

**The OECD World Forum on
“Measuring and Fostering
the Progress of Societies”**

Enrico Giovannini
OECD Chief Statistician
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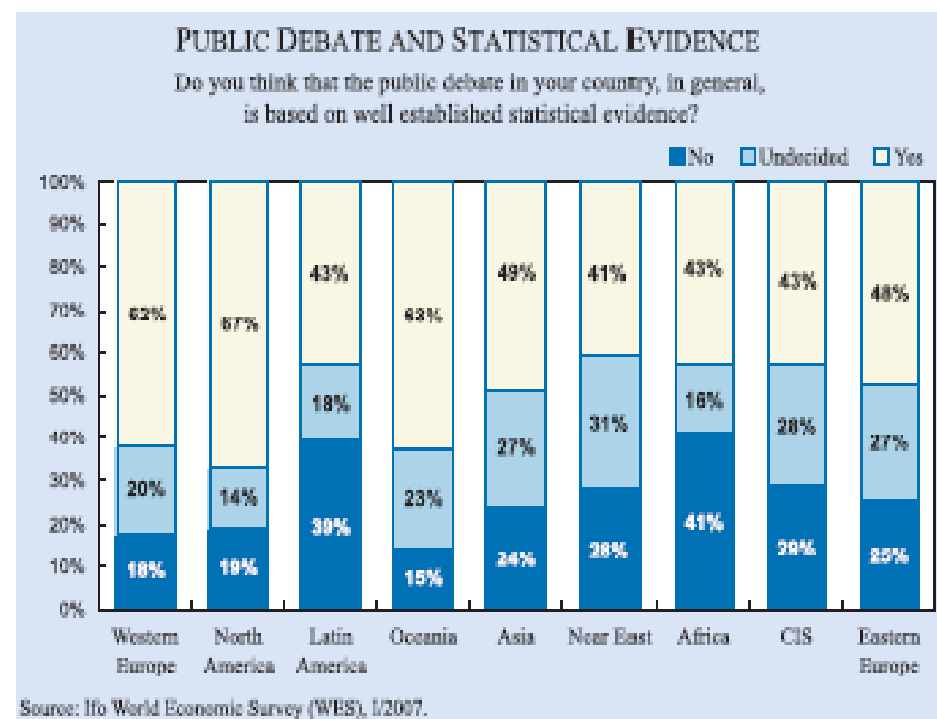
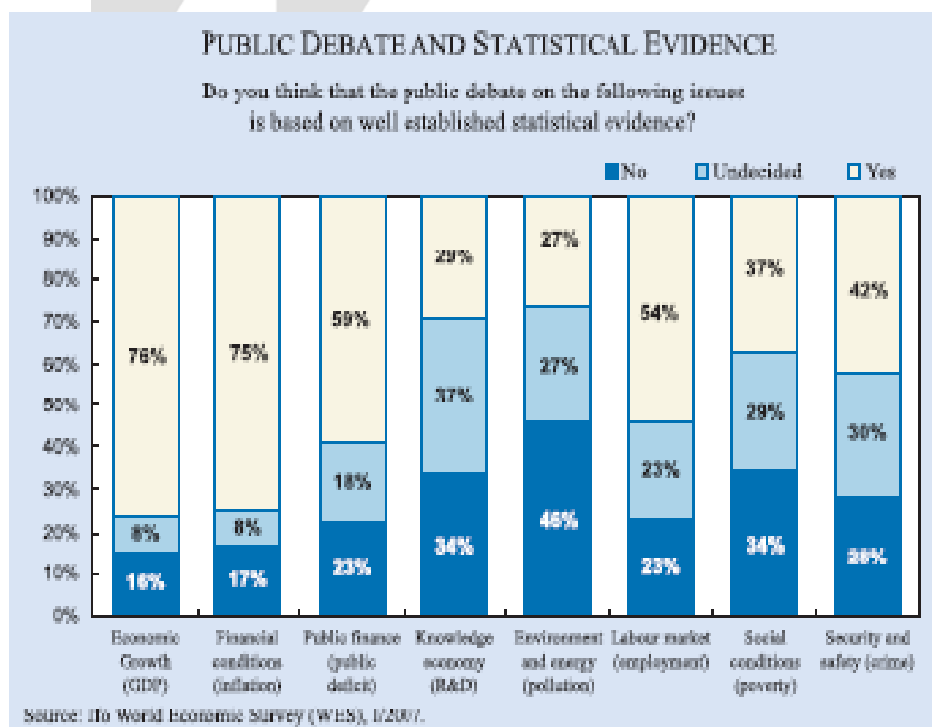
The Inspiration

