

# Promoting Global Data Equity: The Work of the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Household Surveys

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# Outline

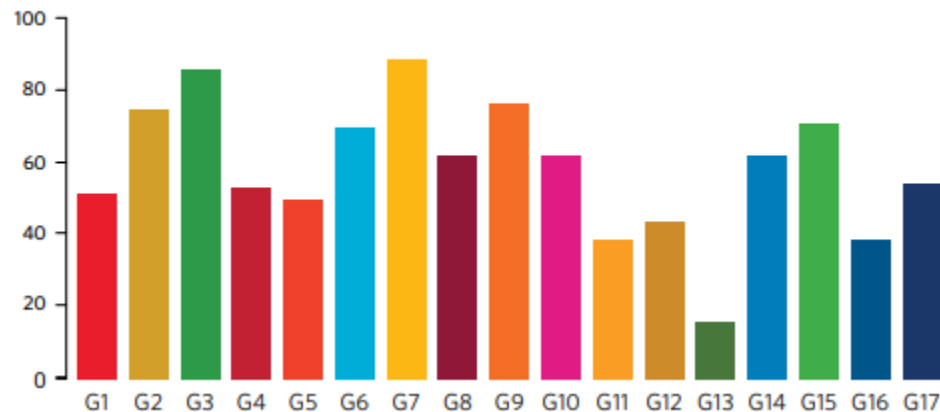
- ❑ Sustainable Development Goals and household surveys
- ❑ COVID-19 and Challenges faced by national statistical offices (NSOs)
- ❑ Positioning household surveys for the next decade and role of Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Household Surveys (ISWGHS)

# The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

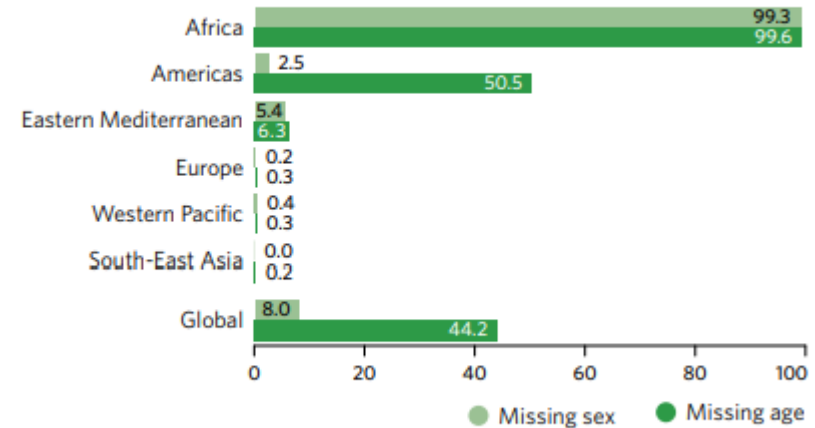


- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs)
  - A global blueprint for people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships, now and in the future
  - 17 Goals, 169 targets and “Leaving no one behind” principle

Proportion of countries or areas with available data, by Goal (percentage)



Proportion of case report forms with missing attributes, January 2020 through April 2021 (percentage)



Note: Regional groupings are those used by WHO.

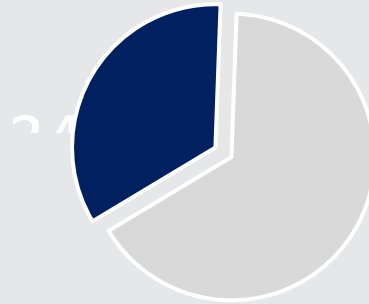
Source: [The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021](#)

# SDGs and the role of household surveys

- Household Surveys: a fundamental component of National Statistical Systems, providing the data to assess progress towards national development targets

80

SDG indicators  
can be obtained  
from household  
surveys



Covering

13 goals

- Household surveys can provide the required data to train and validate alternative data sources for high-resolution, high-frequency insights for monitoring, targeting and evaluation

