Panel 4
HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS IN THE 21ST CENTURY:

Challenges and Opportunities
in an Evolving Data Environment

FRANCESCA PERUCCI

STATISTICS DIVISION, UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Question 1

*What are the key **challenges and opportunities** for enhancing the role of household surveys for monitoring the SDGs and beyond?*

… please give practical examples of constraints and actions in your own country/institution …

Question 2

*In a time of limited resources, increasing demands and conflicting agendas, how do we successfully **advocate** for household surveys as part of the broader data agenda?*

Question 4

Improving the quality and cost-effectiveness of household surveys requires investments in developing new **standards and methods**. *What is the right institutional setting and incentive systems to foster technological and methodological innovation and who should pay for it?*

Question 4b

*Developing new statistical standards presents typical free riding problem associated with **Public Goods**. How to overcome problem? What is the role that the ISWGHS should play? Do we need a new NHSCB? Several regional MECOVIs? Alternative innovative arrangements e.g. twinning?*

A new opportunity: Responding to new data demands for SDGs

- Demands for data to fully implement the new development agenda are unprecedented
- Need to explore and utilize multiple data sources – unique opportunity to strengthen, streamline and better coordinate HS
- Many SDG indicators are based on households survey data
- Household surveys can help
  - address new topics for which indicators' standards and methods are not yet fully developed
  - address specific groups of the population (as in targets)
  - resolve issues of disaggregation

A new opportunity: Responding to new data demands for SDGs

- Experience with MDG indicators – lessons learnt:
  - Country ownership is key!
  - Avoid ad hoc surveys
  - Avoid "testing" of new indicators – define international standards first
  - Integrate different programmes at the national level
  - Ensure coordination within countries and at the international level (internationally sponsored programmes)
    - Content/scope
    - Standards and methods
    - Timing/frequency

Advocating for Household Surveys

- Reaching those who are the furthest behind
  - Oversampling to cover specific groups of the population is often the only way to address the groups explicitly mentioned in targets
  - Disaggregating by wealth quintile (or other poverty measures)

- A few successful examples
  - In some cases HS help fill the gaps when administrative data and civil registration are not sufficiently developed (child mortality, maternal mortality, water&sanitation, access to treatment/health services, child marriage, etc.)
  - In other cases, indicators derived from HS data were the only indicators for which disaggregation was possible – showing unequal sharing of progress in the MDGs across population groups

Advocating for Household Surveys (2)

- For some indicators HS might be the only way forward…. In some cases, do we really have a choice?
  - VAW, FGM
  - Proportion of the population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed …….
  - Proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official…..
  - Proportion of businesses that had at least one contact with a public official and that paid a bribe to a public official…

Household Surveys competing with new data sources?

- Over 230 indicators covering a wide range of policy areas and topics – we need all data sources (from administrative data to perception surveys)
- Real issue is integrating sources
- Finding a balance across the use of different data sources and optimizing use of resources (setting priority and coordinating)
- Still HS are indispensible in many areas (people's experiences/perception, migrants, people with disabilities, older people, etc.)

Moving forward

- Global statistical community (UNSC) to define standards and methods for new indicators and measurement tools

- Global statistical community (IAEG-SDGs and UNSC) to define standards for disaggregation

- Countries to decide priorities, including for international programmes (role of IAEG-SDGs, HLG and UNSC)

- Explore innovative methods by engaging with other communities – civil society, private sector, academia

Role of *ISWGHS*? *A new NHSCB? Several regional MECOVIs?*

- Set priorities based on new data demands (full implementation and measurement of progress of SDGs)
- Develop standard modules to cover specific groups of the population
- Streamline and coordinate to optimize resources utilization – reduce the burden of data collection
- Redefine role of international organizations and sponsored programmes…
- Ensure full country ownership
- Preference for NHSCB and MECOVI approach, based on the principle of providing advisory services – integrated programmes -- not sectorial or ad hoc surveys