



stampa

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<http://www.istat.it>

Contact Centre
contact@istat.it

Ufficio Stampa
tel. +39 06 4673.2243/4
ufficiostampa@istat.it

Next frontiers for well-being measurement and data

Institutional greeting, 4 November 2024

Speech by the President of Istat, prof. Francesco Maria Chelli

Greetings to the authorities present

(in order of appearance in the agenda)

Mathias Cormann

Giancarlo Giorgetti

Dear colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to join the opening of the 7th OECD World Forum on Well-being in Italy, two decades after the first Forum in Palermo in 2004.

And I want to thank the OECD and the Italian Ministry of Economy and Finance, but also the Bank of Italy, for their work in organizing this event, in which ISTAT has been pleased to collaborate.

The 7th Forum is both an important anniversary for us but also a chance to reflect on our achievements.

Challenges are ahead in measuring what truly matters so that public policies can focus on people's well-being and quality of life.

As we know, since the onset of the "Beyond GDP" Agenda, the measurement of progress has broadened considerably, and the analysis of subjective well-being, social cohesion, equity and environmental sustainability has grown rapidly.

This has led official statistics to develop innovative tools and produce better data to measure the multiple dimensions of well-being.

Much has occurred since the last Forum in Korea in 2018, but it is important to acknowledge that the main issues that were discussed then are still important today.

These include attention to the opportunities offered by the digital transition, which, as our statistics have shown in the years of the health emergency, have the potential to improve people's lives and the functioning of institutions, but can also create new divides or amplify existing inequalities.

During the coming days, several topics will be discussed: they are all key issues for National Institutes of Statistics, the producers of official statistics and the stakeholders at large.

I will mention just a few:

- ✓ the lessons we can learn from the use of new data sources and the opportunities offered by data integration;
- ✓ the role of methodological and technological innovations to advance well-being measurement;
- ✓ the contribution of data generated by citizens;
- ✓ the value that institutions can add to statistics, supporting the process of data production.
- ✓ These are all challenges that National Institutes of Statistics need to address to remain relevant.

Over these two decades, ISTAT has devoted a great deal of resources in measuring well-being.

And I would like to take this opportunity to briefly share our experience, which I believe has yielded excellent results, although still much remains to be done.

The Benessere Equo e Sostenibile (BES) framework, which means "equitable and sustainable well-being", was developed 15 years ago and represents today a solid point of reference in Italy at both national and local level.

The set of indicators has been expanded over time to improve our ability to measure the social, environmental and digital transformations taking place, in the light of the new availability of data and methodologies.

The first "Report on equitable and sustainable well-being" was published in 2013, after three years of intense work, with a broad participation of different stakeholders, the scientific community, civil society and citizens, and an unprecedented investment in resources.

For this, we are grateful to Enrico Giovannini, who first wanted it, and then made it happen.

ISTAT is now investing in bridging "local" information gaps by producing indicators to support policy-making closer to citizens' needs, analyzing and understanding the different layers of inequalities, including information on the "hard to reach populations", aligned with the principle of equity that is promoted by the BES framework.

In this vein, I fully recognize a great challenge for National Statistical Institutes in producing better and detailed data at granular level.

Innovation in the collection of quality data to support local policies, especially on issues which could be poorly covered by administrative data, such as subjective well-being, quality of work, trust and environmental sustainability, is and will be crucial, also to maintaining citizens' support.

Our measures of well-being – which, from 2018, have found a complement of international relevance in the measures of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals – are also recognized by the highest institutional bodies as a useful tool for policy at national and local level.

Since 2016, a selection of 12 indicators has been integrated into the national economic policy-making process.

This is a first important step to raise awareness of the use of these tools to meet citizens' needs and identify priorities, and to pay attention to how public policies directly affect the different dimensions of well-being.

ISTAT continues to be committed to making this map of well-being more specific and detailed, also thanks to the inspiration we will receive in these days from the comparison with many international experiences.

For instance, we want to keep exploring the meaning and implications of the term “resilience” for ageing populations, a particularly important issue for Italy, especially focusing on the life course, social networks and intergenerational ties, and the policy implications of these changes.

These themes will also be discussed during the Forum.

I would like to conclude this message with one last thought.

Today, and even more so as will be discussed during this important Forum, the reasons for well-being measurement are all still valid, because they focus on issues that are relevant to citizens' lives and can be useful for policy purposes.

And it is also by building on this asset that, in the face of the extraordinary changes taking place in our societies, all institutions can succeed in communicating – as actively as possible – the evidence on which their decisions are based and their impact on people's well-being thereof.

Of course, as we know, this also means that National Institutes of Statistics and relevant institutions need to work harder to produce more detailed data and improve the way they communicate and disseminate wellbeing measures, fostering cooperation among national and local governments and the private sector, where necessary, to enhance statistical production.

The Forum is an important international opportunity to discuss the need to incorporate the multidimensional, well-being approach into policymaking and policy design, as well as the dissemination efforts that will take place or that have to be enhanced in each country.

Looking ahead, official statistics have a role that goes beyond measurement:
we need to work with citizens, institutions and communities, understanding their perceptions
of well-being and bridging gaps in representation and accessibility.

Thank you for your attention.

I wish you all a fruitful and inspiring Forum.