Webinar Report: Opportunities and Challenges of Using MPD for Official Statistics

Prepared by

UN Big Data and Data Science Regional Hub for Africa

https://ecastats.uneca.org/regionalhub

February 2024

Introduction

The UN Big Data and Data Science Regional Hub for Africa, in collaboration with the UN Mobile Phone Data Task Team operating within the framework of the UN Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics (UN-CEBD), delivered their insights on February 8, 2024, between 14:00 and 16:00 (Rwanda Time). During the webinar, experts shared practical experiences from various countries, shedding light on the opportunities and challenges linked to the utilization of Mobile Phone Data (MPD).

A total of 11 responses were gathered from participants representing 8 countries, namely Burundi, Egypt, Georgia, Nigeria, Qatar, Rwanda, Senegal, and Uganda.

**Participants by Country**

11 responses
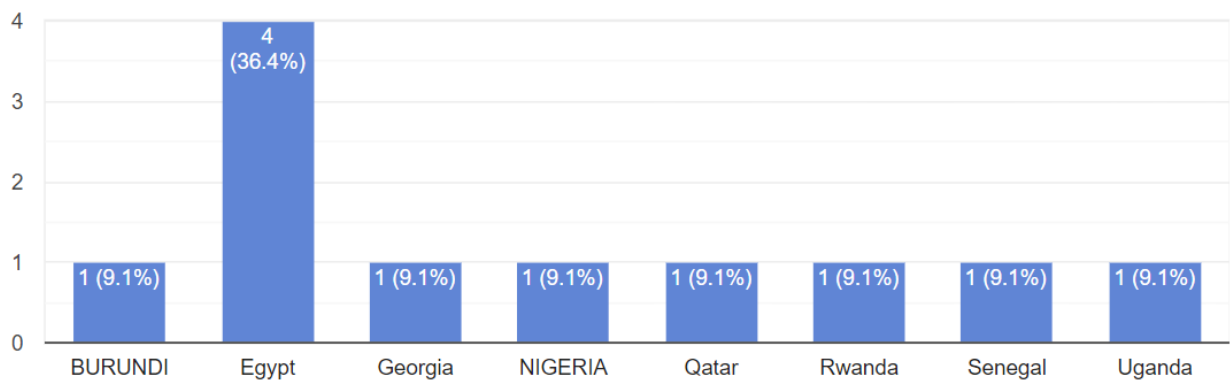
1) **Are you currently using mobile phone data to generate statistics?**

Out of the total responses received, 72.7% (8) affirmed that they are currently using mobile phone data to generate statistics. On the contrary, 27.3% (3) responded negatively, indicating that they are not presently utilizing mobile phone data for statistical analysis.
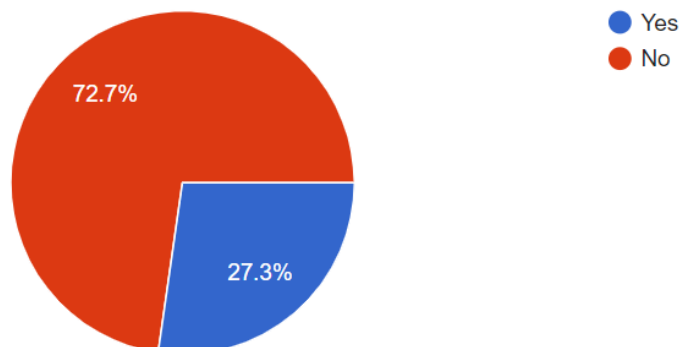
2) To what extent did the webinar address your expectations regarding the opportunities and challenges of using MPD for official statistics?

The survey aimed to gauge participants' satisfaction with the webinar's coverage of opportunities and challenges related to using Mobile Phone Data (MPD) for official statistics. A significant majority, 81.8% (9), responded positively, stating that the webinar met their expectations. On the other hand, 18.2% (2) expressed a more tentative stance, responding with "Maybe."
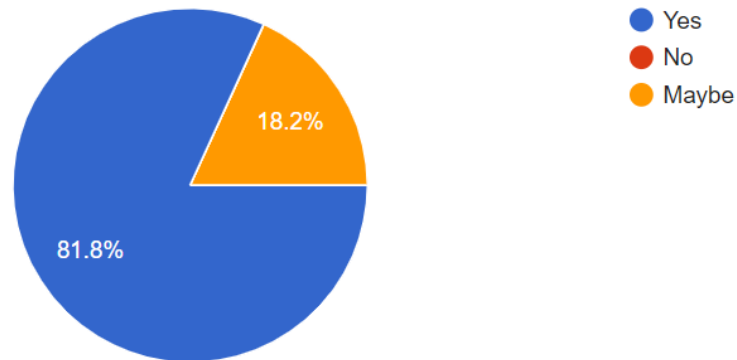

