

FINAL FORUM STATEMENT (NOVEMBER 2018)

Over 2,700 participants for the 6th OECD World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy met in Incheon, Korea on 27-29 November 2018 to discuss some of the key trends that will shape people's lives in the decades to come.

The world we live in today is more connected and yet more fragmented than ever. Online networks flourish but, as well as bringing people together and improving certain aspects of people's quality of life, they also have the potential to create divides and tensions and bring about political polarisation and distrust. Rising inequalities have become a fact of life in many countries, with the gaps between the "haves" and the "have nots" growing wider, and spanning multiple dimensions of well-being. And many of the most pressing well-being challenges facing governments around the world – including climate change, migration, and the pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals – demand increased international cooperation at a time when people in many countries are increasingly turning inwards and voice distrust in the multilateral system built after WWII.

The 6th OECD World Forum has thus taken a broad perspective for considering the future of well-being, putting particular emphasis on three important trends – the digital transformation, governance in an increasingly complex world, and the need to engage the private sector in order to secure sustainable and inclusive well-being.

Over the past three days, a range of world leaders, policy makers, statisticians, government officials, representatives from civil society and business, researchers and journalists, coming from diverse backgrounds, exchanged ideas on the interplay between digitalisation, governance, business and well-being. Some of the key issues raised included the following:

Digitalisation and well-being

The digital revolution is not only fundamentally changing the economy but is also re-shaping our society and the lives of individuals. While many of these changes have the potential to improve well-being, digitalisation creates many new challenges that were addressed by Forum participants. The discussion showcased that digital technologies will be a disruptive force in the future and have far-reaching consequences for inequalities, employment and well-being. Parallel Sessions focused on artificial intelligence and well-being, and a whole of government approach for dealing with the broad range of consequences of digitalisation.

Governance in a complex world

Ensuring inclusive growth and sustainable well-being in view of the complex challenges looming at the horizon requires re-imagining the role of our institutions. An 'empowering state' will view people as its most valuable asset, foster equality, and rebuild trust for a new social contract in the digital era. Sessions at the Forum addressed how new modes of governance can take a systemic 'whole-of-government' approach, strengthen cooperation across sectors, ensure access to key public services, draw on insights from complexity science and strategic foresight, and connect local policy action with global realities.

Business and well-being

Achieving sustainable and inclusive well-being will require a joint effort by all actors. The business sector has considerable impact on people's lives, and its engagement in promoting inclusive growth

will be key for achieving better outcomes. Experts agreed that developing a deeper understanding of how businesses impact on people's well-being and planet's sustainability through robust measurement frameworks will be crucial for supporting more inclusive business models, and will enable business leaders who are setting a new course foster more sustainable and people-minded strategies.

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As world leaders address the UN 2030 Agenda and act to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the 6th OECD World Forum has allowed to discuss what makes for a good life in all countries of the world, and how all actors – policy makers, businesses, and citizens alike – can work together to ensure that our future is as inclusive and sustainable as possible.

Both Korea and the OECD have long been champions of well-being, rethinking the way policy-makers and societies at large could define and measure the well-being of people and communities and, more recently, how these new metrics could be used in the policy process. Forum participants highlighted the importance of evidence-based policy and recognised the pivotal role that National Statistical Offices play in providing high-quality trusted evidence to support policy makers' reflections and decisions on public interventions.

The report of the OECD-hosted High-Level Expert Group on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, released on the first day of the Forum, will provide further impetus and guidance to the various initiatives currently ongoing on measuring people's and societies' well-being.

The roundtable on digitalisation and well-being explored the opportunities that the digital transformation is creating and emphasised the need to gather more evidence to better understand the impacts these new technologies are having on people's life. The roundtable on the evolving role of governance showcased examples of how policy makers at the national and local levels are designing and implementing policies and programmes aimed at improving people's life. In this context, digital technologies and the increasing wealth of available data can provide a way to achieve more open, participatory and trustworthy public institutions in the pursuit of better solutions to societal challenges.

Businesses have demonstrated their engagement in contributing to people's quality of life and the planet, including through the newly established OECD Business Platform for inclusive Growth. The discussion of future pathways to development and the OECD Development Centre report on Global Perspective on Development launched on the third day of the Forum showed how a "Beyond GDP" perspective is driving the emergence of a new development paradigm.

Looking to the future, it is clear that digitalisation, complexity and interconnectedness will drive societies in directions that cannot be fully anticipated today. In particular, innovative and interconnected cities will become even more important in the future. Digital innovation can enable local governments to provide more efficient, environmentally sustainable and inclusive public services within cities.

What is important is that communities and leaders address the challenges of assessing future developments in a comprehensive way, looking at the full range of impacts on the many dimensions of people's life. It is vital that the future of well-being be mapped and measured, and that the link

between measurement and policy be strengthened in order to design and implement more inclusive and more sustainable policies.

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The discussions at the Forum highlighted that:

- Navigating the most pressing well-being challenges facing governments, businesses and citizens in the future will require new ways of measuring, thinking and acting. A strengthened link between statistics, knowledge and policy requires engagement from policy-makers, statisticians, civil society, business, the academic community, and politicians alike.
- All participants should be encouraged to continue the discussions surrounding the future of well-being in their countries. This requires enhancing measures of quality of life, through better and more innovative approaches to data collection.
- Countries need to strengthen their data collection efforts, in particular in areas that are insufficiently covered by national statistical systems (such as subjective well-being, job quality, economic insecurity, environmental sustainability, trust), taking advantage of innovative approaches (satellite information, smart data, crowdsourced data, experimental measures) and collected in ways that allow cross-country comparisons and learning from the experiences of other countries (based on international statistical standards and statistical guidance, including those provided by the OECD in many of these new fields of enquiry).

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Building upon the leadership role the OECD has established in the field of well-being, quality of life and sustainability, the OECD and Statistics Korea will strengthen their cooperation by contributing to the advancement of the measurement of well-being, evidence-based policies and the use of administrative and alternative sources of data, also in the perspective of reinforcing the engagement with other countries and regional organisations in the Asian Pacific region.

The OECD welcomes and supports the Incheon Declaration, announced at the Forum, as a significant step forward in improving people’s quality of life in Korea. The Incheon Declaration shows the Korean government’s commitment to making a whole-of-government effort in enhancing people’s quality of life across a wide range of dimensions that matter for people including the economy, society, education and the environment, and to promote a culture of evidence-based policy at all levels.

The OECD and Forum participants thank the Government of Korea, Statistics Korea and Incheon Metropolitan City for excellent arrangements for holding the 6th OECD World Forum and for extending their warm hospitality to all delegates and guests.