

Webinar Report: Use Cases of Mobile Phone Data (MPD) for Official Statistics

Prepared by
UN Regional Hub for Africa

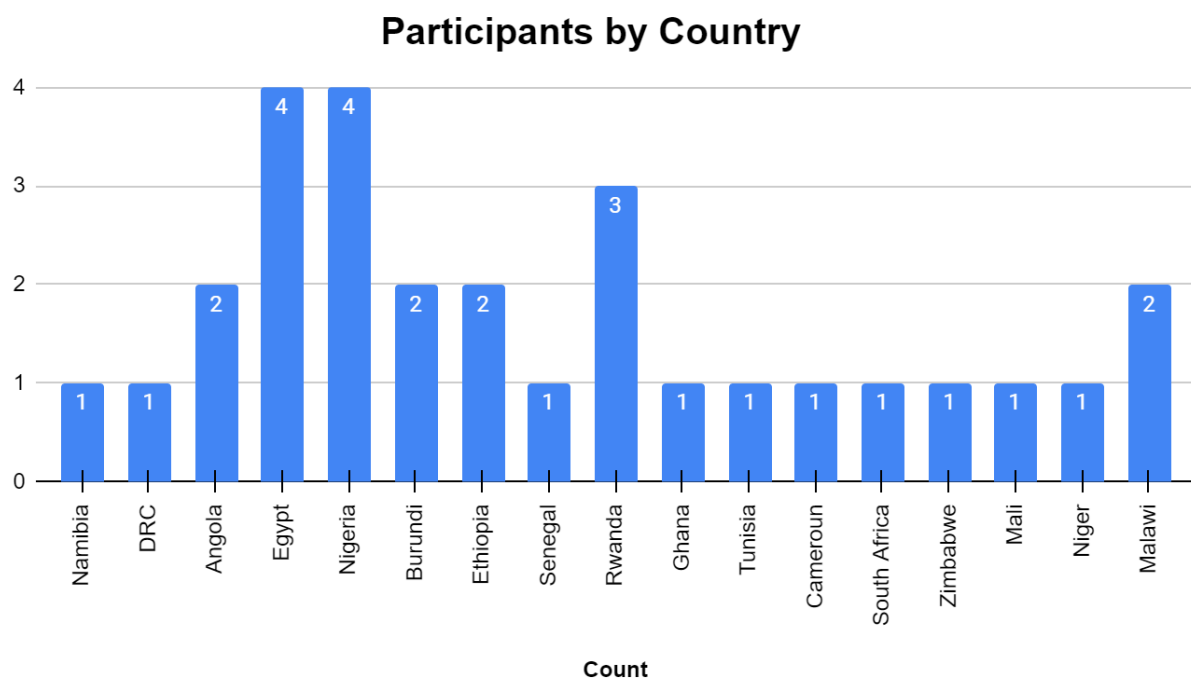
<https://ecastats.uneca.org/regionalhub>

November 2023

Introduction

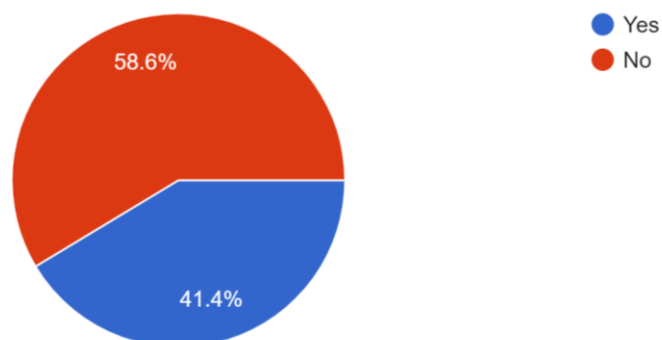
On Thursday, 16th November 2023, the UN Big Data and Data Science Regional Hub for Africa hosted a webinar on Mobile Phone Data (MPD) use cases for official statistics. The webinar took place on Thursday, 16th November at 3:00 PM, GMT+3 and showcased the work done by the Mobile Phone Data Task Team, which is part of the community of global partners operating under the auspices of the UN Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics (UN-CEBD). The Mobile Phone Data Task Team includes speakers from the UN-CEBD, ITU, Positium, University of Tokyo, BPS Indonesia, Flowminder, and Roads and Transport Authority (Dubai). The event highlighted the potential of mobile phone data to fill data gaps worldwide and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

28 total responses were collected from participants in 17 countries namely, Namibia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Egypt, Nigeria, Burundi, Senegal, Ethiopia, Ghana, Tunisia, Cameroon, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, and Malawi.



