

**Fifth Meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group  
on the Sustainable Development Goal Indicators**

Ottawa, Canada 28-31 March 2017

Venue: Shaw Centre, 55 Colonel By Drive  
Room 206/208, Ottawa, Canada

**Report**

**I Introduction**

1. The fifth meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) took place from 28-31 March 2017 in Ottawa, Canada. The meeting was hosted by Statistics Canada. An IAEG-SDG member meeting took place during the first two days on 28-29 March 2017, followed by a plenary session, attended by all participants, on 30-31 March 2017.

2. The main objectives of the meeting were to: 1) review and present the updated tier system; 2) discuss the guidelines on data flow and global data reporting; 3) discuss the criteria for tier re-classification and the proposals for new concepts and definitions; 4) review work plans for tier III indicators and develop a mechanism to ensure completion of work; 5) present the IAEG-SDG work plan on data disaggregation; and 6) present the timeline for finalizing the proposals on possible additional indicators and other changes for the first Comprehensive Review in 2020.

3. At the plenary session, Mr. Anil Arora, Chief Statistician of Canada, opened the meeting and welcomed participants to Canada. Mr Arora emphasized the commitment of Canada to the development of the global indicator framework and to promoting the leadership role of the National Statistical Offices in reporting on the SDGs. Mr. Vincent Rigby, Assistant Deputy Minister, Global Affairs Canada, noted that the ambition of the 2030 Agenda requires a collaborative effort and engagement of all stakeholders to measure progress and achieve the SDGs. Mr. Enrique Ordaz, co-chair of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) and Ms. Francesca Perucci, Chief of the Statistical Services Branch of the United Nations Statistics Division, also offered opening remarks expressing gratitude for the active participation of all attendees as well as the IAEG-SDG Members in the preceding days. The meeting was attended by approximately 170 participants, including representatives from 23 member countries of the IAEG-SDGs, 11 observer countries, about 35 regional and international organisations, over 30 civil society organisations, academia and the private sector.

4. The co-chair of the IAEG-SDGs, Mr. Enrique Ordaz of Mexico, chaired the meeting, assisted by UNSD staff as Secretariat.

5. All documents of the meeting, including presentations for each agenda item and statements, are available for more detailed information on the website of the 5th meeting of the IAEG-SDGs (<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/meetings/iaeg-sdgs-meeting-05/>).

## **II. Information Items: Outcomes of the 48<sup>th</sup> Statistical Commission, updates on the First United Nations World Data Forum and updates on the IAEG-SDG working groups**

6. Agenda item 2 discussed the outcomes of the 48<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations Statistical Commission (held on 7-10 March 2017 in New York), including the draft resolution pertaining to data and indicators for the 2030 Agenda adopted by the Commission. The presentation for this item included: an overview of the specific outcomes of the Statistical Commission decision related to work of the IAEG-SDGs, including agreement on the revised global indicator framework, and on the proposed plan for annual refinements and two comprehensive reviews in 2020 and 2025, and a request for accelerated work needed for Tier III indicators, among other items. The draft resolution, agreed to by the Statistical Commission, adopted the global indicator framework, specified areas of work for the IAEG-SDGs and outlined other criteria for work on indicators and capacity building. The draft resolution will be taken up by ECOSOC at its Coordination and Management meeting in early June and if adopted, would proceed to the General Assembly to be taken up at its 72<sup>nd</sup> session.

7. Agenda item 3 included a presentation on an update on the outcome of the First United Nations World Data Forum and the work of the High-Level group for partnership, coordination and capacity building for statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

8. Agenda item 4 included presentations on the three working groups of the IAEG-SDGs: SDMX, Geo-spatial information and Interlinkages groups. All presentations for these agenda items are included in the meeting website.

