Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Statistics Division

Seventh Meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Vienna, Austria, 9-12 April 2018 Venue: Vienna International Centre Vienna, Austria

Report

I. Introduction

1. The seventh meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) took place from 9-12 April 2018 in Vienna, Austria. The meeting was hosted by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). An IAEG-SDG member meeting took place on 9 April 2018, followed by a plenary session, attended by all participants, on 10-12 April 2018.

2. The main objectives of the meeting were to: i) review the tier classification of indicators; ii) discuss how to prepare a document for the implementation of the guidelines on data flows and global data reporting based on best practices; iii) review the proposed timeline for the consideration of additional indicators; iv) discuss progress made on the work stream on data disaggregation; v) share experiences on implementing monitoring of the SDGs, particularly as it relates to the development of national data platforms; and discuss other related issues.

3. At the plenary session, Mr. Li Yong, Director-General of UNIDO, opened the meeting and welcomed participants to Vienna. Mr. Li emphasized that we are already in year four of the 2030 agenda and that unresolved issues must be addressed as soon as possible. He welcomed the efforts on methodological work on the reclassification of tier III indicators. Mr. Li also stressed that countries need timely and reliable data for decision making and a big challenge is supporting developing and least developed countries in their efforts to compile data and calculate SDG indicators. Mr. Li concluded by expressing his hope that at the end of the meeting, some concrete decisions will be reached that will allow for improved monitoring of the SDGs. Mr. Enrique Ordaz, co-chair of the IAEG-SDGs and Ms. Francesca Perucci, Chief of the Development Data and Outreach Branch of the United Nations Statistics Division, also offered opening remarks expressing gratitude to UNIDO for hosting the meeting and for the active participation of all attendees as well as the IAEG-SDG Members in the members' meeting on the preceding day. The meeting was attended by over 180 participants, including representatives from 24 member countries of the IAEG-SDGs, 24

observer countries, about 45 regional and international organisations, and over 25 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 on the website of the 7th meeting of the IAEG-SDGs (<u>https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/meetings/iaeg-sdgs-meeting-07/</u>).

II. Update on decisions of the United Nations Statistical Commission and on the IAEG-SDG working groups

6. Agenda item 2 was introduced by the Secretariat who provided a summary of the decisions of the 49th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) on the work of the IAEG-SDGs and other related topics. There were several new areas of work that UNSC requested the IAEG to undertake, including considering the use of proxies while Tier III indicators are finalized, determining the dimensions and categories of data disaggregation, and preparing criteria (jointly with custodian agencies) for implementation of the data flows and global reporting guidelines. UNSC also agreed on the proposed annual refinements and the timeline for the 2020 comprehensive review. The presentation for this agenda item is included on the meeting website.

7. Agenda item 3 included updates on the progress made by the three working groups of the IAEG-SDGs: SDMX, Geo-spatial information and Interlinkages, and by the Joint subgroup of the IAEG-SDGs and the High-level Group on Partnership, Coordination and Capacity Building for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. All presentations for this agenda item are included on the meeting website.

III. Data disaggregation

8. Agenda item 4, on data disaggregation, was introduced by Mr. Omar Seidu from Ghana who presented the IAEG-SDG's work plan on data disaggregation. The work on data disaggregation foresees the group preparing and sharing a matrix of data disaggregation dimensions to facilitate consultations with custodian agencies and other disaggregation experts, agreeing on reporting timelines, and establishing mechanisms to engage with stakeholders. The IAEG-SDGs plans to submit a background document to the 50th session of UNSC in 2019 on the dimensions and categories of data disaggregation, while keeping in mind the resources needed and the key principle of *leaving no one behind*. There was a brief discussion after this presentation where it was highlighted that in some cases, multiple levels of disaggregation (combining different disaggregation dimensions) may be necessary in order to ensure no one is left behind.