- Information is not knowledge (A. Einstein)
- Today we are bombarded by information (J.C. Trichet)
- An investment in knowledge pays the best interest (B. Franklin)
- By adopting key indicator systems, we will be able to generate quality information that can help individuals, institutions and nations accelerate progress and make better choices (D. Walker)
- International organizations like the OECD have to create global networks to allow communities to discuss, share knowledge, and identify best practices (D. Johnston)

Some “megatrends”

- Around the world, societies are increasingly concerned with their quality of life and a consensus is growing around the need to develop a more comprehensive view of progress rather than focusing on the economic one (GDP)
- Mistrust in national governments (and therefore in national statistical offices)
- Growing number of “agents” in society (NGOs, etc.)
- Individuals are asked to make decisions that in the past were made by government (pensions, school, etc.)
- In an age of unprecedented, and overwhelming, information flows, the common understanding necessary for informed public discourse is often inadequate

Statistical evidence and public debate (1)



Statistical evidence and public debate (2)

“How sad. All governments find it tempting to tweak the numbers they are judged by. But in doing this they deprive themselves of the best guide to future policymaking. And they also create a self-defeating spiral of distrust in which even the numbers they have not tweaked are disbelieved.”

“The Importance of statistics – Lies, damned lies.” *The Economist*. March 1st 2007, p. 18.

Theoretical Background

- Economic literature:
 - Role of information in “Games Theory” (Nash, Akerlof, Rothschild and Stiglitz, etc.)
 - Role of information in rational expectations models (Muth, Lucas, etc.)
- Political science literature:
 - Role of information in models for democratic choices (Downs, Wittman, Alesina, etc.)
 - Role of information in political processes and elections (Swank, Visser, etc.)

Clear conclusion: “shared information” is fundamental to improve market functioning and minimize social welfare losses

The first OECD World Forum on “Statistics, Knowledge and Policy”

The first Forum (November 2004) addressed key issues for the development of modern democracies:

- Transparency and accountability of public policies;
- People’s capacity for understanding the characteristics and evolution of the economies and societies in which they are living;
- The role of statisticians, media, civil society, etc., in contributing to the development of a common, facts-based knowledge among citizens;
- The measurement of overall progress of a country/region/community.

Main outcomes of the first World Forum (1)

- The World Forum was a very successful initiative: there is a large international community interested in the subject
- Today the role of statistics touches upon people's everyday life: individual and collective decisions are more and more based on some sort of statistical information
- The demand for measuring progress comes from society
- There is not a unique way to develop “key indicators”, nor a unique set of indicators, and each country should choose its approach, considering cultural and institutional environments
- Statistical, political, technical and organizational issues must be addressed, but the success of such an initiative mainly relies on the capacity to involve various sectors of society in a cooperative effort
- International comparisons are necessary to put the results in the right context and push poor performers to improve their situation

Main outcomes of the first World Forum (2)

In conclusion, considering both the opinions expressed during the event, the evaluations and suggestions given in the satisfaction survey, the Forum asked the OECD to:

- Launch a medium-term process on key indicators, through electronic discussion groups, specialized workshops, etc.;
- Organise a second World Forum in 2-3 years time.

To respond to this request, the OECD has:

- Developed the OECD Factbook;
- Designed a horizontal project on “Indicators for Measuring Progress and Indicators for Policymaking”;
- Commenced the preparation of the second World Forum.

