



**Measuring the progress of societies:  
A key tool to improve policy making and  
societal well-being**

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# 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 focussing on the economic one (GDP)
- Mistrust in national governments (and therefore in national statistical offices)
- Growing number of “agents” in the society (NGOs, etc.)
- Individuals are asked to take decisions that in the past were taken by the government (pensions, school, etc.)
- In an age of unprecedented, and overwhelming, information flows, the common understanding necessary for informed public discourse is often inadequate



# Beyond GDP (1)

*“We have used GDP to determine wrongfully what is in fact the state of well-being of a country ... GDP is necessary but inadequate, and we need to develop additional indices that would tell a more comprehensive, a more holistic story about how human society is progressing ... The human being has two needs, the needs of the body and the needs of the mind, and what we have focused on so far is mostly the body, perhaps only the body ... So, it’s a paradigm shift that we need to make”.*

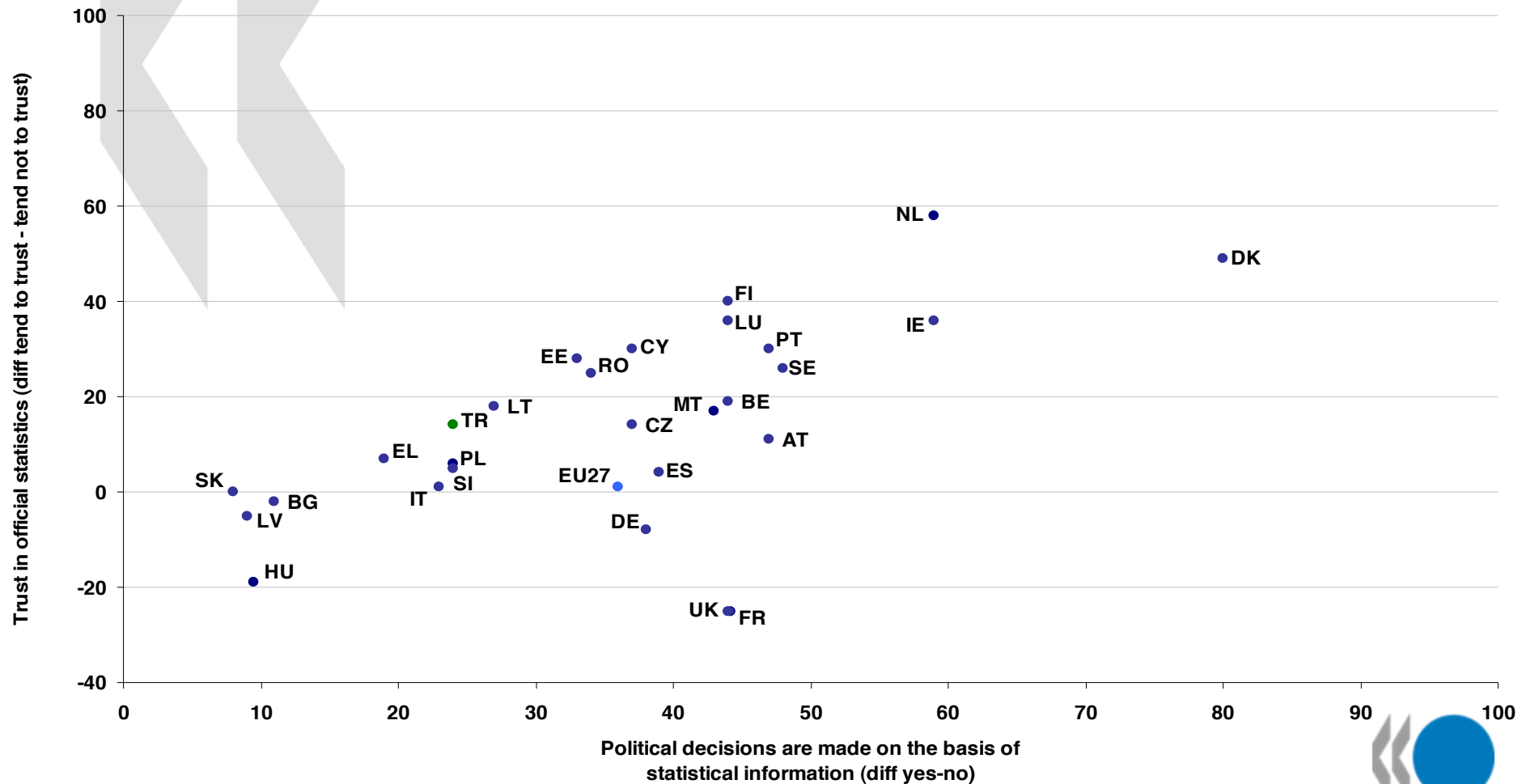
Lyonpyo Jigmi y Thinley, PM of Bhutan

## Beyond GDP (2)

*“We have a very different measure of what constitutes progress in this country. We measure progress by how many people can find a job that pays the mortgage; whether you can put a little extra money away at the end of each month so you can someday watch your child receive her college diploma ... not by the number of billionaires we have or the profits of the Fortune 500, but by whether someone with a good idea can take a risk and start a new business, or whether the waitress who lives on tips can take a day off to look after a sick kid without losing her job an economy that honours the dignity of work”.*

Barak Obama, President of the USA

# Statistics, knowledge and policy: a broken chain





# Statistics, citizenry and democracy

- 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 sciences literature:
  - Role of information in models for democratic choices (Downs, Wittman, Alesina, etc.)
  - Role of information in political process and elections (Swank, Visser, etc.)

