

Tracking Progress on the SDGs: Indicators and Review Mechanisms  
January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015, 1:15 pm – 2:30 pm

I arrived slightly late, so I didn't catch the name of the moderator of the panel. However, please find below some background information, the people who spoke, the organizations they come from, and what they said.

Background:

This meeting has been convened by the Permanent Missions of Mexico and Germany to the United Nations New York, as well as the recently formed Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN). The representatives from both countries shared discussions that they have had in their internal departments and with fellow nations regarding developing global and national indicators and what has worked for them.

Speakers:

1. Dr. Ingolf Dietrich, Deputy Director General Post-2015 Agenda for Sustainable Development; Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Government of Germany

Germany has begun work on monitoring and review mechanisms on November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014, when it moderated high-level discussions with other nations. The November meeting was an open exchange on reviewing what would be most effective in monitoring and evaluation. Dr. Dietrich mentioned the need for nations to agree on an efficient review mechanism for post-2015 SDGs. He listed 7 key points to create such a review mechanism, all of which are elaborated on in the **German Non-Working Paper** attached in the email.

- a. review mechanism needs to be anchored in strong national ownership
  - i. national level should be starting point of review mechanism
  - ii. importance of compact between citizens and governments
  - iii. universal agendas need to be set while remembering national realities to set ambitious goals
- b. review on different levels is necessary → multilayered levels (national and regional) to be presented at global stage, which will be helpful for peer review and learning
- c. need for incentives → since participation is voluntary, there is need for visibility present achievements, exchange best practices, and allow for peer learning and providing support
- d. need for multistakeholder approach → all stakeholders need to contribute to implementations, the private sector should also make commitments and held accountable beyond CSR
- e. the importance of the role of high quality and real time data
  - i. implementation of review mechanism needs to be *fact-based*
  - ii. measurability of agenda is vital
  - iii. low resource countries will need support
  - iv. UN Statistical Group could serve coordinating role between different countries
  - v. Tracking progress should be manageable
- f. the importance of efficiency → using existing structures and improve them
- g. the importance of the role of high level political forum (HLPF)

2. Francesca Perucci, Chief, Statistical Services Branch, UN Statistics Division

Ms. Perucci spent her time speaking on the main achievements of monitoring the MDGs from 2002 to the present, and we can use lessons learned to plan the deciding and implementation of SDGs.

- a. increased attention to importance of statistics for informing necessary policies, review, monitoring
- b. increased country ownership and alignment of like minded ministries
- c. increased connection between national and global monitoring
- d. more transparency and resources dedicated to statistics
- e. improved data availability and data exchange and communications

Lessons Learned:

- a. gender statistics/indicators and survey improvements need to be considered in global indicators
- b. having MDGs helped consistency in messaging and coordinated stakeholders → improved consistency of data resources, which increased data transparency
- c. better connections between data and policy → how can we use statistics to address specific policy issues?
- d. Agreement with Dr. Dietrich on the need for country ownership, with special emphasis on civil society actors and private sector in national and international levels
- e. How will indicators be selected? → need to develop a global list, from which national governments can choose their own indicators based on national policies

3. Jessica Espey, Program Leader, Sustainable Development Solutions Network

Ms. Espey agreed with Dr. Dietrich's point about multilayer, incentive-based review mechanisms and Ms. Perucci's statement regarding a powerful set of global indicators. However, she brought up a few points regarding challenges that SDSN saw in drawing up SDGs.

- a. what are the issues that are critical to sustainable development that cannot be measured or in which there are disagreements over measuring it?
- b. SDSN proposes: 100 global indicators to be used by international community for the purposes of peer review, to be complemented by national indicators
- c. The national indicators need to be clear and straightforward for policy purposes
- d. Need for high frequency, high quality reporting (poverty data is 3-5 years lagging!) → this is of special interest to those of data revolution group
- e. Something to consider: while it is preferable for indicators to track outcomes, it is also necessary to see service based inputs over time. What should indicators be based on?
- f. World population is increasing, we need to have data to track and monitor these trends

4. Dr. Roberto Dondisch, Director General for Global Issues, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Mexico

Dr. Roberto Dondisch shared the Mexican experience of discussing these issues. In this, he agreed with points made by the former speakers and

- a. biggest challenge: implementation → we have to know how we're doing but not every country has the capacity to pursue this
  - b. Mexico progress reports displayed indicators that were successful as well as those that were lagging
  - c. Transparency and access to information are key to development; transparency is achieved through the creation of an online system and frequent reporting
  - d. Mexico has installed national indicators and real time mapping on an easily accessible government webpage
  - e. Mexico has begun an information sharing platform with its Latin American neighbors in the region
  - f. Best practices: transparency, expertise, independence from government and from other institutes (those that are gathering data), need for universal agenda with regional and national indicators
5. Marcela Ordoñez, Minister Counselor at Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations

Ms. Ordoñez discussed the challenges that Colombia faced in implementing the MDGs, and how those lessons can be used when considering what indicators and targets to use for the SDGs.

- a. each government institution was reporting to each sector individually, which created an isolated follow up → encouraged the creation of a coordination mechanism between various government departments to plan implementation and reporting
- b. is interested in including civil society actors, private sector, and academia in these conversations
- c. reports should indicate disaggregated, regional data but capacity building at a local level is still needed to prevent data lagging

#### CONSENSUS:

Many are concerned about how to integrate global and national priorities in indicators for the SDGs. Still others are worried about how to properly integrate civil society actors into implementing the SDGs, thereby providing the citizenry with ownership over these goals.