



Hungarian Central Statistical Office  
President

Co-Facilitators of the process of intergovernmental negotiations on the post 2015 development agenda:

**Mr. Macharia Kamau**  
Permanent Representative  
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya  
to the United Nations

**Mr. David Donoghue**  
Permanent Representative  
Permanent Mission of Ireland  
to the United Nations

Subject: Identification of indicators and an effective framework of targets and indicators

12 January 2015

Dear Excellencies,

On behalf of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC), I would like to thank you for your letter dated 19 December 2014, which recognizes the technical work of the Statistical Commission and its role in preparing an indicator proposal for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to be based on the report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG) and the ongoing intergovernmental negotiations on the post 2015 development agenda. The Statistical Commission, as the mandated intergovernmental body for the review of development indicators, will, indeed, be able to assist you in ensuring that the future information base for the SDGs is based on rigorous science, is sustainable and will be acceptable to member states. I can assure you that the Statistical Commission and the community of official statisticians stand ready and are strongly committed to taking on the task of measuring the SDGs over the coming years and thereby contributing to their realization.

In fact, UNSC has already been actively supporting the intergovernmental process of formulating a new development agenda over the past two years through its Friends of the Chair group on broader measures of progress (FOC), which was established by UNSC in March 2013. The FOC, with the support of the UN Statistics Division of DESA organized an information event for the OWG in December 2013, where national chief statisticians and monitoring experts discussed with members of the OWG the measurement of goals and targets. Furthermore, in March 2014, a compendium of statistical notes was transmitted to the Co-Chairs of the OWG.

Moreover, throughout 2014 the FOC has been conducting important preparatory work on indicators for the monitoring of the SDGs, including an assessment of available information at country level. In its report to the forty-sixth session of the Statistical Commission (3-6 March 2015) the FOC has proposed a roadmap for the development - and Implementation - of an indicator framework/architecture, a coherent and structured set of indicators, for the post-2015 development agenda.<sup>1</sup> The key element is the establishment of a technical Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG indicators which would conduct the required work with broad participation of Member States and all relevant stakeholders. The objective is to identify appropriate global and universal indicators and to prepare a proposal for an effective indicator framework that is measurable. In this context, many of my colleagues pointed out the need for adequate resources for official statistics and for capacity development, in developing countries in particular, to provide trusted and high quality information on the SDGs, both for the establishment of a baseline and for sustainable monitoring over the coming years. I would also like to share with you our professional concern about a too large number of indicators. My Commission colleagues insisted that 500-800 global indicators (3-5 per target) would pose enormous challenges for national statistical systems to produce in a reliable and sustainable manner. A long list of indicators would also be difficult to communicate effectively.

Our review of possible indicators will allow drawing technical conclusions about the ease or difficulty of measuring specific targets and we will certainly share these results with you. However, to answer the question whether a target is sufficiently specific and ambitious will in our view also require the involvement of policy experts with in-depth knowledge of existing international commitments, standards and agreements.

We are aware that all this work needs to be conducted very rapidly, and appropriate information and inputs will be provided to the intergovernmental process in a timely manner. Our work plan at this point foresees to provide a final proposal towards the end of 2015, once the development agenda has been agreed. However, a preliminary proposal could potentially be provided earlier, assuming that it allows for required technical adjustments and completion later.

We are looking forward to a close collaboration with you and to providing the necessary statistical support for the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda and its measurement. I will be in New York 14 to 16 January 2015 to attend a statistical conference and would gladly make myself available for further discussions with you during this time.

Yours sincerely,



Gabriella Vukovich

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<sup>1</sup> In addition, several other reports on the UNSC agenda, such as on big data and the data revolution, specifically aim to support the monitoring of the post 2015 development agenda as well.