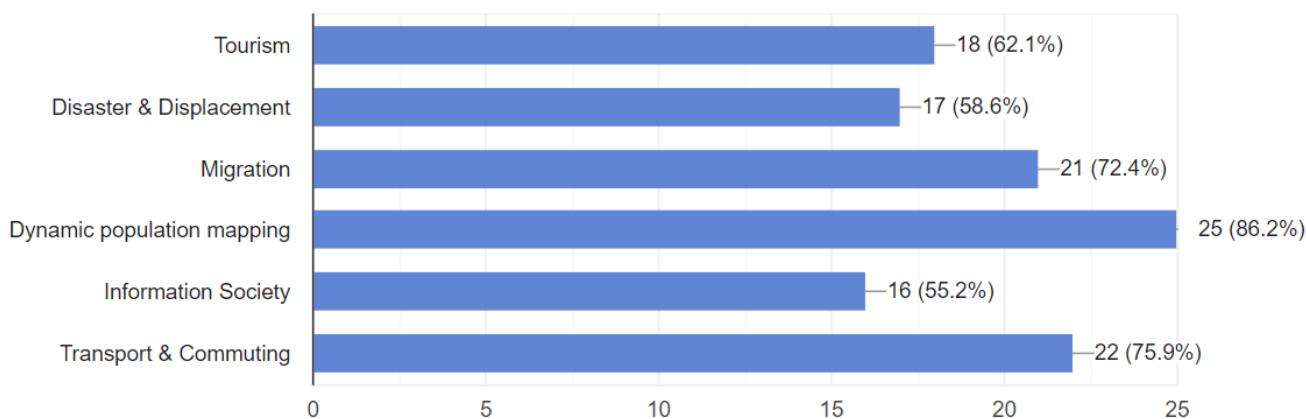
1) Are you currently using mobile phone data to generate statistics?

According to the survey results, 58.6% of respondents are currently using mobile phone data to generate statistics, while 41.4% are not.



2) Which MPD Themes Interest You? Please indicate which of these themes you are interested in.

The survey revealed varying levels of interest among respondents across diverse themes. Tourism captured the attention of 62.1% of participants, reflecting a notable interest in this domain. Disaster and displacement themes followed closely, with 58.6% of respondents expressing interest. Migration emerged as a particularly compelling topic, garnering the highest level of interest from 72.4% of those surveyed. Dynamic population mapping attracted significant attention, with an impressive 86.2% of respondents indicating interest in this theme. The Information Society theme intrigued 55.2% of participants, while Transport and Computing resonated with a substantial 75.9% of respondents, highlighting the diverse interests within the surveyed population.

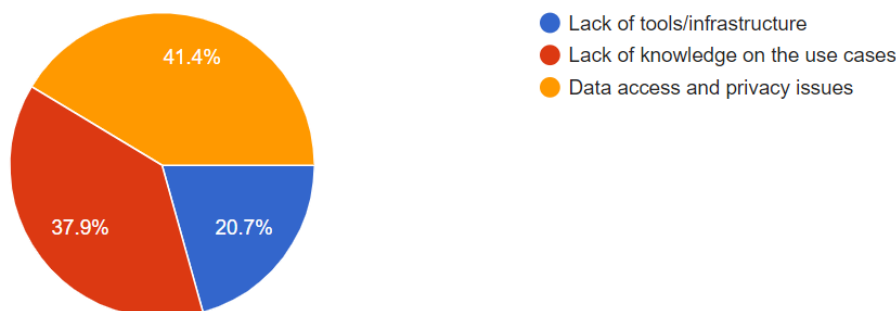


3) If you have any other themes you would like to include on the webinar list related to MPD?

Participants were asked to suggest any other themes they would like to include on the webinar list related to MPD. The suggested themes are telecommunications, price index, health, nutrition, electronic waste reproduction, vital statistics, agricultural statistics, price surveys, and educational performance.