## **III. Presentation of the updated tier system**

9. Agenda item 5, on the updated tier system, was introduced by the Secretariat. The presentation provided an update on the tier system after a review of tier classification and custodian agencies for all refined indicators agreed upon at the 48<sup>th</sup> session of the Statistical Commission and a review of tier classification for the updated Sendai indicators and *fast tracked* Tier III indicators (those indicators that had advanced methodological work and were considered for upgrading). A total of 28 indicators were reviewed. In addition to the updated tier classification for these indicators, additional feedback from the IAEG-SDG Members was

also provided on the indicators that were not upgraded in order to inform agencies' future work.

10. Mr. Marc Gordon from UNISDR provided a presentation on the five updated Sendai indicators and a proposal for the tiering of the indicators. IAEG-SDG Members agreed with the tiering for the Sendai indicators (four indicators will be Tier II and one will be Tier III) as proposed by the UNISDR.

11. The meeting also discussed criteria for how to include partial data available for some Tier III indicators in the global database. It was recommended to code this information differently, noting it is a component of the indicator and develop guidelines on how to deal with Tier III indicators where partial data are already developed.

#### **IV. Presentation on the guidelines on data flow and global data reporting**

12. Agenda item 7 was on the guidelines on data flow and global data reporting. The first presentation by the Secretariat was on the outcomes of the High Level Forum on Official Statistics at the 48<sup>th</sup> session of the Statistical Commission, entitled *Working together to measure progress towards the SDGs*. The forum discussed the importance of global reporting on the SDGs for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and cooperation and coordination between international organisations and national statistical systems. Key concepts repeated throughout the discussion of the forum included transparency and coordination. National representatives stressed the importance for continuous and transparent dialogue with international agencies and the need to improve coordination at both the national level across government agencies and global level with international agencies. The forum also explored the roles of different organisations at national, regional and international levels; examples and best practices for how to improve coordination at all levels; consultation with countries on harmonized, adjusted and estimated data; ways to ensure effective global reporting and capacity building.

13. Mr. Sven Kaumanns, the IAEG-SDG representative from Germany, presented the outline for the development of the guidelines on data flows and global data reporting. The IAEG-SDG Members discussed this agenda item during the Member meeting and developed an outline for the guidelines document, as mandated by the Statistical Commission in its decision at the 48<sup>th</sup> session of (decision 48/101 (I)). The outline of the report includes six sections: 1) Introduction; 2) The complementary roles of national and international statistical institutions in the global monitoring; 3) National reporting and national reporting platforms; 4) Data reporting channels and data flow scenarios from national to the global system; 5) Criteria and responsibilities of data custodian agencies and partner agencies for the global SDG indicators; and 6) Production of international data series. In addition, the Members established a drafting group for the development of the guidelines consisting of Germany and Cameroon as co-leads, along with Bahrain, Brazil, Cuba, Fiji and India<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The members of the drafting group may change once the rotation of the countries takes place.

14. After the presentation, the discussion focused on:
- criteria for data sharing across international agencies to reduce countries’ reporting burden, such as the development of a common and open platform so that data are collected and published once, but can be used multiple times;
  - the need to access the original data sources for each country data point, not only aggregated data on the indicator;
  - the importance of the development of an inclusive data ecosystem;
  - the need for pilot projects on a few indicators for testing the guidelines in order to identify best practices under different data collection scenarios, emphasising that there are no one-size-fits-all principles;
  - the recognition of the facilitating role played by regional mechanisms and bodies, while cautioning that there should not be another layer within the reporting mechanism;
  - the idea of possibly developing guidelines for the short term and the long term, looking for pragmatic solutions and minimizing the reporting burden on countries;
  - the fundamental importance of building upon the existing frameworks and structures in the international statistical system, aiming not to invent new systems;
  - the need to inform National Statistical Offices each time a data request goes out to any part/agency of the country statistical system;
  - the need to leverage technology in data reporting and use it effectively to improve the transparency, communication and interoperability of data reporting;
  - the importance of providing the methodologies, information and adjusted statistics to countries for their review and to allow them sufficient time to verify and validate adjusted or estimated data;
  - the need to consider and include lessons learnt from the MDG reporting and other global reporting mechanisms, such as global reporting on Climate Change;
  - the need to review and include, where appropriate, inputs from existing relevant documents, when developing the guidelines, such as UNECE Road Map on SDG reporting and the draft paper prepared by the Committee on the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) on principles and practices of global data reporting and data sharing.