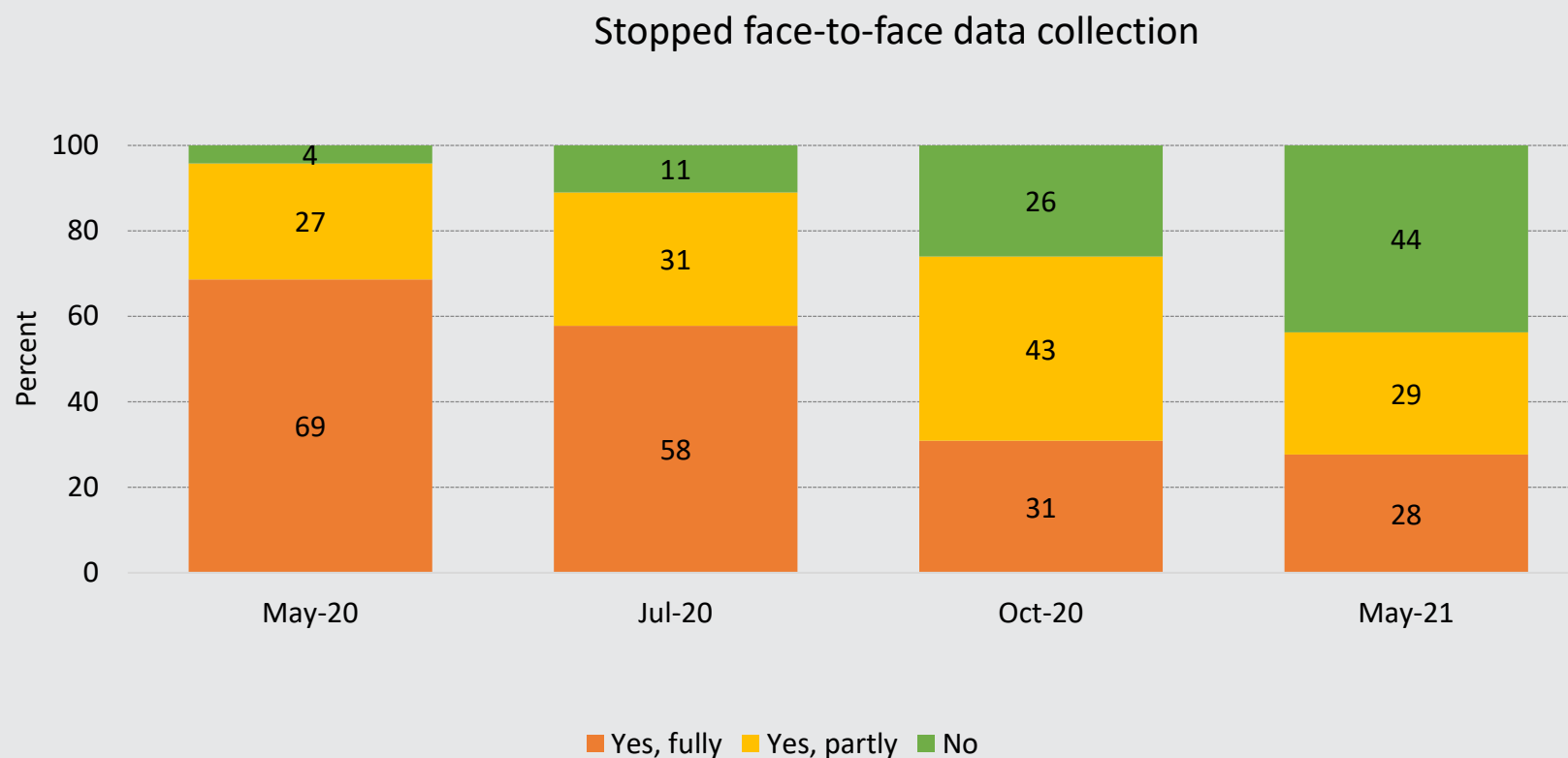
Yet...