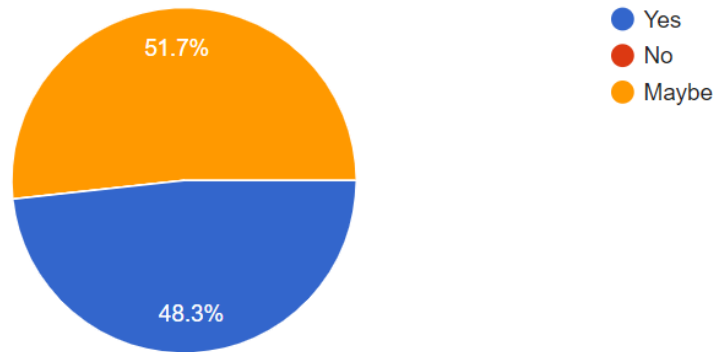
4) What are the challenges that you have in using mobile phone data? (Skills gaps)

The challenges identified in utilizing mobile phone data primarily revolve around skills gaps. A significant percentage of 20.7% cited a lack of tools and infrastructure as a hurdle in effectively leveraging mobile phone data. A larger portion, accounting for 37.9%, expressed challenges stemming from a lack of knowledge regarding use cases, emphasizing the need for better understanding and awareness. Additionally, 41.4% highlighted concerns related to data access and privacy issues, underscoring the importance of addressing these aspects to foster confidence and compliance in the use of mobile phone data. Addressing these challenges is crucial for maximizing the potential benefits of mobile phone data while ensuring ethical and responsible practices.



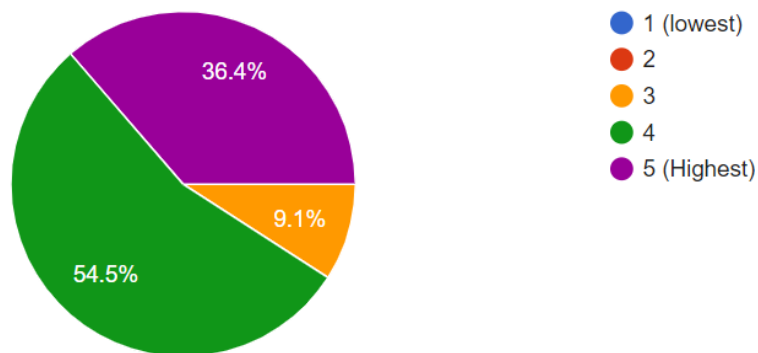
6) Do you have plans to use it from next year as an alternative data source?

In considering the use of mobile phone data as an alternative source from next year, opinions are divided among respondents. A majority of 51.7% expressed affirmative plans to incorporate it into their data sources, recognizing its potential value. On the other hand, 48.3% indicated that they do not have intentions to utilize mobile phone data as an alternative source in the coming year.



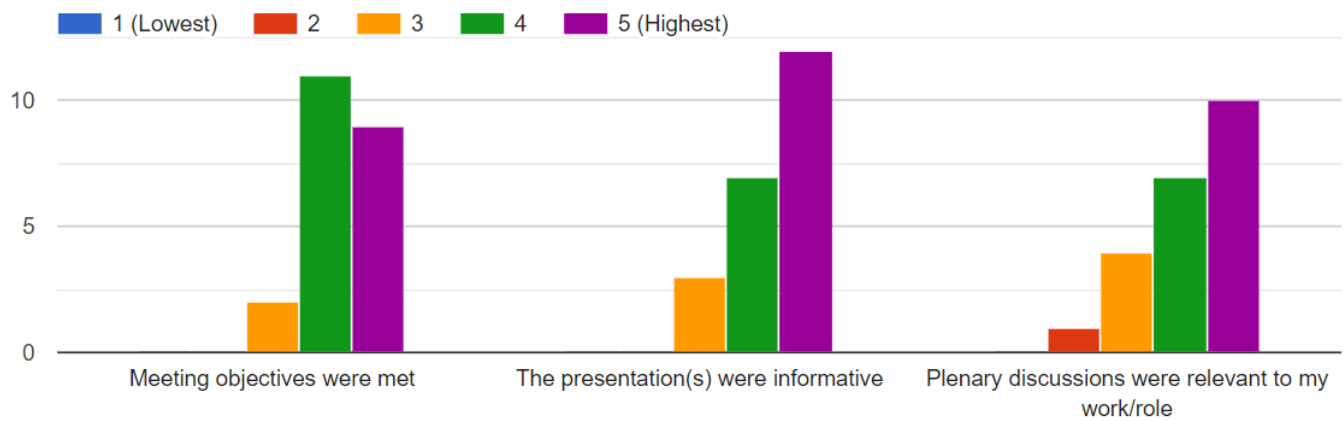
7) Please rate your overall satisfaction with the webinar?

