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**Development indicators**

Background document  
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**Background document accompanying the *Secretary General's Report on  
Development Indicators*  
(E/CN.3/2006/14)**

Prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division

## **Introduction**

The *Secretary General's Report on Development Indicators* (E/CN.3/2006/14) presents the results of an assessment conducted by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) of countries' capacity to produce the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) indicators. The assessment was conducted by UNSD at the request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-sixth session and under the guidance of the Friends of the Chair on MDG indicators. The present document is a complement to the Secretary General's report and summarizes countries' comments to the UNSD assessment, received after the preparation of the above mentioned report.

The analysis of countries' capacity to monitor MDG indicators was based on the availability of country-level data stored in the MDG indicators database maintained by UNSD, which contains the data provided by the designated specialized agencies. In November 2005, preliminary results of the assessment were sent to all national statistical offices for review, comments and corrections. The results of the analysis were also reviewed by national statisticians in two main MDG fora: the Inter-agency and Expert Group Meeting held in Rome in October 2005, attended by 14 representatives of national statistical offices, and the meeting with all 15 national statistical offices from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region, held in Cape Verde in December 2005. Due to time constraints, these comments were not included in the main paper (E/CN.3/2006/14) presented at the Statistical Commission and are now summarized in the present document.

### **Summary of countries' comments to the UNSD assessment of countries' capacity to produce MDG indicators**

#### ***The respondents***

A total of 42 national statistical offices replied to the UNSD request for comments on the country-level analysis carried out on the UNSD MDG indicators database. Out of these, 34 countries provided detailed comments and corrections, which were used for the UNSD assessment. Additional feedbacks from other 12 countries were compiled in the two MDG meetings organized by UNSD in October and December 2005. As a result, 46 detailed country replies have been analysed and summarized in the present report. Table 1 below presents the distribution of respondent countries by regional grouping. Twenty-six countries out of the 46 analysed are from developing regions. Out of these 26, 12 are least developed countries.

**Table 1: Distribution of countries that commented on the UNSD assessment**

<b>MDG region:</b>	<b>Detailed comments</b>	<b>General comments</b>	<b>Total</b>
- Developing regions	26	3	29
(LDCs)	(12)	(0)	(12)
- Developed regions	20	4	24
(OECD)	(14)	(3)	(17)
(DAC)	(12)	(3)	(15)
- Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>54</b>

### *Major findings*

The analysis of countries' feedbacks is presented in Table 2 (in the annex) and can be summarized as followed:

- a. Many countries recognized that the analysis was useful to stimulate the dialogue between national statistical offices (NSOs) and international agencies on ways to improve the use of national official statistics by international organizations and reduce discrepancies between data used and published at the national and international levels.
- b. As a general comment, countries expressed having produced more indicators than what had been reported to the international system and presented in the MDG indicators database - which contains internationally standardized country-level data.
- c. In addition, countries expressed having in general more data points and more recent ones. This reflects the time-lag between the production and dissemination of data at the country level and the reporting to the international statistical system. Countries recognized that problems with reporting to international agencies are mainly linked to the lack of coordination: (i) among various statistical agencies within countries (administrative data from line ministries, NSOs); and (ii) between national statistical agencies and country offices of international agencies. Countries identified possible ways to improve the reporting mechanism between countries and agencies, namely through the establishment of: (a) periodic consultations between NSOs and other data producers at the national level; (b) data dissemination training for NSOs; (c) a national focal point to facilitate the dissemination process of MDG indicator data.

- d. Countries from developed regions that commented the UNSD assessment pointed out that several indicators are not applicable to their national circumstances, in particular those listed under goal 6 (HIV), goal 7 (slums), goal 2 and 3 (literacy).

## Annex 1

**Table 2: Analysis of countries' comments by goal and target**

	How many countries are <b>doing better</b> than shown in UNSD database	<i>mainly in area</i>	How many countries are <b>doing worse</b> than shown in UNSD database	<i>mainly in area</i>	How many countries have <b>more data</b> than shown in UNSD database	<i>mainly in area</i>	How many countries have <b>more recent data</b> than shown in UNSD database	<i>mainly in area</i>	In how many countries the indicators are <b>not applicable</b>
<b>Goal 1, T1 (poverty)</b>	10	poverty (7 L)	2	- share poorest quantile (1 L)	7		15		3
<b>Goal 1, T2 (underweight and hunger)</b>	1	hunger (L)	4	- hunger (4 L)	8	- underweight	10		6 "na" in underweight
<b>Goal 2 (primary education)</b>	18	- 13 literacy (7 L) - 11 survival (7 L) - 8 PCR (5 L)	4	-PCR (3 L)	13		24		4 "na" on literacy (D)
<b>Goal 3 (gender)</b>	15	12 literacy (7 L)	6	- women wage employment (4 L)	12	- education	24		4 "na" on literacy (D)
<b>Goal 4 (child mortality)</b>	1	immunization (L)	0		12	- mainly child and infant mortality	15		
<b>Goal 5 (maternal mortality)</b>	9	- MMR (6 L) - births attended (1 L & 2 D)	0		10		18		3 "na" (D)
<b>Goal 6, T7 (HIV)</b>	13	behaviour indicator (8 L)	8	- orphans (4 L)	8	- contraceptive prevalence rate	10	- contraceptive prevalence rate	7 "na" (D)

**Notes:**

D = Countries in developed regions  
na = not applicable

L = Countries in developing regions  
ODA = Official development assistance

LLDS = Landlocked developing countries  
PCR = Primary completion rate

MMR = Maternal mortality ratio  
SIDS = Small island developing states

Annex 1 (cont.)