- Criticisms persist regarding availability, coverage, accuracy, timeliness, cost-effectiveness, policy-relevance and use of household surveys
- Diminishing response rates; coordination failures; lengthy questionnaires
- A crowded backdrop of competing data sources and methods

... **plus** ...

- Covid-19 pandemic completely upended survey landscape!

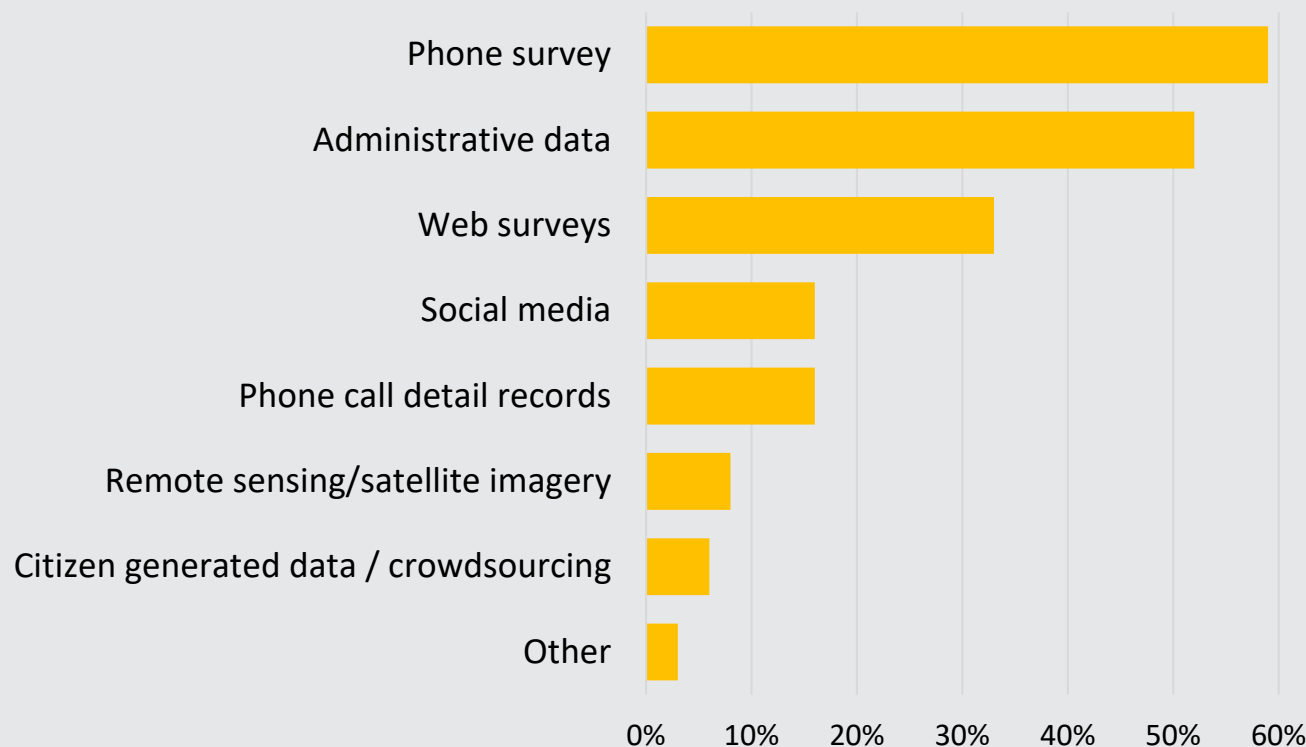
# As of May 2020, virtually all countries had fully/partly stopped face-to-face surveys ...



**Source:** [Global COVID-19 Survey of National Statistical Offices \(Rounds 1-4\)](#)

# ... but many NSOs responded rapidly by adopting new data sources/modes!

Is your institution using alternative /nontraditional data sources/approaches to analyze or monitor aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic?