9. After the presentation by Mr. Seidu, there were three additional presentations by different organizations and groups on their ongoing work on data disaggregation. UNICEF presented on their work on disaggregation, with a particular focus on their ongoing work on disaggregating by disability status; the Titchfield City Group on Ageing-related Statistics and Age-disaggregated data presented on their work in building better evidence to address population ageing; and OHCHR presented on international human rights standards and recommendations relevant to the disaggregation of SDG indicators.

10. Following these presentations, the co-chair of the IAEG-SDGs suggested that the different types and approaches to data disaggregation should be interlinked and asked if this is happening and, if not, how it could happen. There was a brief discussion on how to interlink the different dimensions of data disaggregation and general agreement that each expert group/custodian agency working on different dimensions of data disaggregation to share the indicators they are working on, and then synergies could be identified. Finally, it was mentioned that not just social indicators need disaggregation and that there are many important aspects of environmental disaggregation that should not be overlooked by the IAEG-SDGs. The co-chair of the work stream on data disaggregation, Mr. Seidu from Ghana, closed the session by highlighting the importance of working together, while also recognizing that it is not possible to disaggregate all indicators by all dimensions and prioritization will need to occur.

IV. Tier classification of indicators

11. The Secretariat reviewed the information needed for tier III indicator reclassification request and the timeline for submitting the request. This presentation highlighted that the IAEG-SDGs welcomed the dialogue with custodian agencies before formally considering a reclassification request. The IAEG-SDGs will seek the advice of specialized expert groups when reviewing concepts, definitions and standards related to SDG indicators and request technical advice from these groups. Finally, based on discussions of the IAEG-SDGs with custodian agencies, the group will ask UNSC for clear guidance on a mechanism for approving concepts, definitions and standards related to SDG indicators as the IAEG-SDG concluded it is not the body to approve international standards for SDG indicators.

12. Following the introductory presentation, the criteria for reclassifying indicators and the need for clearer guidelines for indicator reclassification were discussed. There was also a discussion on what it means to have an international standard for a SDG indicator. The co-chair of the IAEG-SDGs suggested that the group should have more flexibility when reviewing indicators and should focus more on the robustness of the indicator and the soundness of the definition, and if these criteria are met, the group could reclassify the indicator to tier II. After discussion and comments from different country delegates and custodian agencies, the IAEG-SDGs agreed to a greater degree of flexibility when considering the reclassification of indicators in an attempt to reduce the number of tier III indicators and to ensure monitoring of the 2030 agenda is as comprehensive as possible.

- 13. The reclassification requests of six indicators were then discussed:
 - i. *3.8.1* Coverage of essential health services (defined as the average coverage of essential services based on tracer interventions that include reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health, infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases and service capacity and access, among the general and the most disadvantaged population)
 - ii. 5.1.1 Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex
 - iii. 6.3.2 Proportion of water bodies with good ambient water quality
 - iv. 6.6.1 Change in the extent of water-related ecosystems over time
 - v. *14.6.1* Progress by countries in the degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
 - vi. *14.b.1* Progress by countries in the degree of application of a legal/regulatory/ policy/institutional framework which recognizes and protects access rights for small-scale fisheries.

14. The custodian agencies for each indicator made brief presentations on the progress made on the methodology and why the indicator was ready to be reclassified as tier II. After each presentation and a brief discussion on the indicators, the IAEG-SDGs decided to reclassify all six indicators to Tier II.

15. For indicator 6.6.1, the co-custodian agencies, UN Environment and the Ramsar Secretariat, proposed to include two data reporting streams for the indicator. The first reporting stream will be compiled by UN Environment based on international comparable methodology with national data and regional and global aggregations. The second will be compiled by the Ramsar Secretariat based on national reporting to the Ramsar Convention on wetlands extent. Both data reporting streams and their metadata will be included in the SDG Global Database.

16. The meeting also discussed on minor refinements to the indicator names, which need to be formally submitted to UNSC at its 50th session in March 2019. The minor refinements will be related to indicators 5.1.1, 6.6.1, 14.6.1, 14.b.1 and other indicators related to degree of implementation of legal frameworks or international instruments.