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



# The Istanbul Declaration (1)

- A **culture of evidence-based decision making** has to be promoted at all levels of government, to increase the welfare of societies.
- We affirm **our commitment to measuring and fostering the progress of societies** in all their dimensions and to supporting initiatives at the country level.
- We **urge statistical offices, public and private organisations, and academic experts** to work alongside representatives of their communities to produce high-quality, facts-based information that can be used by all of society to form a shared view of societal well-being and its evolution over time.

# The Istanbul Declaration (2)

- To take this work forward we need to:
  - **encourage communities** to consider for themselves what “progress” means;
  - **share best practices** and **increase the awareness** of the need to do so using sound and reliable methodologies;
  - **stimulate international debate**, based on solid statistical data and indicators, on both global issues of societal progress and comparisons of such progress;
  - **produce a broader, shared, public understanding of changing conditions**, while highlighting areas of significant change or inadequate knowledge;
  - **advocate appropriate investment in building statistical capacity**, especially in developing countries, to improve the availability of data and indicators needed to guide development programs and report on progress toward international goals, such as the MDGs.

# What is “progress”?

The “western” concept of progress can be traced back to the late XVII and XVIII centuries (“Enlightenment”).

- **Plato:** a continuous process, which improves the human condition from a state of nature to higher and higher levels of culture, economic organization and political structure.
- **Bacon:** progress in knowledge should lead to progress in well-being, and inventions should be useful for mankind’s fulfilment.
- **Comte:** the famous Positivist movement maxim “*Love as a principle and order as the basis; Progress as the goal*” was the base for the dawn of the Brazilian Republic).
- **Catholic Church:** *Encyclical Populorum Progressio*
- **Islamic scholars:** “sincere work towards progress and development is, therefore, an act of religious worship”.



# How to measure “progress”?

- From “necessary” to “possible” progress
- Three main approaches:
  - Extension of national accounts
  - Composite indicator
  - Key indicators
- Objective vs. subjective (happiness?)
- The OECD supports the development of key indicators, but measuring progress is not enough if:
  - The measures are not shared
  - They are not communicated to the whole society
  - Citizens do not understand them
- From “statistique” to “sociestique”



# A growing movement

- National initiatives: Australia, US, Ireland, South Africa, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Canada, Netherlands, Morocco, Niger, etc.
- International Association of Supreme Auditors
- Local initiatives:
  - US: Community Indicators Consortium
  - EU: Council of Europe
  - UK: Young Foundation
  - France: FAIR
  - Italy: Sbilanciamoci
  - Latin America: Como Vamos
- Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative
- International Society for Quality of Life Studies
- World Women Forum



# Commission on measurement of economic performance and social progress

J. Stiglitz

A. Sen

JP Fitoussi

B. Agarwal

A. Atkinson

JP Cotis

A. Deaton

K. Arrow

P. Weil

3 working groups

Report in April 2009

K. Dervis

H. Flassbeck

M. Fleurbay

N. Folbre

J. Gadrey

E. Giovannini

R. Guesnerie

G. Heal

C. Henry

D. Kahnemann

A. Krueger

J. Lin

R. Putnam

N. Stern

C. Sunstein

J. Heckman



# WEF Global Council “Benchmarking the progress in societies”

- Main dimensions:
  - Identify the metrics and indicators most widely used
  - Identify variables that could complement measures of income to build a more accurate understanding of progress and well-being,
  - Improve statistical capability, comparability and reliability of data across countries
  - Make data available to the general public to promote openness and government accountability
  - Engage foundations and other organisations to promote statistics literacy and dissemination to the civil society



# The Global Project on “Measuring the Progress of Societies”

- Three main streams of work:
  - What to measure?
  - How to measure?
  - Ensure that measures are used
- Build a partnership with international national and local organisations, foundations, etc.
- Partners: WB, UNDP, UNICEF, IADB, AfDB, EC, INTOSAI, ESCWA, ESCAP, COE
- Associates: national and international organisations, NGOs, universities, etc.



