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Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals – Road Map

Extract of the Conference of European Statisticians' Road Map on Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals

Note by the Steering Group on Statistics for SDGs

Summary

The document presents an extract from the Conference of European Statisticians' (CES) Road Map on statistics for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Road Map is prepared by a Steering Group co-chaired by Switzerland and the United States. Its members are: Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom, Eurostat, OECD and UNECE.

The extract is prepared for translation purposes and includes chapters 1-6 of the Road Map.

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I. Executive Summary

1. This Road Map is a resource for guiding the work of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) on statistics for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It outlines a strategy for CES members to follow in implementing the CES *Declaration on the Role of National Statistical Offices in Measuring and Monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals* adopted by the Conference in 2015. The Road Map lays out the activities associated with producing statistics for SDGs; more particularly:

- what needs to be done;
- who is to do what and when;
- who are the stakeholders, and
- the opportunities for cooperation.

2. The Road Map is intended as a living document. It will be updated by the CES Steering Group on Statistics for SDGs to take into account the comments by CES and its Bureau, and developments within different UN bodies and groups, including the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs), the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity Building for the 2030 Agenda (HLG-PCCB), and the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21).

3. In order to prepare the Road Map and monitor its implementation, the CES Bureau set up a Steering Group on Statistics for SDGs in October 2015. The Steering Group is co-chaired by Switzerland and United States. Its members are Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom, Eurostat, OECD and UNECE. UNECE acts as secretariat of the Steering Group. The Road Map also benefited from contributions of case studies from UNICEF and UNFPA.

4. The first draft of the Road Map was considered at the CES plenary session in April 2016 (ECE/CES/2016/19). Since then, the text has been updated to reflect the suggestions by CES and its Bureau, outcomes of the meetings of the Steering Group in September 2016 in Neuchâtel, Switzerland and in November 2016 in Geneva, and other relevant developments.

5. The Road Map includes six substantive sections, focusing on establishing mechanisms for national collaboration, assessing the readiness of countries to report on global SDG indicators, developing regional, national and sub-national indicators, reporting of SDG indicators, capacity building, and communicating statistics for SDGs. It includes recommendations for national statistical offices (NSOs) and concrete actions for the Steering Group to support CES member countries in implementing a measurement system for SDGs. Annexes provide case studies relating to the road map's sections, the international context for the development of SDGs and the groups that are working on related issues at the regional and global level.

A. Establishing national mechanisms for collaboration (Section III)

6. The Road Map recommends that NSOs serve as national focal points for the measurement of SDGs. This requires coordination of national communications and planning and preparation of detailed national road maps and/or plans of action to implement international standards in the reporting of statistical SDG indicators. Close collaboration of

NSOs with policy makers is essential for countries to meet the reporting requirements under the 2030 Agenda in accordance with national priorities.

7. The CES Steering group will support countries by: (a) facilitating sharing of national reporting road maps, and (b) facilitating regional representation of NSOs at relevant SDG policy meetings.

B. Assessing readiness to report on global SDG indicators (Section IV)

8. Section IV of the Road Map is devoted to the need to assess the readiness of countries to report on the SDG indicators, where NSOs will play a central role. To be effective in this role, NSOs will need to assess the availability of data for global indicators within their respective countries. For this purpose, they need to: (a) identify data providers and data sources for SDG indicators; (b) identify data and methodological gaps; and (c) consider data disaggregation requirements. The Steering Group recommends that these assessments be led by NSOs in close cooperation with relevant data producers and in consultation with civil society and international organisations. An essential outcome of the assessment is the identification and assignment of responsibilities among national institutions for each indicator. These activities should occur in close dialogue with national policy makers to ensure that national priorities and resource needs are considered.

9. The CES Steering Group will support countries' assessments of data availability by: (a) developing a template for data assessment at the country level based on the experience of countries that have already carried out assessments, and (b) providing a platform to share and synthetize national experiences (e.g. at the 2017 CES plenary session, at an Expert Meeting and through a public wiki). In the longer term, the CES Steering Group proposes to periodically summarize assessments within the UNECE region; to establish a work plan for countries to contribute to the development of methodologies for Tier III indicators[1]; and to propose new methodologies (e.g., using "big data" as a source). All of these actions are to be linked with other relevant work plans at the CES level.