The satisfaction levels with the webinar are distributed among respondents as follows: 36.4% rated their satisfaction as the highest, indicating a significant level of contentment. A larger percentage, 54.5%, reported a higher level of satisfaction. A smaller portion, accounting for 9.1%, categorized their satisfaction at a medium level. These responses reflect generally positive sentiments about the webinar, with the majority expressing high or higher satisfaction levels.



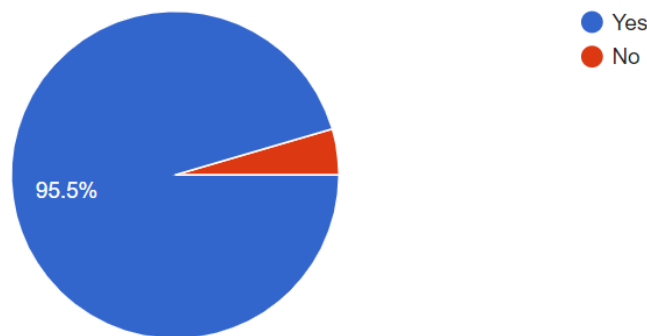
8) Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)?

Participants were asked to rate several statements on a scale from 1 to 5. Notably, meeting objectives received the highest ratings, with 9 respondents rating it the highest, 11 at a high level, and 2 at a medium level. The informativeness of presentations was well-received, with 12 respondents marking it as the highest, 7 at a high level and 3 at a medium level. Plenary discussions' relevance to work or role garnered positive responses, with 10 respondents marking it as the highest, 7 at a high level, 4 at a medium level, and 1 at a low level. Overall, the feedback indicates a generally positive outlook and satisfaction among the participants regarding the proposed use of mobile phone data and the webinar's content and discussions.



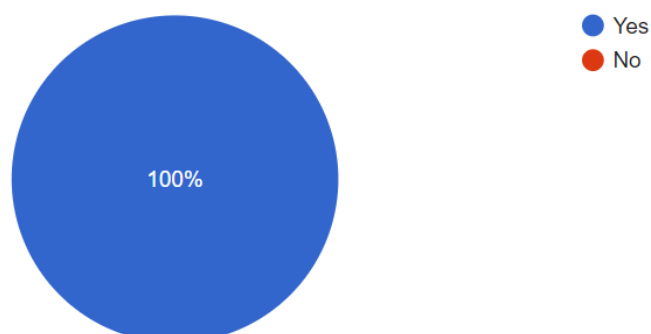
9) Do you see potential applications of the techniques proposed here in the work of your organization?

An overwhelming majority of 95.5% of respondents see potential applications of the proposed techniques in the work of their organizations, indicating strong recognition of the relevance and value of the presented methodologies. Only a small fraction, 4.5%, indicated otherwise, suggesting a minority perspective that may require further exploration or consideration of specific organizational needs and contexts.



10) Are you interested in the UN Regional Hub for Big Data Science in Africa supporting your organization in using Mobile Phone Data (MPD) for official statistics?

All respondents, 100%, expressed interest in the UN Regional Hub for Big Data Science in Africa supporting their organizations in utilizing Mobile Phone Data (MPD) for official statistics. This unanimous positive response indicates a strong desire among the surveyed individuals for collaboration and assistance from the UN Regional Hub in harnessing the potential of mobile phone data for official statistical purposes.



11) Please provide any comments and suggestions you may have on how to improve future meetings and webinars on Mobile Phone Data (MPD) for official statistics?

The main comments and suggestions provided by the respondents regarding the improvement of future meetings and webinars on Mobile Phone Data (MPD) for official statistics:

- Emphasize time for discussions and include French interpretation.
- Expressed the need for in-depth training on each topic.
- Advocate for increased awareness across all statistics offices.
- Suggested providing Arabic translation.
- Proposed that physical meetings would have a more significant impact.
- Advocated for the inclusion of physical meetings to supplement webinars for a hands-on experience with MPD.
- Appreciated the opportunity to discover applications of MPD and recommended planning for deep training on different models related to sectors like Transport or Health.
- Encouraged incorporating practical examples and experiences in physical meetings.
- Requested sessions on utilizing data for analysis, dashboards, and insights.
- Requested another course, expressing difficulty in following the current one.