

## Work on the indicator framework for the post-2015 development agenda

Note by United Nations Statistics Division

### I. Purpose and basis of the indicator framework

1. The indicator framework has the objective to provide the indicators for the monitoring and reporting of progress on the post-2015 development agenda. National and regional monitoring may utilize additional indicators. The goals and targets adopted by the Open Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals (OWG) and the outcome of the General Assembly (GA) process on the post-2015 development agenda, which is expected to conclude with a high-level summit in September 2015 to adopt the post-2015 development agenda, are the basis for this indicator framework.<sup>1</sup>

### II. Arrangements for the development of the indicator framework

2. *Overall arrangements:* The United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) at its forty-sixth session (3 - 6 March 2015) is expected to discuss and agree on the process and modalities for the development of the indicator framework. At its subsequent forty-seventh session, in February/March 2016, the UNSC is expected to discuss and agree in some form on the indicator framework (and the set of indicators) for the measurement and monitoring of the SDGs/post-2015 development goals and targets, and its implementation.<sup>2</sup> The UNSC Friends of the Chairs Group on broader measures of progress (FOC) is expected, through its reports to the Commission in 2015 and 2016, to prepare and guide the discussions on the development and implementation of this indicator framework, and to ensure proper involvement of Member States, international and regional organizations, the scientific community and other stakeholders as appropriate.

3. *Work on the indicator framework.* For the MDGs the work on indicators was conducted by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on MDG indicators (IAEG-MDG), consisting of international agencies, regional organizations and national statistical offices, and this group has been responsible for the global and regional monitoring of progress towards the MDGs. The UNSC at its forty-sixth session may establish a similar mechanism for the development and implementation of the post-2015 indicator framework. The existing work on indicators conducted by different groups of countries and organizations will form the

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'indicator framework' refers to the idea that there should be a coherent set of indicators that addresses the overall requirements of the post-2015 development agenda. The work on the indicator framework entails the selection of appropriate indicators.

<sup>2</sup> The Statistical Commission is the leading entity of the global statistical system and the intergovernmental focal point for the elaboration and review of the indicators used in the United Nations system, as indicated in General Assembly resolution 57/270 B.

basis of work, and countries, organizations and the various groups working on indicators in specific areas are invited and expected to contribute their expertise and experiences in the definition and selection of the indicators and the design of the indicator framework.<sup>3</sup>

4. *Immediate activities September – November 2014.* The FOC on broader measures of progress will be discussing its report to the forty-sixth session of the UNSC (3 - 6 March 2015), including the arrangements for the development of the indicator framework as outlined in this note. The CCSA member agencies are invited to express their views and considerations as input to the discussion. A background document containing the matching of some available indicator sets to OWG targets has been made available to illustrate the task ahead and to provide a reference or starting point for the work on the indicator framework.<sup>4</sup>

5. *Suggested expert meeting in January/February 2015.* It is suggested that based on the discussion and inputs provided during the initial consultations on the indicator framework during September – November 2014, an expert group meeting will be held to discuss the various aspects of the development and design of the indicator framework. A report of this meeting could be provided as a background document to the forty-sixth session of the UNSC in March 2015.

### **III. Principles for the design of the indicators framework**

6. The following principles are suggested:

- a. Existing and agreed indicators sets, be it from existing monitoring efforts, international agreements, conceptual frameworks, or other efforts, should be considered on priority basis.
- b. The five conceptual issues of universality, inclusiveness, scope of the development agenda, inter-linkages and cross-cutting issues, and means vs. ends and focus on meaningful outcomes, as identified in the *Compendium of Statistical Notes* under Conceptual Issues should be considered.
- c. The conceptual basis for the indicator framework should be discussed and elaborated as appropriate. The *CES Recommendations on Measuring Sustainable Development*, having been reviewed and agreed upon by an inter-governmental process are a useful starting point for the statistical community. The Rio+20 outcome document, *The future we want*, and the *OWG Outcome Document* represent the conceptual basis

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<sup>3</sup> A very important input and basis for the work on the indicator framework is the *Compendium of Statistical Notes for the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG)* that informs about the measurement aspects of the 29 issues discussed by the OWG during its first eight stocktaking sessions and which was drafted in collaboration with FOC members and the international organizations represented in the CCSA and the Technical Support Team (TST). The statistical notes inform about conceptual and methodological tools, existing and new indicators and data requirements, challenges and limitations in respect to the individual issues. It is available at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/doc14/BG-FOC-Broader-measures.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> This background document is based on a file that had been submitted in June 2014 as an input to the OWG (see <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/broaderprogress/work.html#>). The use of specific indicator sets for this exercise does not imply any judgement of UNSD on what indicators should be selected to measure the specific targets.

from a political perspective, which the indicator framework will need to reflect and respond to. It is suggested that as a first step the OWG targets should be mapped against each other and analysed with respect to the three dimensions of sustainable development and the CES recommendations in order to identify inter-linkages, overlaps and gaps.

#### **IV. Principles for the selection of individual indicators**

7. The following principles are suggested:

- a. Criteria for the selection of individual indicators have been discussed in different fora in the past and present. These criteria should be reviewed and taken into consideration as appropriate. For example, indicators should be SMART: **s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**vailable/achievable in a cost effective way, **r**elevant for the programme, and available in a **t**imely manner. In particular, the following recent references which contain criteria for indicator selection should be considered:
  - *Lessons Learned from MDG Monitoring From A Statistical Perspective*, Report of the Task Team on Lessons Learned from MDG Monitoring of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group (IAEG) on MDG Indicators (IAEG-MDG) (March 2013);
  - *Conference of European Statisticians recommendations on measuring sustainable development* (Published beginning of 2014);
  - *Indicators and a monitoring framework for Sustainable Development Goals, Launching a data revolution for the SDGs*, A report by the Leadership Council of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (Revised working draft 25 July 2014)
- b. The statistical notes provided to the OWG should form the starting point of the discussion of indicators in specific areas, as they represent an inventory of information on the measurability in these areas that has been compiled with the wide involvement of FOC members and organizations.

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