C. Developing regional, national and sub-national indicators (Section V)

10. Agenda 2030 emphasises that the SDGs and targets should be implemented at the national and sub-national levels. Their integration into national policy and strategies will be crucial. The implementation of these national strategies needs to be supported by national data. In addition, countries with significant regional differences may require indicators at sub-national level.

11. Section V of the Road Map provides guidance on establishing SDGs at regional, national and sub-national levels. Countries are in different situations vis-à-vis measurement of sustainable development. Some countries have already sustainable development indicator (SDI) sets and may wish to adjust these to reflect the SDGs. Some countries may take the global SDG indicators as a starting point and adapt these to their national policy priorities. Countries that collected data for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) may build on that experience. The Road Map highlights the crucial need for dialogue between NSOs and policymakers on national follow-up and review and the importance of reaching common understanding on roles and responsibilities.

12. Section V also highlights work done by the Task Force on Adjusting the CES Recommendations on Measuring Sustainable Development and the possibilities for using

[1] See Annex I for a description of the three "tiers" of SDG indicators.

the adjusted CES framework to guide the criteria for identification of national/regional statistics and indicators.

13. The Steering Group proposes to (a) identify the list of countries planning to establish national SDG indicators, and (b) exchange experiences on the selection of national indicators. Based on these experiences, guiding principles for adjusting existing SDI sets to SDGs could be developed.

D. Reporting on global SDG indicators (Section VI)

14. Section VI of the Road Map discusses possible reporting mechanisms for SDG indicators. It highlights the importance of having NSOs act as coordinating organisations for data on SDGs and suggests national reporting platforms (NRPs) as one possible mechanism for disseminating SDG indicators.

15. Section VI considers possible models of data flows at the national level and from the national to the regional/global levels. The entities responsible for the coordination of official statistics in countries (that is, NSOs) are well positioned to plan and propose the data flow model(s) for use in their respective countries. NSOs should maintain and develop networks so there is a clear system for SDG indicators from all providers and so that investments in the system are of use to the country as a whole.

16. NSOs in several countries are currently developing NRPs for SDG indicators. The Road Map recommends that the data available through NRPs should be comparable, transparent, timely and publicly accessible. NPRs could include: (i) data collection or submission portals that allow different data providers in countries to submit/post data; (ii) indicator production databases and (iii) dissemination portals where users can find tables, documents and publications (this is also part of a communication strategy). The CES Bureau has established a Task Force that is currently developing guidelines for national reporting mechanisms, including NRPs.

17. The Road Map outlines different scenarios for data flows between the national, regional and global levels. The Steering Group recommends that NSOs evaluate which data flow model(s) provide the most transparent and efficient transfer of the data from the national to the global level, avoiding duplication and considering their national circumstances.

II. Introduction

A. Mandate

18. The document *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*[2] (for simplicity, this document is referred to henceforth as "Agenda 2030"), which includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets, was agreed to in September 2015 by heads of state and high-level representatives.

19. Official statistics will play a key role in providing evidence for the follow-up and review of SDGs and the related targets. In addition, two of the targets focus specifically on improving official statistics; namely:

[2] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf.

- **Target 17.18:** "By 2020, enhance capacity building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts"
- **Target 17.19:** "By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries."

20. The 2015 plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) decided to "launch work on a Road Map for the development of official statistics for monitoring SDGs."[3] The Road Map (this document) aims to guide the CES work on statistics for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

21. To prepare the Road Map and monitor its implementation, the CES Bureau set up a Steering Group on Statistics for SDGs in October 2015, including Switzerland (co-chair), United States (co-chair), Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom, Eurostat and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) acts as its Secretariat.

B. Objectives and approach

22. The Road Map aims to guide the CES work on statistics for SDGs. It lays out the activities associated with producing statistics for SDGs:

- what needs to be done;
- who is to do what and when;
- who are the other stakeholders, and
- the opportunities for cooperation.

23. The Road Map supports the implementation of the *Declaration on the Role of National Statistical Offices in Measuring and Monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals*4 that CES adopted in June 2015. The Declaration:

(a) calls upon national governments to support national statistical offices in their key role in measuring and monitoring SDGs, and recognizes the importance of cooperation at local, national, regional and global levels in monitoring SDGs, and

(b) emphasizes the importance of efficient coordination of SDG monitoring and reporting at regional levels between relevant international organisations and between international organizations and national statistical offices.