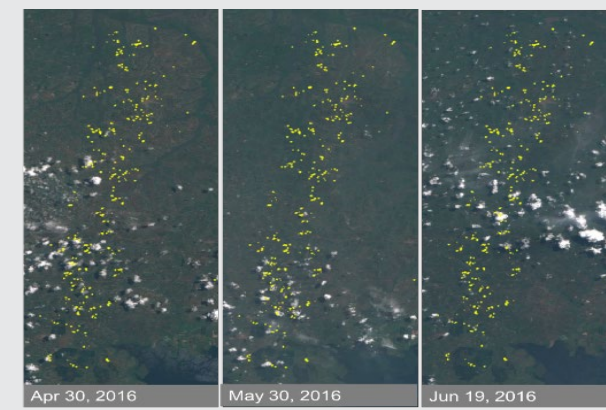
**Source:** Global COVID-19 Survey of National Statistical Offices (Rounds 1) , May 2020

**Virtually all countries are now conducting phone surveys to monitor the impact of the pandemic and beyond, most with support from ISWGHS members ...**

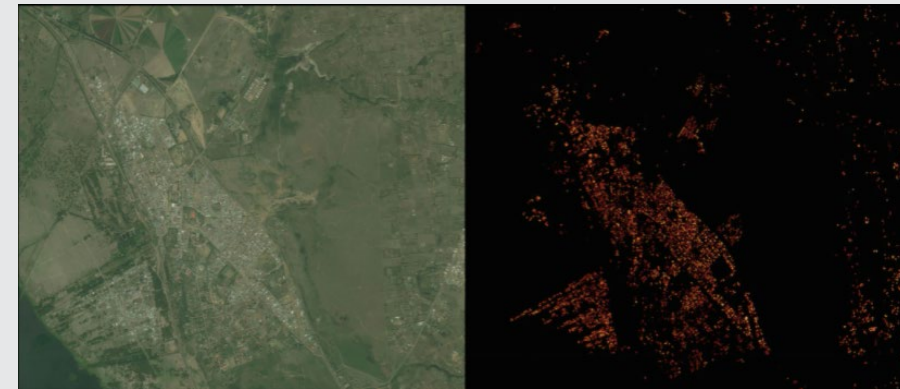




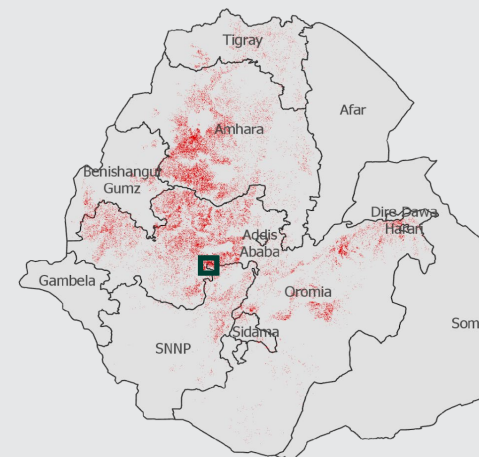
... and many are integrating earth observations (EOs) and survey data and leveraging machine learning (ML) to improve spatial disaggregation and timeliness of development data ...



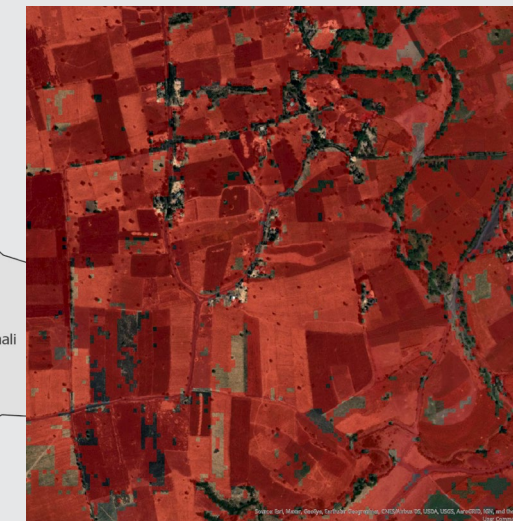
Source: [Lobell et al. \(2020\)](#)



Source: [Tiecke et al. \(2017\)](#)



Source: [Azzari et al. \(2021\)](#)



... meanwhile,  
affordable sensors  
and other digital  
instruments are  
increasingly used in  
survey operations.