17. The group had a discussion on the methodological development of indicators 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 – both addressing the concept of *small-scale food producers*. There has been a concern among some IAEG-SDG members that the proposed definition could include hobby farmers. A small group of countries are working on a definition that would ensure that hobby farmers are not included in the data collected for these indicators. It was agreed at the meeting that as soon as a definition was agreed upon by this small group of countries and proposed to FAO, the custodian agency for these indicators, these two indicators would be ready to be submitted to the IAEG-SDG for reclassification. It was also agreed that UNSC

would not need to approve this definition as an international standard for these indicators to be reclassified by the IAEG-SDGs.

V. Use of proxy indicators to monitor targets where indicators are currently tier III

18. This agenda item was introduced by the Secretariat. It was highlighted that this new work on the possible consideration of proxy indicators comes from a decision at the 49th session of UNSC. The IAEG-SDGs plans to prioritize goals where many indicators are tier III (Goals 10, 12-14), means of implementation targets with only tier III indicators, targets with a 2020 deadline with only tier III indicators, and tier III indicators with slow or no methodological progress. The IAEG-SDGs proposed reviewing indicator proposals for these targets from the initial SDG indicator discussions, considering additional proposals from IAEG-SDG members and that a review of an initial list of proxy indicators would take place at the 8th meeting of the IAEG-SDGs. Following the discussion at the 8th meeting, a list of proxy indicators would be submitted to the 50th session of UNSC for its consideration.

19. Following the introductory presentation from the Secretariat, several agencies presented their work on proxy indicators. The Statistics and Tourism Satellite Account Committee proposed a set of proxy indicators for the tourism indicators that are currently Tier III, UNFCCC presented on climate change indicators and OECD presented a new indicator on measuring official support for sustainable development. All presentations are on the meeting website.

20. The discussion on this agenda item focused on for what indicators the IAEG-SDGs would consider using proxies and how the group would define slow progress. There was an agreement that the IAEG-SDGs would request updated work plans for all tier III indicators, with more specific information regarding the expected date for when the methodological development would be completed. It was also emphasized by the co-chair that the IAEG-SDGs will only consider using global proxies that already have data available.

VI. Proposed plan of work for the consideration of additional indicators

21. The Secretariat provided an overview of the work plan agreed by the IAEG-SDGs for considering additional indicators and its timeline for the 2020 comprehensive review. IAEG-SDG members identified 37 possible additional indicators for 33 targets where members identified some aspects of the target that were not adequately monitored with existing indicators. Between the 7th and 8th meetings, the IAEG will review this list, and at the 8th meeting it will determine which indicators should be included in an open consultation. The final list of additional indicators would then be included as part of the comprehensive review package submitted to UNSC at its 51st session in 2020. The IAEG-SDGs plans to keep the final list of additional indicators limited in scope and will only consider proposals with an agreed methodology and some data already available.

22. During the discussion on this agenda item, several agencies and countries asked if they can submit proposals for additional indicators. The co-chair emphasized that the IAEG-SDGs is not planning to reopen the entire global indicator framework and wants to consider only a limited set of additional indicators so as to not overburden countries.

VII. Measuring progress made on targets with a 2020 deadline

23. The Secretariat made a brief presentation and highlighted the 22 targets and 28 corresponding indicators with a 2020 deadline. While most indicators measuring these targets are tier I, there are still six tier III indicators among these 28. One of the key points raised for discussion is what to do with these tier III indicators and how to monitor progress on the associated targets without agreed methodology or available data.

24. Following the introduction from the Secretariat, there were three presentations (by the Philippines, IUCN and PARIS21) on how they are addressing this issue. During the discussion, one country suggested asking the High-Level Political Forum what they plan to do with targets with a 2020 deadline. Most meeting attendees were in agreement that even if the target has a 2020 deadline, monitoring should continue all the way through to 2030 in order to ensure that progress is sustainable and countries do not regress over time.