24. The Road Map provides recommendations to national statistical offices (NSOs) as they prepare to report SDG statistics for global indicators. The mechanisms for ongoing review of the SDGs at the policy level and the measurement and reporting at the statistical level are currently taking shape. The Road Map provides structured information about the

[3] ECE/CES/89, para 23
http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/2015/Rep_1512361E.pdf.
[4] ECE/CES/89/Add.1 at http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=38920" \l "/.

ongoing developments and will help ensure that official statisticians actively contribute to these processes.

25. The Road Map contributes to the *Cape Town Global Action Plan on Sustainable Development Data*,[5] prepared by the HLG-PCCB and previewed at the first UN World Data Forum in January 2017, by providing concrete actions that will support countries in meeting the challenge of providing statistics for SDGs. In addition, by identifying the type of work and funding required, it will also provide information for all NSOs, international organizations and stakeholders (e.g., the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century – PARIS21) concerned with statistical capacity building.

26. The Road Map is meant to complement the ongoing work of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity Building for the 2030 Agenda (HLG-PCCB) by providing suggestions related to the needs of CES member states. Other NSOs may also find this Road Map helpful.

27. The Road Map is intended as a living document. It will be updated by the Steering Group taking into consideration comments by CES member states and developments within different UN bodies and groups (e.g., the IAEG-SDGs, the HLG-PCCB and PARIS21).

28. Section III of the Road Map describes the importance of establishing collaboration mechanisms at the national level, with NSOs playing a central role. Section IV describes assessing the readiness of countries to report on global indicators. Section V discusses regional, national and sub-national indicators. Section VI describes reporting flows of SDG indicators. Section VII addresses capacity building. Finally, Section VIII discusses strategy for communicating statistics for SDGs.

29. The substantive sections conclude with (a) recommendations for CES member state NSOs; and (b) short, medium, and long-term actions for the Steering Group to support the follow up and review of the SDGs by CES members. Short-term actions are those intended for completion by the CES 2017 plenary session (June 2017). Medium-term actions are those to be completed by the CES 2018 plenary session. Long-term actions are anticipated to be completed after the CES 2018 plenary session.

III. Establishing national mechanisms for collaboration

A. The role of National Statistical Offices

30. NSOs will play a central role in reporting on the SDGs. The annual progress report on the SDGs prepared by the UN Secretary General (UNSG) in cooperation with the international statistical system will be based on global indicators and data produced by NSOs. According to Agenda 2030, follow-up and review processes at all levels will be "rigorous and based on evidence, informed by country-led evaluations and data which is high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable and disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability and geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts."[6]

31. In general, the Steering Group recommends that national readiness assessments and identification of data gaps be directed by NSOs in close coordination with relevant data

[5] http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/global-consultation-hlg-1/GAP_HLG-20161021.pdf.
[6] Paragraph 74(g) in http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1.

producers and international organisations. An essential outcome of these analyses is the identification and assignment of responsibilities among national institutions.

B. Essential dialogue with policymakers

32. National and sub-national monitoring of objectives and measures should be the result of close collaboration between statisticians and policy-makers. In this sense, it is of primary importance that statisticians be involved from the beginning of work on a national action plan. This collaboration ensures that the objectives are measurable (which facilitates the work of statisticians) and that the selected indicators are accepted and relevant for policy-makers. Furthermore, statisticians can ensure that the monitoring of the SDGs at the national and sub-national levels is consistent with predefined conceptual frameworks such as the CES framework. A good example of efficient collaboration between statisticians and policy makers is presented in Case Study 6 by Switzerland.

33. Close collaboration between statisticians and policy-makers benefits from the clear definition of the roles and responsibilities. For example, the selection of national and sub-national objectives and measures falls under the responsibility of policy-makers with the support of statisticians. On the other hand, the selection of indicators and the determination of methodologies and data sources are the responsibility of statisticians in consultation with policy-makers.

34. Understanding these roles and responsibilities along with clear indicator selection criteria ensures both strong collaboration between all the stakeholders and respect for the requirements of official statistics.

