call decision-makers to action, in different sectors of society.

Identifying information gaps in lack of access to data, disaggregation levels or unavailability are aspects that are addressed by organizations working around data for sustainable development, such as PARIS21, GPSDD, SDSN TReNDS, among others.

Cepei, as an agent for change in the Global South, works to contribute to decision-making to move towards sustainable development based on data and analysis. This is aimed at closing information gaps, conveying diversity in social realities, strengthening the capacities of different stakeholders to encourage data use, and promoting a data culture that ***"leaves no one behind."***

How has **Cepei participated in the UNWDF?**

Cepei participated in the on-site Forum in 2017 and 2018, as well as the virtual Forum in 2020:

Programme Committee of the World Data Forum

People from different sectors collaborate in the Programme Committee: civil society, the private sector, the academic community, and governments, working around data for sustainable development. Their contributions are focused on strengthening the Forum's programme and selecting the thematic aspects that are most relevant to current times.

Cepei has been part of the Committee of the three Forums, providing a Latin American and Caribbean perspective regarding the region's progress towards sustainable development and the needs in data use and production to monitor the SDGs.

How does Latin America and the Caribbean participate in the Forum?

Regional presence is one of the main objectives of the World Data Forum, especially representation from regions of the Global South to learn about their challenges and practices in measuring the SDGs.

From the total participants, Latin America and the Caribbean only made up for 4% in the first two editions of the Forum (2017 and 2018), while in 2020 the virtual nature of the Forum was a determining factor for this number to rise to 12%. This shows that there is still an opportunity for more participation from the region, requiring:

- Better resource allocation for participants to travel..
- Including sectors other than the statistical community, for example, civil society, the academic community, and the private sector.
- A regional communications strategy that presents the benefits of the Forum for the regions and its countries.
- Multi-language meetings with Spanish, Portuguese and other interpretation available.

Check out how Cepei has participated in previous editions of the World Data Forum

How does Cepei participate **in the UN World Data Forum 2021?**

In the framework of the World Data Forum 2021, Cepei seeks to enhance the importance of creating multi-stakeholder partnerships, by presenting successful cases and improvement opportunities to showcase the potential of administrative records for statistical purposes and the use of non-traditional sources of information, specifically telecommunications data, as an opportunity to close information gaps and meet the new information demands to measure the Sustainable Development Goals.

This is why Cepei is co-organizing 3 sessions and 1 parallel session with key partners such as the Global Partnership (GPSDD), Tanzania Datalat, Telefónica Tech, DANE and the Swiss Federal Statistical Office.

1. Data partnerships for sustainable development: The story of the Global South

On 4 October, at 9:00 a.m. Berna time, Tanzania Data Lab and Cepei, together with a group of civil society organizations, will share their experiences with global data partnerships and explore how they can contribute to closing the existing data gaps with:

- National reports
- National and subnational data roadmap initiatives
- Strengthening data collection and analysis that are centralized at a local level
- Good practices to implement quality standards for non-traditional data sources
- Research in policy, data analysis, case studies, and cross-regional exchange to close data gaps for the Sustainable Development Goals

Research as the foundation for sustainable development

Cepei's contribution

BD4D Network

Between 2018 and 2020, LIRNEasia, the Local Development Research Institute (LDRI), the African Institute for Mathematical Science (AIMS), the Centre of Internet and Society (CIS), and Cepei, with the support of Canada's International Development Research Center (IDRC), created Big Data for Development, a network that promoted the relevance of big data for sustainable development in the Global South. Among the research done by Cepei, we note:

§ Governance of Big Data development ecosystems

§ Legal barriers to big data within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America

§ The context of data quality for measuring the SDGs (SPA)

AIMS-Cepei Data Science Fellowship Program

The AIMS-Cepei Data Science Fellowship Program, aimed at promoting innovation in Africa and Latin America to respond to capacity building challenges in emerging digital technologies, including big data, open data, and solving issues related to development. Within the framework of this program, every year Cepei provides practice spaces for AIMS students, in order to develop their competencies by participating in projects related to big data for sustainable development.