3) What are the challenges that you have in using Mobile Phone Data? (Skills gaps)

Participants were asked to identify challenges related to skills gaps in utilizing Mobile Phone Data (MPD). The responses highlight specific areas where participants perceive a need for improvement. The majority of respondents (54.5%) expressed that the primary challenge lies in a "Lack of knowledge." 27.3% identified "Data access and privacy issues" as a significant hurdle. 9.1% pointed out "Lack of tools/infrastructure" as a challenge. Another 9.1% indicated facing challenges in "all the issues listed."
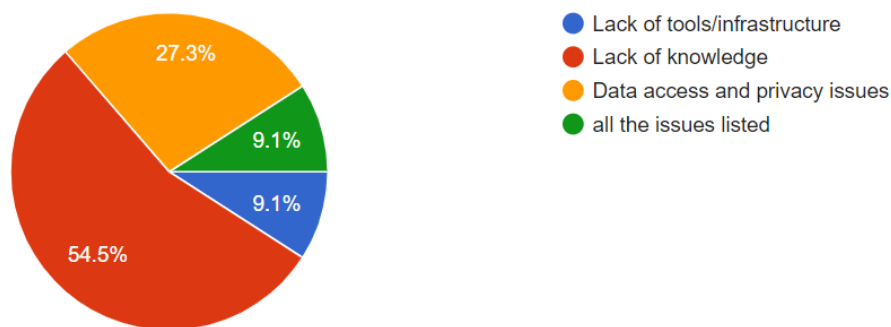

4) Do you see potential applications of the techniques proposed here in the work of your organization?

Participants were asked to evaluate the potential applications of the techniques introduced during the webinar within the context of their organization's work. A significant majority of respondents (63.6%) expressed a positive outlook, indicating that they see potential applications for the proposed techniques in their organization. However, a notable portion (36.4%) responded negatively, stating that they do not foresee applying the techniques in their organizational work.
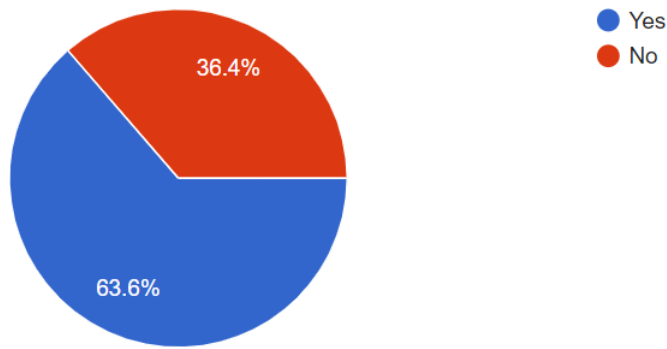
5) Do you have plans to use Mobile Phone Data as data source?

Participants were asked about their plans to use mobile phone data as a data source. A majority of respondents (54.5%) affirmed that they have a plan to use mobile phone data as a data source. A smaller percentage (9.1%) indicated that they do not have any plan. A significant portion (36.4%) responded with "Maybe," suggesting a level of uncertainty or the need for further consideration.
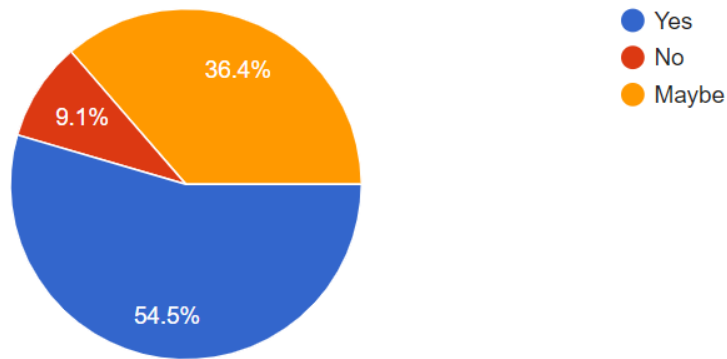
6) Are you interested in the UN Big Data Regional Hub for Africa supporting your organization in using MPD for Statistics?

