

Statistical Commission

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**Items for discussion and decision: data and indicators for
the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

Background document

Available in English only

***Summary of Better Data for Sustainable Development: Implementing the Cape Town
Global Action Plan for Data for the 2030 Agenda***

Prepared by the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building
for statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Summary of *Better Data for Sustainable Development: Implementing the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Data for the 2030 Agenda*

11 January 2019

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs aims to eliminate poverty, make and keep our planet healthy, and build inclusive societies, leaving no one behind. To fully implement the goals and ambitions of this Agenda and review progress against the goals and targets, there is an urgent need for more and better data. The global data and statistical community responded to this need by adopting the Cape Town Global Action Plan for sustainable development data for the 2030 Agenda (CTGAP), which outlines a strategic framework for strengthening the statistical capacity of countries.

Development data are critical for policy making, planning, and monitoring and measuring impact nationally and globally. Yet statistical systems in developing countries are often under-resourced and under-staffed which affects the availability of evidence needed for decision-making. Furthermore, improved statistical capacity is essential for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda whose data needs have created challenges that must be addressed in a timely and efficient manner.

The CTGAP outlines the necessary actions to generate quality and timely data on a regular basis to inform sustainable development at the requested level of disaggregation and population coverage, including for the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups. The implementation of the CTGAP will require that national statistical offices (NSOs), together with national governments, stand behind this plan of action enabling their countries to take charge of promoting the mobilization of the required resources. But it is also essential that all key donors, data communities, and international agencies work together with the national statistics offices and related systems to secure broad support for statistical capacity development.

Presently, the demand for more and better data has not been reflected in a greater availability of funding, but one thing is certain - investing in data brings returns.

The High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (HLG-PCCB) was mandated by the United Nations Statistical Commission to provide strategic leadership for the implementation process relating to the Sustainable Development Goals, including statistical capacity-building, partnership and coordination (decision 46/101)¹. Therefore, under the umbrella of United Nations Statistical Commission, the HLG-PCCB is leading the work on the implementation of the CTGAP. This work is being carried out in cooperation with the World Bank and other partners. The goal is to establish a transparent and inclusive financing mechanism that can address the data challenges and ensure that quality and timely data are available to enable governments, international organizations,

¹ See the report of the 46th session of the UN Statistical Commission, Document No. E/2015/24-E/CN.3/2015/40.

civil society, private sector and the general public to make informed decisions and ensure accountability.

Dubai Declaration and the establishment of a transparent financing mechanism

To meet these data challenges, the Dubai Declaration announced at the UN World Data Forum in October 2018 in Dubai, calls for “The establishment of an innovative funding mechanism, open to all stakeholders under UN membership oversight, that is able to respond in a fast and efficient manner to the priorities of national data and statistical systems, with a goal to mobilize both domestic and international funds and activate partnerships and funding opportunities to strengthen the capacity of national data and statistical systems. The funding mechanism, entirely demand-driven, will be created under the mandate of the UN Statistical Commission and operate under the guidance of representatives of national statistical systems and different data and donor communities who will support the decision making on the operational modalities and on raising resources to address the data needs for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and will be serviced by a Secretariat located at an international institution with global membership.”

The financing mechanism will be open to all stakeholders, including public and private ones, which allows for financing both in terms of monetary inputs as well as the provision of in-kind transfers and for openness in combining funding. Another important role of the mechanism is to ensure and maximize the effectiveness of financing for capacity building. As one of its pivotal elements, the mechanism will help countries identify SDG-related data needs and set their priorities on what will be the highest investment impact. This in turn will facilitate government statisticians in building a country-driven investment case for finance ministers, and open for a dialogue with donors (both public and private resource providers) focused on the same objectives. The role and functions of the mechanism can be summarized under three broad headings: 1) Provision and management of funds, 2) Catalyzing high-impact investments in data and statistics to unleash greater domestic resources over the medium-term, 3) Exploring and implementing innovative funding instruments. Delivery of capacity building will rely on partnerships to execute this work.

Role of the HLG-PCCB and other key actors

Setting up a strong and efficient governance and oversight structure is key to the success of the CTGAP’s implementation. The UN Statistical Commission, and the HLG-PCCB as its the main body for capacity building for data on the 2030 agenda, will be a main player in the oversight of CTGAP implementation through its annual reviews. The roles and functions of the financing mechanism will be managed by an executive committee composed of members of the HLG-PCCB and other key partners, following extensive consultations with a wide range of development partners and donors to ensure better coordination of activities.