COVID-19 Data and Innovation Centre

In 2020, Cepei launched the COVID-19 Data and Innovation Centre to deliver information, evidence, knowledge, innovation strategies, territorial requirements, and policy recommendations to the *UN COVID-19 Multi-Partner Trust Fund* in their purpose of strengthening response and recovery actions in the Global South.

2. Discovering opportunities in unusual places: How countries support each other to harness administrative data for the SDGs

On 4 October, from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. (Bern time), the Global Partnership (GPSDD) and Cepei will host a round table where the national statistical institutes of Costa Rica, Paraguay, and Zanzíbar, together with the Ghana births and deaths registration office, will present, by means of a series of Q&As, the concrete strategies, actions, and partnerships developed to harness administrative records, in order to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and think about the post-pandemic era.

The United Nations Statistics Division will comment on the progress made and challenges faced by countries harnessing administrative records and how the Collaborative on the Use of Administrative Data for Statistics is working on this.

Strengthening statistical capacity for the use of administrative records

Cepei's contribution

In the last few years, the importance of administrative records has become increasingly clear as a primary source of information providing countries with timely, up-to-date, and easily accessible data that help identify the most vulnerable groups and target resources to meet their needs.

The Global Partnership (GPSDD) and Cepei have promoted capacity building and strengthening for both national statistical institutes and other government and non-government, national and cross-regional data producers by exchanging knowledge/experiences, such as the Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa peer exchange on administrative records, held in November 2019 in México, supported by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI). During this event, 48 participating national statistical offices, ministries, agencies, and government bodies; multilateral bodies; and the private sector from 11 countries of both regions shared their experiences, identified common challenges, and formed partnerships on administrative records.

The peer exchange became the starting point for developing new bilateral cooperation spaces and multi-regional partnerships. In the first case, there was technical assistance between October and November 2020 from Statcan, in which Canada shared its Business Register experience with Costa Rica's statistical institute (INEC) to strengthen the Register of Economic Units currently being developed by the Institute.

In 2020 the Collaborative on the Use of Administrative Data was created as an initiative of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and the Global Partnership (GPSDD), to strengthen the capacity of countries to use administrative data sources for statistical purposes. Cepei co-facilitates *Task Team 3: Technical interoperability and linking records*, where we boost participation from Latin American and Caribbean countries.

3. Experiences with telecommunications business data to measure the impact of climate change on the management of natural disasters

On 5 October, from 5:15 p.m. to 5:35 p.m. (Bern time), in a 20-minute Ted Talk, Telefónica Tech and Cepei will present an exercise on the use of mobile phone data to identify the impact of population displacement during natural disasters. The case study will be the torrential avenue that took place in Mocoa, Colombia, in March 2017.

The session will present the challenges faced, methodological aspects and research findings, including data analysis, interpretation, and visualization, as well as the opportunity to use big data from telecommunications to map social and environmental issues by means of partnerships between the private sector and civil society.

Mobile phone data to understand the impact of natural disasters

Cepei's contribution

Data story: Rebuilding Mocoa through data

In 2017, Mocoa, a municipality in southern Colombia, experienced one of the worst natural disasters in its history: A torrential avenue that destroyed a large proportion of its territory. Telefónica Tech and Cepei got together to analyze the internal and external mobilization of the Mocoa population before, during, and after the natural disaster, using call information and data traffic from mobile phones. The research also includes data from secondary sources, such as Government bodies and the media, that helped identify the trajectory taken to rebuild Mocoa years after the event took place.

Results are presented through an interactive data story format with a visually supported narrative. The story, ***Rebuilding Mocoa through data***, is available in the digital data lab for sustainable development DataRepública.org.

White paper: Big data to manage natural disasters

Aware of the importance of big data as a tool to measure, analyze and monitor social, political, and economic issues, Telefónica and Cepei developed a technical document explaining in further detail the analysis of the Mocoa natural disaster by processing, in an aggregated and anonymous manner, the mobile phone network data, from a Sustainable Development Goals perspective. The results of the internal and external mobilization analysis in the municipality show how big data can provide information that strengthens planning and decision-

making processes when managing these phenomena. Additionally, it has become clear that research done through multi-stakeholder partnerships has added value.