25. Finally, many interventions linked the discussion on measuring targets with a 2020 deadline to the discussion on proxy indicators. Many participants highlighted that proxy indicators could be used to monitor progress on targets with a 2020 deadline that have tier III indicators. IAEG-SDG members agreed and will prioritize these targets and indicators during their consideration of proposals for proxy indicators.

VIII. Guidelines on data flows and global data reporting

26. This agenda item was introduced by Mr. Ordaz, the co-chair of the IAEG-SDGs. He presented the UNSC decisions on the guidelines on data flows and global data reporting, and the timeline for the development of an implementation plan for these guidelines. This implementation plan will be drafted jointly by the co-chairs of the IAEG-SDGs and CCSA and will incorporate best practices from a series of case studies on data flows and data reporting. The IAEG-SDGs expects to circulate a first draft among IAEG-SDGs and CCSA members in September 2018, and a revised draft will be discussed at the 8th meeting of the IAEG-SDGs. The implementation plan would then be finalized and submitted to UNSC as a background document.

27. Ms. Martine Durand of OECD, the co-chair of CCSA, emphasised on the good collaboration between the IAEG-SDGs and CCSA. She also pointed out that the two groups are working together towards the same objective of providing high quality statistics for global and national reporting. There were some questions on whether the guidelines themselves would be revised, and the co-chair of the IAEG-SDGs stated that the implementation plan would build upon these guidelines, but the guidelines themselves would not be revised.

Several other IAEG-SDG members took the floor to welcome this collaborative work with CCSA on drafting the implementation plan for the guidelines.

28. A series of presentations were made by countries and custodian agencies on case studies and best practices on data flows and global data reporting for the SDGs. The Russian Federation presented on their involvement in two series of case studies on data flows for the SDGs and described their involvement in the SDMX-SDGs working group, including the preparation for the pilot exercises that will take place in the second half of 2018. They also highlighted some of the challenges in data reporting that included complicated mechanisms and insufficient time for data validation, unclear schedules of data reporting, and missing metadata.

29. Turkey then presented some practical suggestions for facilitating data flows. These included: (a) identifying focal points for countries and custodian agencies; (b) providing a schedule for custodian agency SDG data requests and updates; (c) improving communication of global and national metadata; (d) discussing between countries and custodian agencies existing and emerging transmission needs and opportunities; (e) having a transparent and flexible validation process that allows for maturation as needed; and (f) establishing at an early stage a collaboration style between countries and custodian agencies that works for all parties.

30. After the two country presentations, there were three presentations from custodian agencies on data flows. WHO presented their data flow process for developing comparable estimates, using indicator 3.1.1 on maternal mortality as an example. WHO highlighted their country consultation process to validate the estimates prior to publication. One challenge WHO identified in this process is that it is time intensive and requires timely communication between all parties. ILO presented some best practices they developed in global data reporting on the SDGs based on their experience. These included trying to reduce the burden on respondents by customizing questionnaires for each country, receiving and process data in batches when possible, and having automated processes to access data directly from NSOs. They also highlighted the use of preferred concepts and coverage for purposes of international comparability. Finally, the United Nations Population Division (UNPD) presented the results of a survey it conducted with custodian agencies on the use of data produced by UNPD in the calculation and aggregation of SDG indicators. They found that 39% of SDG indicators in the sample use data from UNPD for global monitoring, highlighting the importance and cross-cutting nature of population data for the SDGs. They look to have further engagement with the IAEG-SDGs on population data and plan to hold capacity development workshops on population data quality evaluation and population projection methodologies.

31. Following these presentations, there was a brief discussion on some of the key points raised. GCC-Stat highlighted the importance of disaggregating population data as population structures differ widely in certain groups of countries. UNPD also highlighted that they are interested in contributing to the work stream on data disaggregation.