Participants were asked about their interest in having the UN Big Data Regional Hub for Africa support their organization in utilizing Mobile Phone Data for statistical purposes. A significant majority (72.7%) expressed interest in the support offered by the UN Big Data Regional Hub. A notable minority (27.3%) indicated a lack of interest in such support.
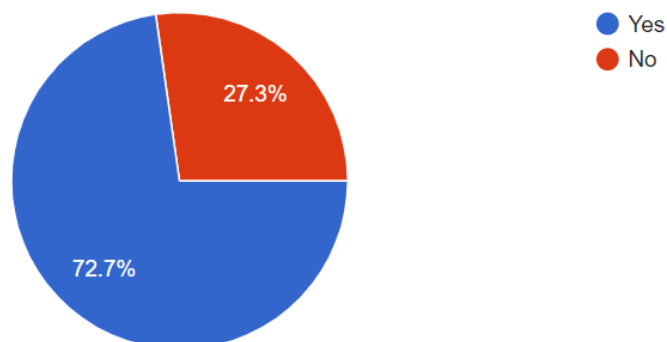
7) If yes, please provide your name and the name of your organization/ institution.

Countries expressing interest in receiving support from the UN big data and data science regional hub for Africa related to utilizing Mobile Phone Data for statistical purposes encompassed Burundi, Egypt, Nigeria, and Rwanda. The following table provides the contact person's name, affiliated organization, and country.

| No.	Name	Organization	Country
1	Samuel Lolo	National Bureau of Statistics	Nigeria
2	Valentine Imanishimwe	National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda(NISR)	Rwanda
3	Faida Fedha,	Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies of Burundi (INSBU)	Burundi
4	Ahmed Shouman	Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS)	Egypt

8) Did you find the webinar format (presentation, Q&A, discussions) engaging and conducive to learning?

Participants were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the webinar format, considering elements such as presentations, Q&A sessions, and discussions, in terms of engagement and learning outcomes. The vast majority (90.9%) responded positively, indicating that they found the webinar format engaging and conducive to learning. A small percentage (9.1%) expressed a negative view, suggesting that they did not find the format effective for their learning needs.
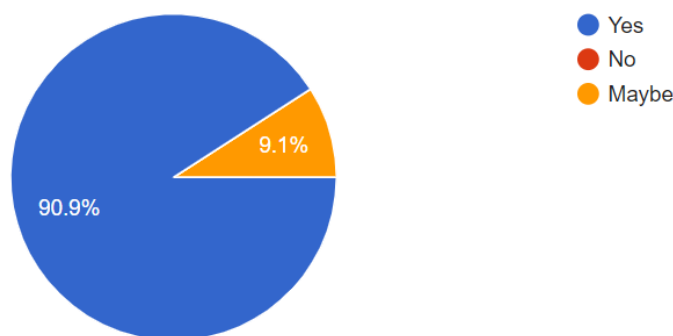
**9) Please rate your overall satisfaction with the webinar?**

Participants were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the webinar using a scale ranging from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). A larger percentage, 36.4%, reported a higher level of satisfaction. A smaller portion, accounting for 36.4%, categorized their satisfaction as a high level. The remaining 27.3%, reported medium level of satisfaction levels.
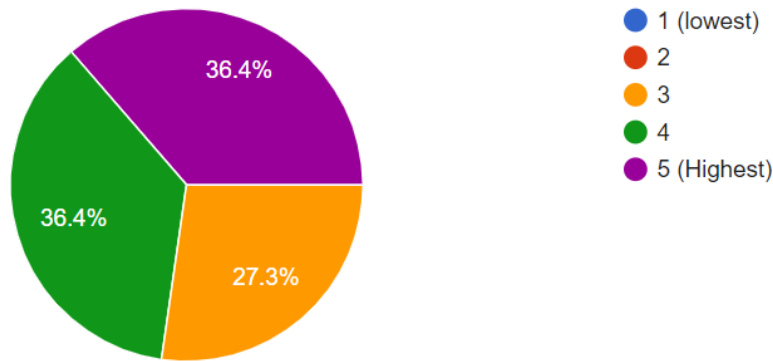
10) Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)