15. Many interventions also stressed the need to increase transparency, the importance of applying the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (FPOS) when using “non-official” data and the need to create mechanisms to ensure data quality. It was stressed that countries have very different circumstances, capacities and realities, which imply that no single approach will work for all of them. However, it was recognized that there is a need in all countries to strengthen national statistical capacity to improve global reporting. In addition, it was noted that the CCSA can assist with possible pilot studies, as they are in a position to demonstrate how agencies work with countries and address issues.

**V. Presentation on the criteria for tier re-classification and proposals by custodian agencies for new concepts and definitions**

16. Agenda item 8, on the criteria for tier re-classification, was presented by Ms. Cara Williams, the IAEG-SDG representative from Canada. Ms. Williams reviewed the updated tier classification criteria that had been updated by the group in the preceding Member meeting to include more precise language describing the thresholds for each tier classification. The updated language reflects the definitions used in the IAEG-SDG Report to the Statistical Commission (E/CN.2/2017/2, para 24 and footnotes). The tier classification is as follows: 1) Tier I: indicator is conceptually clear, has an internationally established methodology and standards are available, and data are regularly produced by countries for at least 50 per cent of countries and of the population in every region where the indicator is relevant; 2) Tier II: indicator is conceptually clear, has an internationally established methodology and standards are available but data are not regularly produced by countries; 3) Tier III: no internationally established methodology or standards are yet available for the indicator but methodology/standards are being (or will be) developed or tested for the indicator. The presentation also included guidelines on the information needed to upgrade a classification from Tier III to Tier II and from Tier II to Tier I. It also discussed the criteria for data custodian and partner agencies, including their responsibilities.

17. Discussion on this agenda item included queries on the need for pilot studies that are regionally representative in developing Tier III indicators and the challenge of aggregating data at global and regional levels for some indicators. The IAEG-SDGs explained that the pilot studies will be used to test the methodology and data collection approach. The results of the studies will help guide the assessment of the methods by the IAEG-SDGs. In addition, as countries have varying national realities, it was agreed that pilot studies will be conducted in a variety of countries and regions. Information on the custodian agencies and their criteria are also presented in the IAEG-SDG report to the Statistical Commission (E/CN.3/2017/2).

18. The second part of the agenda item was on how to develop proposals by custodian agencies for new concepts and definitions. Ms. Petra Kynclova from UNIDO gave a short presentation on the process of developing the concept of “small scale industries”. The definition was reviewed and the group requested additional work to include not just the size of the industry, but also revenue in the definition. Several comments during the discussion focused on the possibility to use an electronic platform to review new terms and concepts that are important for the SDG framework (or other concepts needing consensus, such as “small scale farmers”), possibly with the IAEG functioning as the focal point for broader consultation. The group agreed that this could be a useful mechanism for wider consultation as well as enable the Members to know the status of development of the new concepts and definitions. The group also agreed that already existing international statistical and monitoring groups working on specific items will be consulted and their deliberations taken into account.

## **VI. Review of Tier III work plans**

19. Agenda item 10, the review of Tier III work plans, was introduced by the Secretariat, with a description of the review by the IAEG-SDGs of Tier III work plans, flagging issues in

the current methodological work, in particular for those with targets that have a 2020 deadline. Key issues identified on Tier III indicators are: limited information in the work plan, missing work plan, no clear timeline, timeline not meeting target date of 2020, missing results of pilot studies, and the need for re-classifying the indicator with completed methodology work.