IX. Experiences on implementing monitoring and reporting on SDGs, including the development and use of national data platforms

32. This agenda item included a series of presentations from countries, regional organizations, international organizations and stakeholders on the work taking place on SDG implementation and reporting at the national, regional, global and thematic levels, with a particular focus on national data platforms. Due to the number of presentations included in this agenda item, it was divided into two smaller sessions (one on 11 April and another on 12 April). A total of 12 presentations were made during this agenda item: 3 by countries; 2 by regional organizations; 3 by international organizations; and 4 by stakeholders. On national reporting, countries have domesticated the global SDG indicators to create national frameworks of SDG indicators relevant to national circumstance. Egypt highlighted that they plan to present at the upcoming HLPF in July 2018, while Belarus and Greece mentioned that they have either already developed a national data reporting platform or that they are currently developing such a platform for the SDGs.

33. The presentations from regional and international agencies focused on their reporting at the regional, global and thematic levels. Many agencies highlighted their own data platforms and ongoing efforts to report on the SDGs. UNIDO highlighted its SDG data platform, while UNSD highlighted the ongoing work to assist countries in developing national data reporting platforms and the. UNECA presented on regional efforts to monitor the SDGs, including through the Africa Forum on Sustainable Development and various capacity building efforts, while CIS-STAT presented their regional SDG database that includes 111 SDG indicators of particular relevance to the Commonwealth of Independent States. Finally, UN-Women presented their thematic report: *Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda*, that highlighted the ongoing and needed efforts to ensure data exist that allows women and girls to be visible across all SDG goals, targets and indicators.

34. The four presentations by stakeholders highlighted several aspects of SDG reporting and implementation. The presentation by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative highlighted the interlinkages between many different indicators (both positive interlinkages – moving in the same direction, and negative interlinkages – progress in one indicator leads to regression in another. The presentation on the 1,000 Day App described a data collection mobile phone app that allows health workers to record essential health data in the field. The presentation from GEO highlighted ways in which earth observation data can be integrated into SDG monitoring and innovative ways to visualize the data. Finally, the presentation from the Women's Major Group highlighted how civil society organizations are participating in the national reporting process in eight countries, especially as it relates to gender mainstreaming, identifying gaps in data disaggregation, and reviewing voluntary national reviews. All presentations made during this agenda item can be found on the meeting website.

X. Work plan and next steps

35. The IAEG-SDGs work plan (March 2018 – March 2019) and Webex schedule for tier reclassification requests were presented as the final agenda item of the meeting. They are provided below for reference.

Work Plan – March 2018-March 2019:

(a) Continue the review of workplans for tier III indicators and reclassify indicators when requirements are met at the physical meeting in the Fall 2018 and via open Webex meetings throughout the rest of the year, based on the calendar agreed by the group;

(b) Conduct an open consultation on additional indicators agreed by the IAEG-SDGs and develop a first proposal for discussion at the Spring 2019 meeting; (this will then be finalized as part of the proposal included in the comprehensive review for consideration by the Statistical Commission at its fifty-first session in 2020);

(c) Begin work on the comprehensive review by compiling a preliminary list of possible changes, refinements and deletions to the indicator framework for an open consultation in mid-2019;

(d) Continue the work of the joint subgroup of the IAEG-SDGs and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by reviewing data availability and capacity building needs for Tier I and II indicators;

(e) Determine the dimensions and categories or data disaggregation and establish a mechanism for discussion with specialized groups and custodian agencies in relation to the specific data disaggregation dimensions and finalize a document for consideration at the 50^{th} session of UNSC in 2019;

(f) Continue the work of the three working groups, on statistical data and metadata exchange (SDMX), geospatial information and interlinkages and review the work plans of the working groups to ensure that they are in line with the work of the IAEG-SDGs;

(g) Prepare a document (jointly with the co-Chairs of CCSA and the IAEG-SDGs) for the implementation of the guidelines based on best practices for the data flows between countries and custodian agencies for consideration at the 50th session of UNSC;

(h) Review and proposed annual refinements and submit these annual refinements for consideration at the 50th session of UNSC;

(i) Suggest a list of proxy indicators (indicators for which data are already widely available) for immediate use to monitor targets, while Tier III indicators are being finalized;

(j) Hold a meeting in November 2018, and continue to interact electronically and through teleconferences, as needed.

