

Agenda item 7 (ii)

Summary of discussion on support to international public goods and outlook on how to further address it

(as of 25 April 2021)

Summary of discussions

At its **third meeting on 11 August 2020**, the Group agreed to a co-Chair's proposal to launch a research agenda on three topics, one of which was support to International Public Goods. As a result, a wiki platform was set up on which approaches to measuring “developmental” IPGs could be explored.

At its **seventh meeting on 16 December 2020** the Working Group discussed the issue of International Public Goods (IPGs) based on a background note prepared by the Secretariat.

Ms Brathaug, Co-Chair, concluded that there was no universally accepted framework for measuring support to IPGs. The literature focused largely on “global public goods”, where all countries benefited, and this did not conform with the specific focus of Target 17.3 on mobilizing additional resources “for developing countries”. The discrepancy raised a range of theoretical and technical issues concerning the apportionment of benefits and the identification and treatment of relevant data. The Co-Chair’s view, based on the comments at the meeting and on the Group’s previous discussions, and considering the breadth and depth of issues on which consensus would need to be reached within a tight timeframe, was that the Group’s indicator proposal for the 2022 Statistical Commission was unlikely to contain a sub-indicator on support for IPGs. However, she invited countries to provide examples of experience with the measurement of IPGs on the wiki platform, as several members had suggested, which might form a basis for a further discussion. Co-chair Mr. Méndez concurred with this approach.

At the **eighth meeting on 26 January 2021** it was noted that there had been no additional inputs on IPGs and members were again invited to provide examples on the wiki of the measurement of IPGs.

At the **ninth meeting on 18, 19 and 23 February 2021**, the Co-Chair noted that the meeting recognized the importance of IPGs. IPG data issues had been explored in a Secretariat research note, discussed at the seventh meeting, and canvassed on the wiki platform. The meeting had concluded on the conceptual and practical difficulties of including IPGs in the indicator proposal of the Working Group but had invited members to provide further examples and discussion on measurement issues on the wiki platform. The Secretariat pointed out that the Working Group may, as per its TOR, make recommendations or suggestions on further work required when reporting to the IAEG-SDGs. No additional inputs such as examples of experiences with the measurement of IPGs had been provided on the wiki platform.

The **tenth meeting on 23 March 2021** again noted that no additional inputs had been posted since the previous meeting of the Working Group. The co-Chairs reiterated their conclusions from the seventh meeting that, considering the breadth and depth of issues on which consensus

would need to be reached, the Group's indicator proposal for the 2022 Statistical Commission was unlikely to contain a sub-indicator on support for IPGs. Although countries had been repeatedly invited to provide examples of experience with the measurement of IPGs on the wiki platform since December 2020, as several members had suggested, no such examples have been provided up to now.

Outlook / proposal on how to further address IPGs

As the summary of the discussions indicates, there is no consensus and no practical way forward for including international public goods in the Working Group's indicator proposal under Target 17.3. A fundamental problem is that there is no agreed operational definition for IPGs among UN Member States, due to different views and concerns. In addition, an indicator for IPGs appears not to fit easily, or even necessarily to belong, under target 17.3, which focuses specifically on additional resources "for developing countries".

At the same time, the Working Group has fully recognized the importance of the contribution of international public goods for sustainable development.

As per its Terms of reference in para 4(f), the Working Group can make recommendations or suggestions on further work required at the end of its current two-year term.

It is therefore suggested that the Working Group recommends the IAEG-SDGs to discuss whether and how to give further consideration to the possible inclusion of an indicator on international public goods in the global indicator framework, given the importance of IPGs for sustainable development.

The additional indicator could only be considered under the 2025 comprehensive review. An indication, that work on this particular aspect should continue, could be part of the Working Group's proposal to be submitted by the IAEG-SDGs to the 53rd session of the UN Statistical Commission in March 2022.

The questions that need to be addressed would include but may not be limited to the following four:

1. Is there a target under which an indicator on IPGs could be included?
2. Should work on such an indicator on IPGs be conducted or encouraged at this time given the absence of an agreed definition and concerns of Member States?
3. Who should conduct such work?
4. Are there any relevant examples and practices that make it appear feasible that an indicator on support to IPGs could be developed and measured?

Participants are invited to express their initial (non-binding) views on this proposal. The Working Group may finalize its conclusions on this issue in the June or September meeting.