Source: [Sinha et al. \(2020\)](#)



Source: [Carletto et al. \(2017\)](#)



Source: [Friedman et al. \(2021\)](#)

## However ...

- ❑ Lack of sound survey infrastructure: only 43% of 180 countries implementing phone surveys used a recent, updated sampling frame
- ❑ Institutional barriers: national statistical systems not set up to foster interoperability
- ❑ Lack of financial and technical capacity: main concern voiced by low-income and lower-middle income countries (LICs and LMICs) in UN Statistics Division/World Bank survey
- ❑ More often, data integration and correction for bias done ex-post with data which are unfit-for-purpose
- ❑ Earth observation/modelled estimates of crop production and other remote-sensed applications reveal huge differences with ground-based, “gold standards” measurements
- ❑ Huge demand from earth observation and machine learning communities for better ground-truthing data
- ❑ Technology availability and adoption unevenly distributed across countries and constrained by analytical capacity

## Against this backdrop ...

## *Positioning household surveys for the next decade: Objectives*

- ❑ Identify priority technical areas and required enabling environment for household surveys to perform their foundational roles, meet new data demands, and increase their policy and research impact in the remaining decade for the SDGs
- ❑ Strike balance between foundational and frontier
  - Country equity is strong consideration – with focus on LICs and LMICs where needs are greatest and both foundational and frontier features are weakest
- ❑ Goal not to be comprehensive but ensure that key priorities are included, in light of recent developments and potential for medium-term impact
  - We are open to feedback!
- ❑ Inspire countries in pursuing innovations and guide the work of the ISWGHS!

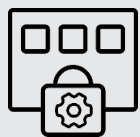
**Source:** [BG-3a-Position-Household-Survey-for-Next-Decade-E.pdf \(un.org\)](#)



## Eight technical priorities

1. **Enhancing the interoperability and integration of household surveys;**
2. **Designing and implementing more inclusive, respondent-centric surveys;**
3. Improving sampling efficiency and coverage;
4. **Scaling up the use of objective measurement technologies;**
5. Building capacity for CAPI, phone, web, and mixed-mode surveys;
6. Systematizing the collection, storage, and use of paradata and metadata;
7. incorporating machine learning and artificial intelligence for data quality control and analysis;
8. Improving data access, discoverability, and dissemination.

# Improve interoperability/integration of household surveys with other data sources



Promote **data access** while ensuring privacy to maximize benefits of interoperability



Systematically **geo-reference** households, plots, community locations to enable linkages with geospatial data and more systematic **ground-truthing**



Include common questions across data sources for **validation and calibration**



Invest in development of **standards and guidelines** on integration of surveys with other data sources – e.g. earth observation, citizen-generated data, administrative and other types of data – and promote the **adoption of best practices** to improve interoperability



Establish a **total quality framework** for integrated data

# Designing and implementing more inclusive, respondent-centric surveys



Understand drivers of and address **non-response**



Address **digital divide** in data collection



Transform respondents into **collaborators and co-producers** at all stages of survey implementation

# The Role of Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Household Surveys



Created by Shireen Frost  
from UNICEF Project

- Foster **coordination** at the national and international level: planning, financing and implementation
- Collaborate with all partners: NSOs, civil society organisations, Academia
- Serve as an intermediary: Innovation  $\leftrightarrow$  national data needs
- Curate and disseminate best practices



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- Encourage and support experimentation with and scaling-up of **innovative methods**
- Support the formulation of guidelines on select topics, anchored in experimentation and evidence



- Promote documentation and exchange of national experiences
- **Advocate** for better financing of household survey programs



- Set priorities as **guided by countries**

More information about ISWGHS: <https://unstats.un.org/iswghs>





THE INTER-SECRETARIAT  
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[unstats.un.org/iswghs](https://unstats.un.org/iswghs)