In order to strengthen political support for the implementation of the CTGAP, it is suggested that the financing mechanism reach beyond the UN Statistical Commission

drawing from both the UN Statistical Commission (and the HLG-PCCB) and key donors, data communities, and implementing agencies, who will guide decisions on the operational modalities and on ways for raising resources. It is recommended that they be assigned a role in the governance structure of the implementation.

Governance/Oversight bodies

The financing mechanism will be an umbrella structure to coordinate and consolidate existing and future inputs for the implementation of the CTGAP, and provide a system to promote coherence among the different approaches and projects being undertaken in the national settings. The implementation of the CTGAP will be country-led and driven, with national priorities at the centre.

There are various options for how the governance structure of the financing mechanism can be developed, including:

- A. A two-tier system consisting of an executive committee that draws from UN Statistical Commission (and the HLG-PCCB), key donors and implementing agencies, and an advisory board that provides advise and inputs on specific targeted areas and projects. This approach would provide the oversight and guidance necessary to support the financing mechanism both administratively and substantively. The Secretariat would handle the operational aspects.
- B. An executive committee that provides both the guidance and the advisory functions. The Secretariat would handle the operations.

The financing mechanism will be created under the mandate of the UN Statistical Commission as its ultimate stakeholder. The HLG-PCCB would play a role as the main oversight body for the CTGAP implementation.

The Secretariat of the financing mechanism will be housed at a large international organization. The World Bank and the United Nations have agreed to co-host the facility, a semi-autonomous unit, that would be located at the World Bank, to take advantage of the institutional setup and experiences dealing with large financial funding mechanisms as well as leverage the institution's operational capability, and provide unique access to ministers of finance. The Secretariat is responsible for the daily operations of the mechanism, manages the flow of resources, and is responsible for aligning needs and resources. It has a few staff members, including staff seconded from the World Bank and the UNSD.

The Executive committee guides the work of the financing mechanism and provides the strategic framework for capacity development activities. It oversees the operational modalities of the mechanism and guides decisions on the raising resources to address data needs. It contains of 4 to 5 members of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building, 4 representatives from the donor community, 2 representatives from philanthropic organizations, and 2 representatives from civil society organizations.

The Advisory board would be established to provide sector-specific and practical expertise on the areas of work of the capacity development activities. It would consist of experts from academia, international agencies, regional commissions, and other partners active in the area of capacity development. The members would draw from the larger data community to bring in various perspectives.

Guiding principles

The financing mechanism will be guided by the following principles:

- Country leadership and ownership, based on the combination of national priorities and the implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan;
- Evidence-based intervention packages and the capacities required for their effective delivery at scale;
- Activities with long-lasting effects and with direct impacts on the continuous work of national statistical systems.

Reporting

The financing mechanism would report to the UN Statistical Commission through annual reviews on the CTGAP implementation.

Flows

The mechanism will initially use small grants catalytically, bringing programmes to scale by leveraging far greater sums from donors – including from private philanthropies - and domestic government resources. These initial grants and other monies will be used to fund small grants and begin the work of the mechanism.

The mechanism will initially focus on providing a way of doing better with existing funds and through information sharing, networking, and coordination of support by both donors and recipients of aid for statistics. It will later expand its focus and scope of work, as more donors and national governments commit resources to address national needs and priorities of the CTGAP.

Database of needs

In order to establish an overview of capacity-building needs in individual countries, it is proposed to establish a database of needs for the purpose of this mechanism. The secretariat of the mechanism would match the needs to the various funding strands to maximize the impact.

Next Steps

- December 2018, UNSD and the World Bank agree on the scope of the financing mechanism under the terms of the MOU between the UN and the World Bank.
- Early 2019, the World Bank and UNSD establish the Secretariat of the financing mechanism (tbc)
- Early 2019, by the HLG-PCCB,
 - Development of advocacy/communication strategy
 - Establishment of the oversight bodies

- Development of the Terms of reference
- Further definition of the goals and principles of the facility
- Elaboration on the agreed upon criteria
- Identify synergy and catalytic opportunities

- March 2019, UNSC high level forum on official statistics
- March 2019, Statistical Commission endorses the Dubai Declaration and agrees on the HLG-PCCB paper.
- Spring 2019, World Bank spring meeting
- Spring 2019, side event on the Financing mechanism, including board members, held during the meeting of the HLG-PCCB.
- July 2019, side event at the High level political forum on Financing mechanism and implementation of the CTGAP