

Access to LIS data for the staff of the United Nations Organisation

December 11th 2019

We are pleased to announce that as of January 1st 2020, and for a period of 5 years, all staff of the United Nations Organisation (including funds, programmes and other institutions that are part of the UN system, with the exception of the specialised agencies) will have **unlimited access to the LIS data**. This was made possible thanks to a generous contribution from the Department of Cooperation of the Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Below, you will find some background about LIS, its financing structure and its relations with the UN.

Founded in Luxembourg in 1984, [LIS](#) is a cross-national data center located in Luxembourg, which serves a global community of researchers, educators, and policy makers. It acquires datasets with income, wealth, employment, and demographic microdata from several countries around the world, harmonises them to enable cross-national comparisons, and makes them available in two databases, the [Luxembourg Income Study Database \(LIS\)](#) and the [Luxembourg Wealth Study Database \(LWS\)](#). Initially focused solely on high-income countries, LIS has, over the last two decades, expanded its coverage to a number of **middle income countries**. Several countries from Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as Asia and Africa have been included in the LIS Database. The LIS and LWS data are used every year by more than 1,000 researchers around the world (including some major international organisations such as the World Bank, the OECD, the IMF, and, to a lesser extent, some UN agencies) reaching a yearly average of about 65,000 requests; the resulting studies are included in hundreds of publications (peer-reviewed articles, government monographs, dissertations, books, popular articles).

With its rich income and wealth data disaggregated along several dimensions and covering five decades (from the 1970s for some of the first LIS Member countries, until nowadays), LIS data has always sparked the interest of several **UN agencies**. LIS' increased coverage of middle income countries, together with the introduction in 2015 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are factors that have further strengthened this interest. Members of the LIS team – based in both our Luxembourg and US offices – have collaborated with colleagues at, e.g., UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, UNRISD, and UN DESA. These collaborations have taken multiple forms. The LIS directors and staff often speak at UN events, serve on advisory panels, and prepare commissioned papers; our US office has hosted public events featuring UN flagship reports. However, because of the current **LIS' financial structure**, until now UN staff was not in the position to query the LIS data directly. LIS is financed by voluntary annual contributions from several of the participating countries and from a number of supranational organizations. In return for these financial contributions, LIS offers all residents in these countries, and all staff in these organizations, free and

lisdatacenter.org

Francois Bourguignon, *President*
Daniele Checchi, *Secretary-General*

ASBL/Non-profit Organisation
R.C.S. Luxembourg F733

LIS Cross-National Data Center
Maison des Sciences Humaines
11, porte des Sciences - 5^{ème} étage
L-4366 Esch-Belval - LUXEMBOURG
+352-466 644 5950
admin@lisdatacenter.org

unlimited access to its microdata. Individual researchers and analysts in non-contributing countries and organisations (such as the UN until now) pay individual user fees to gain access to the LIS data.

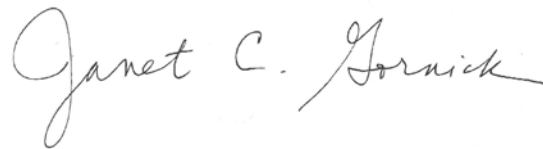
As mentioned above, we are now in the position to offer this access to UN staff thanks to a contribution from the Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is targeted specifically at the UN. This convention will enable UN personnel wishing to use LIS and LWS databases for non-commercial purposes, to access them in an unlimited manner and without being subject to payment of user fees required by LIS' governance in relation to the data access policy for the period of 5 years starting from January 1st 2020. Today, the Luxembourg Minister for Cooperation, Mme Paulette Lenert, together with LIS President François Bourguignon, LIS Luxembourg Office Director Daniele Checchi, and the Director of the Luxembourg Statistical Office Serge Allegrezza have given a press conference in Luxembourg to make this announcement public.

We are certain that, with free access, UN staff will use the LIS data extensively, and we are eager to support our colleagues throughout the UN to make the best use of the LIS microdata. This can consist of help through our self-teaching packages or our user support service, attendance to the LIS annual workshop in Luxembourg, or even the organisation of a local ad hoc workshop in case an agency expresses a specific interest in that direction. Do not hesitate to contact us, or the Director of Operations, Teresa Munzi, if you would like to hear more about these possibilities or if you have any query concerning this matter.

Best regards,



Daniele Checchi
Director, Luxembourg Office of LIS
Professor of Economics, University of Milan



Janet Gornick
Director, US Office of LIS
Professor of Political Science and Sociology, CUNY