# Key activities and outputs in 2009

- ***What to measure?***
  - Regional working groups and conferences (awareness)
  - Guidelines on how to build progress initiatives (institutional building)
- ***How to measure?***
  - Handbook on “Measuring Progress” and taxonomy of dimensions
  - Guidelines on how to measure particular dimensions of progress
  - Knowledge Base
  - Training material and courses
- ***Ensuring that the measures are used***
  - Report on what makes a set of key indicators successful
  - Survey on what citizens know about the progress of their society
  - Knowledge base on ICT tools
  - Release and promotion of ICT tools
  - “Wiki-Progress”



# Key events in 2009

- **March:** Conference on “The use of evidence for policy processes” (Paris)
- **June:** Conference on “Measuring the Progress of Italian Society” (Rome)
- **June:** Conference of the International Institute for Design on visualisation of statistics (Paris)
- **July:** Conference on The Physics of Social Change (Boston)
- **July:** Conference of the International Society for Quality of Life Studies (Florence)
- **August:** Session at the ISI conference
- **April-September:** regional conferences and summer schools (Mexico, Italy, Australia, South Africa, etc.)
- **27-30 October:** Third World Forum (27-30 October, Busan)



# Wiki4Progress (1)

- A global platform to serve all people in the world to understand and debate, using statistical indicators, whether the world itself, or a particular country or region, is making progress.
- The main attribute of a Wiki is that authors contribute their knowledge to a single repository, designed to represent the synthesis of what the “collective intelligence” is able to build about that particular subject.
- Wiki4Progress will:
  - bring data and metadata in the same environment to build a single, integrated database;
  - allow a simple use of statistical data to create charts and tables to be posted on various platforms (Wikipedia, etc.)



## Wiki4Progress (2)

- Wiki4Progress will represent the catalyst of initiatives existing around the world on the measurement of progress, contributing to answer the following questions:
  - Who is developing initiatives on measuring progress (well-being, quality of life, etc.);
  - What type of taxonomy do these initiatives use?
  - Which indicators are being used to measure the different dimensions of progress?
  - How is my country/region/community achieving over time and in comparison to other similar territories?



# WikiProgress: two components

- A “Classical Wiki” where users can find:
  - materials developed by the Project;
  - information about existing or new initiatives around the world.
- A “Statistical Wiki”, where data and metadata can be shared, assessed and eventually uploaded at the end of a “quality-assurance” process. In particular, the user will be able to:
  - upload data and metadata and submit them for quality evaluation;
  - navigate the database by country (map and list) or by topic (taxonomy and list), exploring data and metadata;
  - create tables and charts and export them in various formats to populate texts, blogs, wikis, etc.



# WIKIGENDER

Your information sharing platform for Gender Equality



## Main Page

navigation

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### Welcome to Wikigender

**Wikigender** is your online platform for questions related to gender equality. It allows you to comment on or change existing information, and to create or upload new articles and documents. By allowing users to share their experiences and to learn from each other's knowledge in an interactive way, Wikigender will contribute to a better understanding on the situation of men and women around the world. [More](#)

In order to access information, you can search for a specific topic (using the "search" option on the left), browse through *all of our articles* or enter through one of Wikigender's main categories:

- [Country Focus](#)
- [Data and Statistics](#)
- [Theory and Conceptual Framework](#)
- [Policies and Instruments](#)
- [Organisations and Initiatives](#)
- [All Categories](#)

Wikigender currently comprises **125** articles and is maintained by **21** users. Thank you for being a part of this initiative. [More data](#)



### Getting started

#### See which topics are covered

You can find a complete list of articles here: [Index of Articles](#)

#### Edit an article

If you want to edit an existing article, please first sign up here: [Log in/create account](#) (you just need to provide a login name and an email adress). After that you can edit a text by clicking on "edit this page" on top of each article.

#### Write a new article

Please type in your topic into the search box on the left and click "Go". You can choose to improve articles that might already exist or create a new one if the topic has not been covered yet (please click "create this page").

#### For questions or suggestion to Wikigender

Please feel free to [contact us](#) for any comments you may have.

### Upcoming Events

- [8 Mar 2008 - International Women's Day, Launch of Wikigender](#)
- [31 Mai 2008 - End of Logo selection phase for Wikigender](#)

### Article of the Week

#### Affirmative action

Affirmative action refers to policies intended to promote access to education or employment for discriminated groups. Motivation for affirmative action policies is to redress the effects of past and current discrimination and to encourage public institutions such as universities, hospitals and police forces to be more representative of the population. [More](#)

### Picture of the Week



# In conclusion, the Project aims to:

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

**IMPROVE WELL-BEING**



## And what about the crisis?

... Happiness lies not in the mere possession of money; it lies in the joy of achievement, in the thrill of creative effort. The joy and moral stimulation of work no longer must be forgotten in the mad chase of evanescent profits ...

... Without regard to party, the overwhelming majority of our people seek a greater opportunity for humanity to prosper and find happiness. They recognize that human welfare has not increased and does not increase through mere materialism and luxury, but that it does progress through integrity, unselfishness, responsibility and justice ...

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, President of the USA, 1933