20. Discussion on this agenda item included review of indicators where possible custodians were proposed for a few “orphan” indicators (there remain up to five total orphan indicators, including some where agencies are still in discussions) and the need to identify custodian agencies for a few newly refined indicators. In addition, some potential custodian agencies noted the difficulty in reporting on the proposed indicators with existing data collection mechanism and requested IAEG’s guidance on how to address these situations. For a particular indicator on sustainable consumption and production (12.a.1), it was requested that the agencies provide a recommendation for the components of the indicator as soon as possible. The Secretariat will follow-up with agencies regarding those key issues identified by the group for Tier III indicators.

## **VII. Presentation on the use of household surveys for collecting data for SDG indicators**

21. Mr. Rafael Diez De Medina from the International Labour Organization (ILO) introduced Agenda item 11, on the use of household surveys for collecting data for SDG indicators. He provided information on work of the Inter-secretariat Working Group on Household Surveys (IWGHS), particular in relation to SDG indicators. The working group was established at the 46<sup>th</sup> session of the Statistical Commission. Its work plan entails mapping for development of an integrated system of household surveys and SDGs, capacity building, and methodological and operational coordination.

22. Discussion on this agenda focused on the role of the IWGHS in helping ensure that household survey programmes respond to the data requirements of the SDGs. It was explained that the main role played by the working group is improving the quality, availability and use of survey data through coordination and collaboration. The working group will help promoting the development of household survey methodology, identifying gaps and overlap, and building capacity.

## **VIII. Data disaggregation**

23. Ms. Leesha Delatie-Budair, the IAEG-SDG Member representative from Jamaica, introduced the agenda item on data disaggregation. She presented a review of the discussion on data disaggregation from the 4<sup>th</sup> IAEG-SDG Meeting in November 2016 as well as the work plan developed by the group for the data disaggregation work stream. The work plan provided the definition of disaggregation and a proposal for the initial starting point for disaggregation. The work for this initial phase consists of three workflows: 1) Workflow A: data availability for initial starting point disaggregation; 2) Workflow B: harmonization; and

3) Workflow C: Tools and Methods. Each workflow was presented with a description of the proposed analysis and expected results. In addition, the group plans to have a second phase consisting of extended disaggregation, which was also introduced. The data disaggregation work stream includes a drafting team consisting of Germany, Jamaica, Cameroon, Bahrain, Brazil, France, Netherlands, India, Senegal, Canada and Egypt<sup>2</sup>. The group for the data disaggregation work stream will continue its work focusing on Tier I and II indicators to harmonize the dimensions and will proceed to engage in the three workflows listed previously. Members of said group, who are no longer members of the IAEG, are welcome to continue being part of the group.

24. Several interventions regarding data disaggregation noted the possibilities for enhanced information with the use of big data and the role it could play in providing more disaggregated data. IAEG-SDG Members noted that big data is available at varying degrees among countries and should be examined to determine if these data sources can be considered as a data source that would enable a greater degree of disaggregation. They also noted concerns on cost implications in large populated countries, which depend mainly on sample surveys for data. Among several interventions, it was also suggested to evaluate disaggregated indicators at the global level, as sometimes indicators for a special sub-category may be easier to obtain directly at the global level compared to the national level. This could possibly be examined in the work stream when disaggregated indicators are not yet (or will not be) available at the national level. Others noted ongoing work for city data, ageing, other population groups currently missing from the framework, and stressed prioritization of the disaggregation dimensions to 'reach the furthest behind first'. Additionally, countries and agencies discussed elements and challenges to be considered for national versus global level disaggregation, how to reflect specific groups of populations in the reporting, the use of geospatial information and maps as well as considerations for nested disaggregation.