Table 2: Analysis of countries' comments by goal and target (cont.)

	How many countries are <b>doing better</b> than shown in UNSD database	<i>mainly in area</i>	How many countries are <b>doing worse</b> than shown in UNSD database	<i>mainly in area</i>	How many countries have <b>more data</b> than shown in UNSD database	<i>mainly in area</i>	How many countries have <b>more recent data</b> than shown in UNSD database	<i>mainly in area</i>	In how many countries the indicators are <b>not applicable</b>
<b>Goal 6, T8 (Malaria &amp; TB)</b>	22	-TB prevalence and deaths (10 L)	11	- TB DOTS* (8 L) - 5 malaria prevalence. & death (L)	7	deaths by cause	16		7 "na" (2 D)
<b>Goal 7, T9 (forest, protected areas, gas emissions)</b>	18	- CO <sub>2</sub> (9 L) - protected areas (9 L)	11	- forest (6 L) - CFCs (5 L) - solid fuels (4 L)	7		14	both D & L	
<b>Goal 7, T10 &amp; T11 (water &amp; sanitation, slums)</b>	15	- slums (10 L & 3 D) - W+S (6 D)	1	sanitation (L)	9	W+S	6		6 "na" (5 D)
<b>Goal 8, T12-15 (ODA, market access, debt sustainability)</b>	5	ODA in LLDS and SIDS	8	debt service as % of exports (L)	-		-		
<b>Goal 8, T16 (youth employment)</b>	9	youth unemployment (L)	0		6	youth unemployment (L&D)	16	youth unemployment (D)	
<b>Goal 8, T18 (ICT)</b>	11	PCs (6 D)	12	- all ICT (4 L & 1D) - internet (9 L)	2		16 (4L)		

Notes:

D = Countries in developed regions  
na = not applicable

L = Countries in developing regions  
ODA = Official development assistance

LLDS = Landlocked developing countries  
PCR = Primary completion rate

W+S = Water and sanitation  
SIDS = Small island developing states

## Annex 1 (cont.)

### Table Summary

Countries have **more** capacity than what is shown in the UNSD MDG database in the fields of:

- (i) Education (*literacy, proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5* - 13 out of 46 replying countries, both developing and developed, stating that they can monitor these indicators);
- (ii) Environment (*protected areas, and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions* - 16 out of 26 developing countries, and *slums* - 10 out of 26 developing countries. *Water and sanitation* - 6 out of 20 developed countries);
- (iii) Poverty (7 out of 26 developing countries). Some developed countries pointed out that *the proportion of people under \$1 a day* and the *poverty gap* are not applicable in their countries;
- (iv) Health (*HIV behaviour indicators* - 8 out of 26 developing countries, and *TB prevalence and deaths* - 20 countries, half from developed regions and half from developing regions).

On the contrary, countries have **less** capacity than what is shown through the UNSD MDG database in the fields of:

- (v) Employment (*share of women in wage employment* - 4 out of 26 developing countries stated that they do not have data for this indicator);
- (vi) Health (*ratio of school attendance of orphans to non-orphans* - 4 out of 26 developing countries, *TB DOTS* - 8 out of 26 developing countries, *malaria prevalence and deaths* - 5 out of 26 developing countries);
- (vii) Environment (*forest, CFCs, solid fuels* - respectively 6, 5 and 4 out of 26 developing countries);
- (viii) Economy and ICT (*debt service as percentage of exports* - 8 out of 26 developing countries, and *internet data* - 9 out of 26 developing countries).

Finally, the developed countries that commented the UNSD assessment pointed out that several indicators are not applicable in their countries, particularly those listed under goal 6 (*HIV* - 7 “na=not applicable” to be added), goal 7 (*slums* - 5 “na” to be added), goal 2 and 3 (*literacy* - 4 “na” to be added).

## **Annex 2**

### **List of countries that provided comments to the UNSD assessment of countries' capacity to produce MDG indicators**

Australia	Liberia
Belarus	Liechtenstein
Benin	Lithuania
Burkina Faso	Macedonia
Canada	Malaysia
Cape Verde	Mali
China	Mauritius
Costa Rica	Mexico
Croatia	Mozambique
Cuba	Nepal
Cyprus	Netherlands
Czech Republic	Niger
Denmark	Nigeria
Dominica	Norway
Finland	Occupied Palestinian Territory
France	Philippines
Gambia	Portugal
Ghana	Romania
Greece	Senegal
Guinea	Sierra Leone
Iceland	Singapore
Iran	Slovenia
Ireland	Spain
Israel	Sweden
Japan	Switzerland
Kenya	Unites States of America
Latvia	Viet Nam