Participants were asked to rate the extent to which the meeting objectives were met on a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest and 1 being the lowest. The majority of responses 5 rated the achievement of meeting objectives as the highest (5). Another substantial portion 5 considered the objectives are met at level 4. A smaller group (1) indicated a rating of 2. Participants also asked about the informativeness of the presentations with the same scale. The majority of responses 6 rated the informativeness of presentations as the highest (5). Another significant portion 3 considered the presentations to be informative at level 4. 1 response each was recorded for levels 3 and 2. The plenary discussions received varied ratings from participants, with 4 individuals providing a rating of 5 (highest). Another significant portion 4 considered the relevance to be at level 4. A smaller group 3 rated the relevance at level 3. Overall, the feedback indicates a generally positive outlook and satisfaction among the participants.
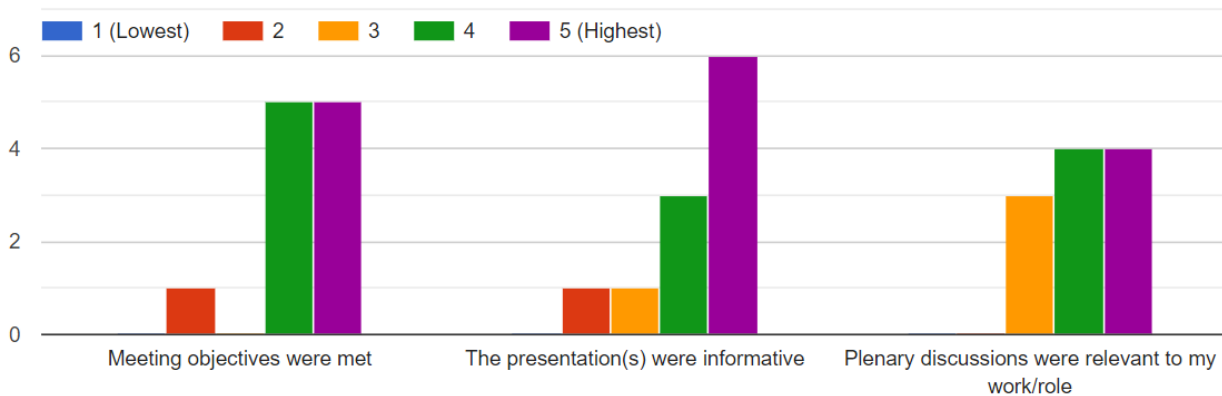
11) Please provide any comments and suggestions you may have on how to improve future meetings and webinars on Mobile Phone Data for Statistics?

The main comments and suggestions provided by the respondents regarding how to improve future webinars on Mobile Phone Data for Statistics include:

- **Translation and Recording**:
  - Participants highlighted the importance of adding translations to the most common languages in Africa to enhance accessibility.

- o The suggestion to record webinars was emphasized, allowing participants to revisit the content at their convenience.

- **PowerPoint Presentations**: Participants expressed the desire for PowerPoint presentations to be shared, providing them with a valuable resource for continued learning and reference.

- **Practical Training in Programming**: Participants expressed interest in practical training sessions covering the use of Mobile Phone Data (MPD) in programming languages such a R, Python, and data analysis.

- **Sharing Webinar Content**: Participants emphasized the importance of sharing presentation slides from the meetings to facilitate ongoing learning and reference.

- **Archiving Previous Webinars**: A suggestion was made to post all previous webinars on the website and provide links through participants' emails for easy access to archived content.

- **Training on Data Collection Methodology**: There is a request for training sessions on how to collect data using mobile phones and understanding the associated methodology.

- **Desire for More Training and Tutorials**: A participant expressed the need for more training and tutorials to gain practical experience in Mobile Phone Data for Statistics, anticipating potential use in their organization in the future.

The feedback indicates a strong interest in practical training, accessibility, and ongoing support for participants in utilizing Mobile Phone Data for statistical purposes. The suggestions provide valuable insights for enhancing future meetings and webinars in this domain.