IAEG-SDG Webex Schedule for Tier Reclassification Requests

- The IAEG-SDGs will hold open Webex meetings where they will review and decide on any proposed tier reclassification requests
- These meetings will take place on a bimonthly basis (as needed) and will occur based on the below schedule:
 - \circ First Webex meeting mid-June 2018
 - \circ Second Webex meeting late-August 2018

Annex 1 – Agenda

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Statistics Division

ESA/STAT/AC.353/rev.2 8 April 2018

Seventh Meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goal Indicators 10 – 12 April 2018 Venue: Conference Room 1 Vienna International Centre Vienna, Austria

Plenary Session Provisional Agenda

Tuesday, 10 April 2018

Registration and collection of badges for IAEG-SDG observers and other stakeholders (8:00 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.)

Morning session (10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.)

For information:

- 1. Opening remarks (10:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.)
 - Mr. Enrique Ordaz, Co-Chair of the IAEG-SDGs
 - Mr. Li Yong, UNIDO Director-General
 - Ms. Francesca Perucci, Chief of Statistical Services Branch, United Nations Statistics Division
 - Mr. Shyam Upadhyaya, Chief Statistician, UNIDO
- 2. Update on the outcome of the 49th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission (10:30 a.m. 10:45 a.m.)
- 3. Updates on the work of the three working groups of the IAEG-SDGs: SDMX, Geospatial information and interlinkages and the Joint sub-group of the IAEG and HLG-PCCB (10:45 a.m. 11:15 a.m.)

Coffee Break (11:15 *a.m.* – 11:30 *a.m.*)

For discussion:

4. Data disaggregation (11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.)

- Presentation and review of the work plan on data disaggregation
- Progress made in identifying ongoing disaggregation work taking place within other expert groups and UN organisations
- Presentations by groups on their work on data disaggregation

Lunch (1:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.)

Afternoon session (2:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.)

- 5. Tier classification of indicators (2:15 p.m. 3:30 p.m.)
 - Presentation of criteria and process for upgrading of Tier III indicators
 - Review of requests for reclassification of Tier III indicators
 - Progress made on indicator development

Coffee Break (3:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.)

- 5. Tier classification of indicators (3:45 p.m. 5:30 p.m.) (continued)
 - Review of requests for reclassification of Tier III indicators
 - Progress made on indicator development

Reception for meeting participants hosted by UNIDO (5:45 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.)

Wednesday, 11 April 2018

Morning session (10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.)

- 5. Tier classification of indicators (10:00 a.m. 11:15 a.m.) (continued)
 - Review of requests for reclassification of Tier III indicators

Coffee Break (11:15 *a.m.* – 11:30 *a.m.*)

6. Experiences on implementing monitoring and reporting on SDGs, including the development and use of National Data Platforms (*11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.*)

Lunch (1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.)

Stakeholder briefing (1:45 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.)

Afternoon session (2:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.)

7. Use of proxy indicators to monitor targets where indicators are currently Tier III (2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.)

Coffee Break (4:00 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.)

8. Proposed plan of work for consideration of additional indicators (4:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.)

Thursday, 12 April 2018

Morning session (10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.)

9. Measuring progress made on targets with a 2020 deadline (10:30 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.)

Coffee Break (11:15 *a.m.* – 11:30 *a.m.*)

10. Data flows and global data reporting (11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.)

- Implementation plan for *Guidelines on Data Flows and Global Data Reporting for SDG Indicators*
- Development of a document on best practices in global data reporting

Lunch (1:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.)

Afternoon session (2:15 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.)

10. Experiences on implementing monitoring and reporting on SDGs, including the development and use of National Data Platforms (2:15 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.) (continued)
Coffee Break (3:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.)

11. Work plan and next steps (4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.)

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