DataRepública: Data lab for sustainable development

DataRepública seeks to create a strong dialogue between users and data for sustainable development through four components: Connect, Learn, Publish and Analyze, presenting the data ecosystem for countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Paraguay, Dominican Republic, and Uruguay). The platform not only enhances the key role of Government entities in data production, but the contributions of other stakeholders as a complement for official statistics. DataRepública also shows how non-traditional data sources can address gaps that have not been covered by traditional methods.

4. Support, Engage and Amplify the World Data Forum Messages

The Road to Bern initiative in LAC

On 7 October from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. (Bern time), DANE, the Swiss Federal Statistical Office and Cepei, with the support of Tableau, will meet with relevant stakeholders of the data community, such as national statistical offices, civil society, the private sector, and international organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean, to:

- Discuss the results of the webinar series Road to Bern: Data for development from Latin America and the Caribbean
- Launch the Community of Practice for Latin America and the Caribbean in Communications and Data Visualization, seeking to promote collaborative dissemination to expand awareness of activities related to data, statistics and SDGs monitoring in the region.
- Collectively define the region's way forward following the UN World Data Forum.

Strengthening Latin America and the Caribbean's participation in the Forum

Cepei's contribution

Road to Bern: Data for development from Latin America and the Caribbean

DANE and Cepei, in collaboration with the Swiss Government and its Road to Bern iniciative have developed a strategy to promote the use of timely and quality data for sustainable development in the LAC region through a series of five webinars that foster participation of stakeholders in the public and private sectors (including businesses, the academic community and civil society).

Between April and September 2021, we carried out 4 webinars (available on our YouTube channel) covering the themes: **1)** multi-stakeholder participation at the World Data Forum, **2)** non-traditional data sources for official statistics, **3)** multi-stakeholder partnerships to close data gaps, and **4)** the role of data to empower the population. On 11 November, during the ECLAC Statistical Conference of the Americas, there will be a final webinar to discuss the main conclusions and lessons learned of the third UN World Data Forum.

Final **considerations**

Multi-stakeholder partnerships to close data gaps in the Decade of Action

Multi-stakeholder partnerships reduce data gaps to implement and monitor the SDGs, since they complement the capacities, competencies and interests of different stakeholders pursuing a common goal, as well as joining technical, institutional, and financial resources. Thus, it is fundamental that low and middle-income countries, which face great challenges, create long-term partnerships that can help develop projects for the next decade to achieve the SDGs according to each country's local reality.

Research: A bridge to regional partnerships

- Data partnerships **are essential to guaranteeing that data are used** in planning, decision-making, evidence-based policies, programming for development, and practices.

- Partnerships **must be conceived based on a set of common priorities and a shared context across regions and sectors.** Although Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa present different regional contexts, they share common challenges that allow them to exchange lessons learned through data-based research. Cross-regional collaboration must be frequent and sustainable. It must be a fixed item in the international cooperation agenda.

Strengthening statistical capacity as a first step to boost the use of administrative records

Administrative records have become an important data source to complement censuses and surveys and answer to information gaps in measuring the Sustainable Development Goals. Thus, **creating awareness and strengthening capacities must be a priority, both for data recorders, and for data producers and users, to highlight the benefit of harnessing these records** for statistical purposes, such as cost reduction and timely data.

Non-traditional data sources: A call to understand data from another perspective

Non-traditional data sources are a call, from a broader perspective, to understanding how we measure data, particularly for the Sustainable Development Goals. The use of sources such as satellite images, CDR, social media, or citizens generated data, provide valuable

information to analyze social, economic, political, environmental, and cultural phenomena. **Although their use requires significant efforts in technological and human development, this must be a collective task involving all stakeholders, from the academia to the community**, in order to create synergies that enable their effective use (See Traditional and Non-Traditional Data Sources for Sustainable Development).

We look forward to seeing you at UNWDF 2021 to continue building a data-driven world

The UN World Data Forum is a chance to share experiences within the framework of collective learning, identifying common goals, and creating partnerships that strengthen actions to boost the use of data for sustainable development.

Join the different sessions organized by Cepei and partners by registering here for the Forum.

Cepei

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