## **IX. Proposal for additional indicators and other changes for the 2020 Comprehensive Review**

25. Mr. Enrique Ordaz, the IAEG-SDG co-chair, introduced agenda item 15 on the proposal for additional indicators and other changes for the 2020 comprehensive review. He provided a brief presentation on the components and timeline for this review. The latest decision by the Statistical Commission agreed in principle with the plan for possible additional indicators proposed by the IAEG-SDGs, but also agreed that this has to be part of the 2020 comprehensive review. Therefore, the IAEG-SDGs developed a timeline for the 2020 review, including steps for reviewing the possible additional indicators. The timeline proposed is: 1) By end of 2017: the IAEG-SDGs will review the current list of possible additional indicators to decide which to include in an open consultation; 2) By fall meeting of 2018: the group will review indicators and propose changes and possible deletions based on the criteria set out in the IAEG-SDG report to the Statistical Commission (E/CN.3/2017/2,

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<sup>2</sup> The members of the drafting team may change once the rotation of the countries takes place.

para 22); 3) By end of 2018: one or more open consultations on the proposed possible additional indicators will subsequently be launched; 4) By mid-2019: one or more open consultations on the proposed changes and deletions will be carried out; 5) By September 2019: IAEG-SDGs will review the results of the consultations and give preference to those proposals with an established methodology and data available; 6) By end of 2019: IAEG-SDGs will prepare the final proposal for the 2020 review to the Statistical Commission.

26. Interventions following the presentation focused on the possibility of splitting indicators that currently include many series, which the IAEG-SDG co-chair agreed should be considered, as well as the best entry points for recommendations of deletions and replacements for indicators, especially for indicators that do not measure the targets. It was noted that it is important to keep the number of additional indicators to be included in the set to a minimum in order to maintain a manageable framework.

## **X. Statements by Civil Society Organisations, Academia and the Private Sector**

27. The IAEG-SDGS continues with their collaboration with civil society organisations, academia and the private sector. These organisations were invited to provide statements on the various agenda items throughout the meeting. These statements highlighted, among other things, the possible interlinkages of the indicators that could be addressed by focusing on cluster deprivations, the inclusion of non-traditional data sources in the SDG reporting to fully monitoring all the Goals and targets as well as elements of data disaggregation, and missing aspects of the framework to be addressed to ensure that no one is left behind. Statements made by these organisations can be found on the IAEG-SDGs website.

## **XI. Way forward and conclusion of meeting**

28. The IAEG-SDGs next steps, as agreed by the Members at the meeting, are included below. Additionally, the work plan for activities between March 2017 and March 2018 as outlined in E/CN.3/2017/2 is also provided below for reference.

### **Next Steps:**

#### **1. Preparation of the Guidelines:**

- Establishment of the drafting group
- First draft (available for the next IAEG-SDG meeting)
- Submission to UNSC49

#### **2. Implement the plan for the yearly refinements to be submitted to UNSC49**

3. Initiate work on 2020 comprehensive review of the global indicator framework (as presented under agenda item 15)

#### **4. Member rotation finalized by May 2017**

5. Fall meeting (4<sup>th</sup> quarter) t.b.d. (host country and sources of funding to be identified)



**Work plan (E/CN.3/2017/2, para 35):**

- (a) Establish procedures for the review of workplans for Tier III indicators and finalize a mechanism for moving indicators from one Tier to another;
- (b) Initiate work on a proposal for additional indicators and other changes as part of the comprehensive review for consideration by the Statistical Commission at its fifty-first session in 2020;
- (c) Review the availability of data for Tier I and Tier II indicators and develop a plan for increasing the data coverage of Tier II indicators with the joint subgroup of the Expert Group and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- (d) Develop further guidance on the issue of data disaggregation;
- (e) Continue the work of the three working groups, on statistical data and metadata exchange, geospatial information and interlinkages;
- (f) Develop guidelines on the data flows between countries and custodian agencies;
- (g) Hold two meetings, the first in March 2017 and the second in the fourth quarter of 2017, on dates to be determined, and continue to interact electronically and through teleconferences, as needed.