The Bellagio Conference

- 24 eminent people representing different constituencies and institutions met to discuss the direction of the project and the Forum
- Mission of the Project on Measuring progress of Societies’’: *To foster the development of sets of key economic, social and environmental indicators and their use to inform and promote evidence-based decision-making, within and across the public, private and citizen sectors. These indicator sets can be at the sub-national, national and international levels. The Project is open to all sectors of society, building both on good practice and innovative research work, organized by the OECD in cooperation with national and international organizations.*

Towards the second World Forum (1)

- Istanbul (27-30 June 2007)
- Given the growing interest in indicators and their use for decision-making, regional preparatory events are being planned in:
 - Latin America (Colombia – October 2006)
 - Africa (Rwanda – January 2007)
 - Asia (Korea – February 2007)
 - Middle-East (Yemen – April 2007)
 - CIS (Russia – April 2007)
- Thematic workshops and conferences
 - Measurement of well-being (Milan – June 2006)
 - New ICT tools to present statistics (Rome – March 2007)
 - Measurement of happiness and policy-making (Rome – April 2007)

Towards the second World Forum (2)

- In cooperation with EC, OIC, UN, World Bank
- Supported by SIS, PARIS21, SESRTCIC
- Website established (www.oecd.org/oecdworldforum)
- Newsletter
- Knowledge base

- Invited session at the ISI2007
- Link to the world meeting of the audit authorities (Mexico 2007). The OECD is now planning the second World Forum, to be held in Istanbul (27-30 June 2007)
- Link to other initiatives and networks

Towards the second World Forum (3)

- The event is intended for people interested in:
 - Making better use of the latest techniques for measuring societal status and progress;
 - Identify best practices on how to address key national policy issues;
 - Discuss global policy issues based on solid statistical evidence.
- The common bond of participants will be their interest in **taking action** to improve the societies they serve through the use of more meaningful, accurate, and timely measurements of progress.
- Their common experience at the conference will be to **understand and envision** possibilities, **orient and assess** their own situations, and then gather contacts and information that will help them **plan and act** when they return.

Towards the second World Forum (4)

- We expect that the Forum will draw a very diverse audience (900 participants):
 - From multiple sectors and professions
 - From multiple countries at various level of development
- The Forum would offer:
 - Plenary sessions
 - Parallel specialized sessions
 - Opportunity for information sharing and training on development of indicators
- Webcasting of main sessions in seven languages

Key speakers

- **Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa**, President of the UNGA
- **Joaquín Almunia**, European Commissioner
- **François Bourguignon**, Chief Economist and Senior VP of the WB
- **Margaret Chan**, Director-General, WHO
- **Kemal Dervis**, UNDP Administrator
- **Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu**, Secretary-General, OIC
- **Recep Tayyip Erdoğan**, Prime Minister of Turkey
- **Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson**, President of Iceland
- **Angel Gurría**, Secretary-General of the OECD
- **Richard Layard**, London School of Economics
- **Jacqueline Mc Glade**, Director, European Environment Agency
- **José Antonio Ocampo**, Under-Secretary-General of the UN
- **Jimgi Y Thinley**, Minister, Bhutan
- **Shirley Williams**, House of Lords, UK
- **Matthew Winkler**, CEO, Bloomberg

Key speakers – US

- **Larry Brilliant**, CEO Google.org
- **Richard Curtin**, University of Michigan
- **Nick Donofrio**, Executive VP, Innovation and Technology, IBM
- **Bill Drayton**, Founder of Ashoka
- **Harvey Fineberg**, President of the Institute of Medicine
- **Cynthia Glassman**, Under Secretary Economic Affairs, Department of Commerce
- **Chris Hoenig**, Director Key National Indicators Initiative
- **Alan Krueger**, Princeton University
- **Theodore Porter**, UCLA
- **Lester M. Salamon**, Johns Hopkins University
- **Darren Walker**, Vice-President, Rockefeller Foundation
- **Dave M. Walker**, Comptroller General of United States
- **Katherine K. Wallman**, Chief Statistician, OMB

Goals of the Forum

- Ensure that every attendee understands the growing importance of societal measurements and indicators systems
- Ensure that every attendee leaves the conference understanding the steps they can take to assess, evaluate and implement some of the measures that are appropriate for their society
- Create an “experience” that can stimulate further interactions between participants
- Build an international network to measure progress in individual countries and at world level
- Establish a mandate for future work

Exhibition on “Innovative tools to turn information into knowledge”

- Animations
- Videos
- Databases
- Web sites
- Software
- E-learning for statistics
- Comprehensive indicator systems

The best initiatives will be formally recognized during the conference.

