

Note Verbale

Technical seminar on methodologies for regional and global estimation

A Proposal by the ILO

1. Background

The UN General Assembly adopted 8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for use in assessing the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. These 8 goals are to be achieved over a 15-year period ending in 2015. To monitor progress towards the MDGs, a set of 18 targets and 48 indicators have been identified. The Secretary General (SG) is required to report annually to the General Assembly on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration based on these goals, targets and indicators. In order to have relevant statistics for monitoring progress towards this implementation and for use in advocacy and mobilization through the Millennium Campaign, UN specialised agencies, funds and programmes as well as international organisations have been requested to populate a database set up by the UN Statistics Division with country data as well as regional and global estimates for all the selected indicators. They are also expected to write up story lines on trends with 1990 as baseline. (See Annex 1 for the distribution of responsibility to the relevant agencies.)

The initial exercise was carried out in 2002. A report¹ of an inter-agency technical meeting held in May 2002 to review the exercise raised a number of issues concerning the statistics supplied by the agencies. They included a) conceptual validity, b) availability, accuracy and consistency over time of country data, and c) the methods used for regional and global estimation.

On the question of aggregation, the report noted that international agencies used different approaches to produce regional and global estimates, which were unavoidable due to the lack of country data. Differences in estimation of missing data, modelling techniques, use of appropriate exchange rates, classification of countries into regional and/or economic groupings as well as conceptual and methodological differences between countries were mentioned.

¹ United Nations Millennium Development Goals: Data and Trends. Prepared by An Inter-Agency Expert Group on MDG Indicators and edited by the UN Statistics Division/DESA. May 2002, New York, available at millenniumindicators.un.org under the menu selection 'key documents'.

While acknowledging that methods used to address these concerns are necessarily tied to the nature of the indicators, an exchange of information and discussion about these methods between agencies could still be of enormous benefit to the overall process of monitoring progress towards the MDGs.

2. Proposal

It is proposed to hold a half-day technical seminar on methodologies used for producing regional and global estimates either during the next meeting of the Committee for Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) 9 – 11 September, 2003 or back-to-back with it.

A consultant will be hired by the ILO in consultation with the other agencies to facilitate discussions at the meeting. Each agency will be invited to prepare a description of the methods used for producing such estimates, especially but not necessarily limited to the indicators used for monitoring the implementation of the MDGs. Some concrete examples of the use of these methods should be included. It is expected that these write-ups and any supporting documents and publications will be submitted to the consultant by 30 April 2003. The consultant will be required to prepare a discussion document with recommendations based on the write-ups and the person's own professional experiences. The write-ups and discussion document will be circulated to all members of the CCSA.

The seminar will consist of a 45-minute presentation by the consultant followed by open discussion for 120 minutes.