29. Mr. Ordaz, the Co-Chair of the IAEG-SDGs, thanked everyone for their participation in the meeting and expressed appreciation for the close collaboration among all involved parties, which enabled the meeting to be a success. He looked forward to seeing everyone, including new IAEG-SDG members according to the rotation process, at the upcoming 6th meeting of the IAEG-SDGs.

## Annex 1 – Agenda

### Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Statistics Division

ESA/STAT/AC.333/1  
29 March 2017

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### **Fifth Meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goal Indicators**

30 – 31 March 2017

Venue: Shaw Centre, 55 Colonel By Drive  
Room 206/208, Ottawa, Canada

### **Plenary Session Provisional Agenda**

#### **Thursday, 30 March 2017**

*Registration and collection of badges for IAEG-SDG observers and other stakeholders  
(8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.)*

#### **Morning session (9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.)**

*For information:*

1. Opening remarks (9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.)
  - Mr. Anil Arora, Chief Statistician, Statistics Canada
  - Mr. Vincent Rigby, Assistant Deputy Minister, Global Affairs Canada
  - Ms. Francesca Perucci, Chief of Statistical Services Branch, United Nations Statistics Division
  - Mr. Enrique Ordaz, Co-Chair of the IAEG-SDGs
2. Update on the outcomes of the 48<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations Statistical Commission, including the draft resolution adopted by the Statistical Commission and decisions related to the IAEG-SDGs (9:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.)
3. Update on the outcome of the First United Nations World Data Forum and the work of the High-Level group for partnership, coordination and capacity-building for statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (9:45 a.m. – 10:05 a.m.)
4. Updates on the work of the three working groups of the IAEG-SDGs: SDMX, Geo-spatial information and interlinkages (10:05 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.)

*Coffee Break (10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.)*

*For discussion:*

5. Presentation of the updated tier system (10:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.)
  - Review of tier classification and custodian agency for any refined indicators agreed upon at the 48th session of the Statistical Commission
  - Review of tier classification of Sendai indicators
  - Review of *fast track* of Tier III indicators
6. Stakeholder Interventions (12:15 p.m. – 12:30 p.m.)

**Lunch (12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.)**

**Afternoon session (1:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.)**

7. Discuss the guidelines on data flow and global data reporting (1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.)
  - Review of outcomes from the High Level Forum on Official Statistics at the 48<sup>th</sup> session of the Statistical Commission, entitled *Working together to measure progress towards the SDGs*
  - Discuss the development of guiding principles and practices on how custodian agencies and countries can work together to contribute to the data flows necessary to have harmonized statistics

*Coffee Break (3:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.)*

8. Discuss the criteria for tier re-classification and proposals by custodian agencies for new concepts and definitions (4:00 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.)
9. Stakeholder Interventions (5:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.)

**Friday, 31 March 2017**

**Stakeholder Briefing (8:30 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.)**

**Morning session (9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.)**

10. Review Tier III work plans (9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.)
  - Presentation of a mechanism to ensure the completion of work as planned
  - Review of progress of work plans for indicators with a 2020 deadline
11. Presentation on the use of household surveys for collecting data for SDG indicators (11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.)

*Coffee Break (11:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.)*

12. Data disaggregation (*11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.*)

- Presentation and review of the work plan on data disaggregation
- Discuss the harmonization of categories for data disaggregation for the global indicators
- Ongoing data disaggregation work by other groups/organisations

13. Stakeholder Interventions (*12:45 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.*)

**Lunch (1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.)**

**Afternoon session (2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.)**

14. Data disaggregation (*continued*) (*2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.*)

- Presentation and review of the work plan on data disaggregation
- Discuss the harmonization of categories for data disaggregation for the global indicators
- Ongoing data disaggregation work by other groups/organisations

15. Preparation of a proposal for additional indicators and other changes for the 2020 Comprehensive Review (*3:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.*)

16. Work plan and next steps (*3:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.*)