International Survey on What People Know

- In democratic countries, policy decisions are taken by political authorities, although their decisions are influenced by public opinion.
- Increasing attention is given to public opinion, even when it is poorly informed
- Recent literature argues that there are big differences in the way that the general public and specialists think about key issues. For US citizens, ideology seems to be the most important determinant in shaping the public's opinion
- First coordinated international survey will be carried out (April 2007) in 30 countries, including US, on what citizens know about key economic indicators (GDP, inflation, unemployment, public debt)

Long-term directions of the Project

- Prepare the ground towards a new set of “World Progress Indicators”, to replace MDG indicators after 2015
- Four pillars:
 - Statistical research
 - Development of ICT tools
 - Advocacy and institutional building
 - Development of a global infrastructure about progress
- Build a coalition/partnership with international organizations, foundations, etc.

Key deliverables (1)

● Statistical research

- Recommendations on **how to measure the progress of societies** using different approaches;
- Development of recommendations on **how to measure specific phenomena**;
- Establishment of a **knowledge base** on existing measures of progress at international, national and sub-national level;
- Publication of **comparative analyses** of existing progress measures and projects to identify commonalities, differences, innovative frameworks and approaches, etc.;
- Publication of comparative results based on an **international survey** on what citizens know about the progress of their society.

Key deliverables (2)

- **ICT tools to transform statistics into knowledge**
 - Development of **innovative software** to improve users' capacity to visualize and analyze statistical indicators;
 - Development of a **knowledge base** about innovative ICT tools to facilitate the access to and the understanding of economic, social and environmental indicators;
 - Development of **partnerships with national and global media** to improve the dissemination of statistical information to citizens;
 - Organization of **international exhibitions** on innovative tools to transform statistics into knowledge, during the World Forum events, every 2-3 years.

Key deliverables (3)

● Advocacy and institutional building

- Recommendations on **how to build initiatives** aimed at measuring societal progress through the involvement of different components of the society (government, opposition, civil society, etc.);
- Organization of **working groups** in the different regions of the world, where experience on these issues can be shared and discussed, good practices identified, etc.;
- **Support to countries and regions** who want to establish initiatives to measure progress, provide training courses, scientific advice, software to present indicators, etc.

Key deliverables (4)

- **Global infrastructure to measure and foster world progress**
 - **The Project web site and the Newsletter**
 - **A global, web-based technical infrastructure** where:
 - Progress indicators would be made accessible to citizens all over the world;
 - Users could interact with indicators using attractive graphical interfaces and other analytical tools, and launch global conversations based on solid and comparable statistical information, etc.
 - **World and regional events**, to stimulate statistical and policy discussions on societal progress, and to promote the convergence towards world progress indicators.
 - The Global Project **will not produce any report** on world progress

Why the OECD?

- The Organization has a rich history in developing international statistical concepts and standards about new and complicated areas of life:
 - system of national accounts (60s);
 - social indicators (70s);
 - education outcome measures (90s);
 - sustainable development (00s).
- The Organization is a very respected source of statistical data and standards worldwide
- The Organization has a wealth of expertise in practically every key area of progress – economic, social and environmental – that one might wish to measure.
- The Organization has the flexibility to organize projects with other public and private partners.

In conclusion, the Project aims to:

- **Strengthen democracy**, respecting historical and cultural differences
- **Change culture**, helping citizens to pay attention to all dimensions of progress
- **Improve citizens' knowledge**, becoming more aware of risks and challenges of today world
- **Improve citizens' numeracy**, strengthening people's capacity of understanding the reality in which they live
- **Improve national policy making**, through a better measurement of policy and societal outcomes
- **Improve international policy making**, through the a world progress monitoring system, covering all countries
- **Foster a global and open conversation** about the state and progress of the world
- **Improve statistical capacity** in each and every country
- **Develop new statistics** in emerging domains



Thank you for your attention.

For more information:

- www.oecd.org/std
- www.sourceoecd.org/factbook
- www.oecd.org/statistics