

# Modernising agricultural statistics crucial to reach 2030 Agenda

The key message from FAO director-general José Graziano da Silva at the start of the [7th International Conference on Agricultural Statistics](#) was the need for countries and international organisation to make tremendous efforts and increase their investments in improving national statistical capacities to monitor progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda.



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Graziano da Silva underlined that the adoption by the UN Statistical Commission of 230 different indicators earlier this year to monitor the [17 Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) and 169 targets of the [2030 Agenda](#) represents "a turning point for the global statistical system."

"The SDG data requirements far exceed the current capacities of most national statistical systems," he said, noting that to rise to the challenge, the world needs to both strengthen tried-and-tested statistics gathering systems as well as adopt innovative approaches and cost-effective methodologies, such as the use of mobile technology or remote sensing imagery.

"The challenge facing us now is to move from identifying our objectives to achieving them," said Italian Vice Minister for Agriculture Andrea Olivero, in remarks made at the start of the conference. "Statistics represent a critical tool in this effort since the effectiveness of public policies will depend on the best possible information."

"For this reason, we need experts capable of identifying the appropriate tools in this the new reality. Our task now is to take advantage of the new information era to ensure global food security and agricultural sustainability," the deputy minister added.

## Strengthening national capacities

To help countries achieve the 2030 agenda - including the Zero Hunger Target - FAO is putting in place a series of initiatives to strengthen countries' capacity and has developed innovative survey tools, such as the [Food Insecurity Experience Scale](#) to monitor food insecurity worldwide, and [AGRIS](#) (Agriculture Integrated Survey) to monitor economic, social and environmental aspects of farming activities, Graziano da Silva said.

The agency is also working on gathering and harmonizing the information provided by countries to produce global and regional aggregates, all of which are available online through [FAOSTAT](#), its statistical database on food, agriculture,

fisheries, forestry, natural resources management and nutrition. The world's largest and most comprehensive data resource of its kind, FAOSTAT provides free, open and easy access to over three million time-series and cross-sectional data of 245 countries and territories.

The suite of tools being used and developed by FAO will help establish a baseline against which countries can measure progress towards the SDGs, design the most effective policies and monitor their impact.

## About the conference

The International Conference on Agricultural Statistics (ICAS VII) takes place every three years and convenes senior agricultural statisticians representing national statistical offices and ministries of agriculture from around the globe. The conference is open to all producers and users of agricultural statistics, from government entities, academia, development partners and international organisations. The seventh edition of the Conference is organised by the Italian National Institute of Statistics (Istat), in collaboration with FAO, under the auspices of the International Statistical Institute.

This year the event focuses on research studies and best practices for monitoring the agriculture-related targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in doing so aims to address the changing needs and opportunities for agricultural statistics, under the overarching theme of *Modernisation of Agricultural Statistics in support of the Sustainable Development Agenda*.

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