

High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (HLG)

Concept note on the participation of observers in the work of the HLG *(15 August 2016)*

1. Introduction

Background

At its first in person meeting in January 2016, HLG members discussed the format for future meetings and the involvement of observers. At the HLG's subsequent meeting in March 2016, members requested further clarification regarding the openness of meetings to non-member NSOs and the involvement of issue partners on specific areas of work. Members then agreed that it would be important to develop an approach that balances their commitment to inclusiveness and transparency while also facilitating the efficiency of the work of HLG. Further, this approach should be clearly communicated to all stakeholders. This proposed concept note addresses this need.

Purpose

This concept note pertains to the working methods of the HLG, including the conduct of in-person meetings and teleconferences, as well as the preparation of meeting materials and outputs in draft and final form. Its aim is to provide a balanced method of communications among HLG members, observer NSOs, international organizations, civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders, including intergovernmental and private partnerships. It outlines the involvement of issues partners on specific agenda items at meetings and in specific areas of work. This method should facilitate timely inputs, demonstrate transparency in HLG decisions and work processes in a manner that allows the HLG to proceed in its work efficiently. This concept note, once adopted by the HLG and supported by the UNSC, shall be reviewed and revised, in agreement among HLG members, as needed.

Rationale

This concept note pertains to the work processes and products of the HLG. The main purpose of the HLG is to provide strategic leadership in addressing statistical capacity needs of NSOs in the follow up and review of SDG indicators. To achieve this, the HLG will coordinate closely with the IAEG-SDGs, its sister working group charged with proposing a global indicator framework and list of indicators for monitoring the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda, and providing technical support for their implementation. The HLG will identify both existing and new resources to address unmet statistical and data needs through a comprehensive assessment of current and potential partnerships (both intergovernmental and private), including CSOs and other relevant stakeholders. A primary mechanism of communicating both needs and potential solutions will be through the UN World Data Forum, under the leadership of the HLG. However, additional, routine mechanisms will be necessary given the anticipated periodicity of the UN World Data Forum (annually).

Given the mandate and approach of the HLG, there is a clear need for frequent and well-defined mechanisms to enable the group to collect key inputs to achieve its mission by ensuring the quality of its

work products and the integrity of the process. At the same time, it is critical that work proceed in a focused, deliberate, and efficient manner.

2. Proposal

Below is a proposal for the conduct and communication of HLG work processes and products.

A. In-person meetings:

The HLG will convene four in-person meetings per year, according to the following schedule:

- Spring (in alignment with the UN Statistical Commission): Open*
- Summer: Closed**
- Fall (in alignment with UN World Data Forum): Open
- Winter: Closed

***Closed meetings* are available to HLG members and relevant UNSD staff only; co-chairs may choose to invite non-members on a thematic basis, referred to as issue partners at the recommendation of members (see partner consultations, below).

**Open meetings* are open to HLG members, HLG observers, partnerships (interagency or private), and civil society. Civil society attendees will be selected using the same method as used by the IAEG-SDGs. Specifically, UNSD, in collaboration with the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS), will facilitate a nomination process to identify representatives from civil society organizations, academia and the private sector to attend open HLG meetings. When appropriate, a volunteer Stakeholder Selection Committee will be set up to ensure broad and inclusive participation in the selection of stakeholder candidates. The committee will review all applications received through this process and, based on the content of the agenda and the available space, determine a list of candidates to attend an open HLG meeting.

In general, closed meetings will feature logistics items on its agenda. Open meetings will feature information and discussion items on its agenda.

B. Teleconferences:

Teleconferences will be scheduled periodically at the discretion of the co-chairs. These will be closed; co-chairs may periodically invite particular issue partners at the recommendation of members. (See partner consultations, below.)

C. Electronic consultations:

The HLG is expected to produce a number of work products. These materials will be made available on the UNSD website as described below:

1. For meeting agendas and meeting minutes/action items:
 - First draft: Closed
 - Second draft: Open
 - Final: Open

2. For major work products (e.g., global action plan; list of strategic priorities; schedule of deliverables; UN World Data Forum theme proposals, call for papers/presentations, forum materials):
 - Notice of intent: Open
 - First draft: Closed
 - Second draft: Open
 - Final: Open

D. Partner Consultations:

To assess current resources and unmet needs, as well as to identify new resources, the HLG will conduct consultations periodically. These consultations will be focused on particular SDG themes or clusters (including the reporting and documentation process for SDG indicators, statistical classifications, data management and production, among others).

Depending on the strategic priorities established by the HLG, and accordingly, the nature of the topics for consultation, HLG members may recommend issue partners with expertise in a particular area of interest to participate in a given consultation. This will improve the coverage and quality of the resources assessment being conducted by the HLG, and facilitate input in a transparent and orderly fashion. Issue partners will be selected by co-chairs on the recommendation of HLG members.

Communication of these consultations will be conducted as described below:

- Notice of intent (topic and requests for offers to present/discuss): Open
- Teleconference/meeting agenda and minutes:
 - First draft: Closed
 - Second draft: Open
 - Final: Open

Potential issue partners:

Issue partners with specific expertise can be called upon by the HLG members to provide technical advice and share their experiences on specific topics. Some potential issue partners include:

- Experts working in specific topics
- Representatives from the Committee for Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA)
- Representatives from Regional organizations, such as UN Regional Commissions, Eurostat, OECD, among others
- Experts from information technology sector
- Experts involved in resourcing and financing of statistics
- Experts from Academia, ISI, and related groups
- Experts from other stakeholders, such as Paris 21, Civil Society Organizations, Private Sector and others.