

Information note for the “Friends of the Chair Group on the Broader Measures of Progress”.

Introduction

In the Rio + 20 Conference, the international community reaffirmed the commitment to sustainable development. The Rio +20 outcome document” acknowledged(s) the need to further mainstream sustainable development at all levels including at the (sub) national/local level, integrating economic, social and environmental aspects and recognizing their inter-linkages, so as to achieve sustainable development in all its dimensions”¹. In this context the Rio + 20 outcome document recognised “the need for broader measures of progress to complement gross domestic product in order to better inform policy decisions, and in this regard we request the United Nations Statistical Commission, in consultation with relevant United Nations system entities and other relevant organizations, to launch a programme of work in this area, building on existing initiatives”². In order to follow-up to this Rio+20 mandate, the Statistical Commission at its 44th session created a Friends of the Chair Group on the Broader Measures of Progress by decision 44/114 (g) with the following mandate:

Supported the formation of a Friends of the Chair group to build a work programme to develop broader measures of progress based on a stocktaking exercise of current national, regional and international practices in this field, and to conduct a technical review of these existing efforts with a view to identifying good/best practices and to facilitating the sharing of knowledge, especially for the benefit of developing countries; requested the Friends of the Chair group to closely monitor the ongoing debate on development frameworks and to keep the Bureau of the Statistical Commission informed, undertaking an active dialogue with United Nations bodies and the policy sphere in order to ensure that a robust statistical measurement approach is incorporated from the outset in preparations for the post-2015 development agenda; requested the secretariat to assist the Commission in its work by organizing meetings of the Friends of the Chair group and preparing relevant materials, including an inventory of existing practices, and requested the Friends of the Chair group to report on the preliminary results of its work to the Commission at its next session in order to receive guidance for subsequent work.

¹ The Future We Want, para.3.

² The Future We Want, para. 38

Proposed modes of operation:

- The Friends of the Chair will adopt an open, transparent and inclusive manner of operation. For this purpose, the group may decide to send out regularly information updates and/or create a website on its work;
- The Friends of the Chair will adopt a bottom up approach to its operation, which will reflect the differentiated national needs and priorities of the countries. For this purpose, it will undertake national consultations. In this process the FOC group will reach out to the agencies of the UN system, regional commissions and sub-regional agencies to take an active role in the consultations.
- The Friends of the Chair will primarily consult the community of official statisticians of the international, regional and national statistical systems (with a coordinating role of the national statistical offices at the country level). In addition, the group may decide to reach out to other relevant constituencies (e.g users/policy makers, the private sector and businesses, academic and scientific community and civil society).
- The Friends of the Chair (FOC) group will primarily function virtually. Physical meetings will be held when opportunities (e.g. on the side of major statistical events) arise.
- The Friends of the Chair will be led by the co-chairs and supported by UNSD as the Secretariat.
- The Friends of the Chair has a time bound task for preparing the proposed deliverables to the Statistical Commission of 2014 and 2015

Proposed deliverables:

Statistical Commission report 2014 (manuscript to be completed by end of November 2013):

- Conduct stocktaking exercise of current national, regional and international statistical practices on the main policy themes for the broader measures of progress;
- Conduct technical review of existing efforts and identify good/best practices by main policy themes in monitoring and reporting on the broader measures of progress based on assessments of the statistical capacity of international, regional and national statistical infrastructure and operations and institutional arrangements in data collection, compilation and dissemination and data exchange mechanisms;
- Share knowledge on the current statistical normative standard and practices and the outcomes of the technical review, especially for the benefit of developing countries, possibly through a designated UNSD website.
- Closely monitor ongoing UN debate on development frameworks; reach out to relevant UN bodies and the policy sphere; prepare thematic/technical inputs on measurement approaches, to pro-actively and strategically participate in the debate on the development agenda to ensure robust measurement of the post-2015 development agenda through national statistical systems.

Statistical Commission report 2015 (manuscript to be completed by end of November 2014):

- Make recommendations on an international, regional and national programme of work for broader measures of progress, in support of the evolving United Nations framework of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its related indicators;
- Suggest a medium-term work programme for the Statistical Commission to support the implementation of a national programme of work for the broader measures of progress in support of the emerging Sustainable Development Goals Indicator Framework. This suggested medium-term work programme could refer to thematic reviews, methodological standards and compilation practices, statistical capacity building, data exchange , etc.;
- Develop an international programme to build and strengthen the capacity to implement the programme of work on the broader measures of progress at the national level, focussing on necessary institutional arrangements (coordination within the National Statistical System), statistical infrastructure and operations