C. Institutional arrangements for reporting on indicators

35. The CES Steering Group recommends that national governments inform all involved ministries and agencies of Agenda 2030 and the SDG indicators and strengthen inter-agency cooperation to meet the related challenges.

36. National governments should consider designating a national body to coordinate the measurement system for SDGs to achieve consistency in the work of all stakeholders, information exchange and the discussion and implementation of internationally accepted methodologies.

37. Such a national coordinating body could:

- serve as a platform/forum for discussion of issues on data collection and analysis between government agencies and international organizations on SDG indicators;
- keep stakeholders abreast of and share knowledge on statistical activities in the field of data collection and analysis;
- organize and promote coordination and joint advocacy activities around data collection with a specific focus on SDGs;
- ensure coordination of information exchange on SDG indicators, and
- promote substantive discussion on statistical capacity building.

38. The CES Steering Group recommends that NSOs play the role of national coordinating body. An important task for this body would be the creation of a detailed road map or plan of action to implement the SDG indicators.

D. Recommendations for National Statistical Offices – Establishing collaboration

(a) NSOs should inform all relevant national ministries and agencies of the SDG indicators and contribute to strengthening inter-agency cooperation to efficiently meet the challenges of SDGs;

(b) NSOs should consider ways to coordinate national communication and planning of measuring SDGs to achieve consistency in the work of national stakeholders, information exchange and discussion and implementation of international methodology;

(c) NSOs should serve as focal points at the national level to provide this coordination in the reporting of statistics for SDGs. NSOs can also provide a supporting role to other government bodies charged with SDG policy-making;

(d) NSOs, as the national coordinating body (or in collaboration with another such body) should prepare detailed national road maps or plans of action to implement international standards in the reporting of statistical SDG indicators;

(e) NSOs could organise meetings with main data users to improve understanding of their needs. These meetings could be a useful forum to engage business, civil society, and academia in the SDG process;

(f) Countries should consider establishing technical thematic working groups (for example on human rights and gender equality, social inclusion, economic growth and environment protection or separately on each target) to analyse SDGs.

E. Actions for the CES Steering Group – Establishing collaboration

1. Medium-term (complete by the CES 2018 plenary session)

(a) Facilitate sharing of national road maps among the countries participating in the CES work;

(b) Facilitate regional representation of national statistical offices at relevant SDG policy meetings, such as regional and global political fora on SDGs.

IV. Assessing readiness to report on global SDG indicators

39. According to Agenda 2030, follow-up and review processes should be built on existing platforms and processes, avoid duplication and respond to national circumstances, capacity needs and priorities.[7] These processes will evolve over time taking into account emerging issues and methodological development and minimizing reporting burden on national administrations. To implement these decisions, some countries have already or are in the process of assessing their readiness to provide data on SDGs for global, regional, sub regional and national reporting. Some have also begun identifying data gaps where statistics and indicators will require development to inform the SDGs.

40. As a country-led process, the decision regarding which source to use for SDG statistics remains at the discretion of countries. Nonetheless, some data may originate outside of a country's national statistical system. In some cases international organizations

[7] Paragraph 74(f) in http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1. The latest documents are available at the IAEG_SDG website at: http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/

may produce model-based estimates in the absence of country data. These data need to be reviewed and validated by countries before being made available for users. Any data discrepancies between national and international sources should be addressed or explained and other concerns from countries be flagged and clarified.

A. Identifying data providers and data sources

41. NSOs can play an important role in coordinating their national readiness assessments by facilitating communication with other relevant data-producing institutions. The coordination role of the NSOs is outlined in the *CES Declaration on the Role of National Statistical Offices in Measuring and Monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals*. The exact nature of this coordination role, particularly vis à vis reporting of non-statistical SDG indicators, will vary according to national circumstances; however, some aspects of the coordination role can be generalized.

42. For example, as a first task, non-statistical indicators (e.g., indicators on the quality of law) should be distinguished from statistical indicators. NSOs should focus their reporting activities on statistical indicators. However, in some countries NSOs may still coordinate the reporting of all SDG indicators, including the non-statistical indicators.

43. A successful readiness assessment also requires clear definitions and metadata for the global indicators. This is not always yet clear for the SDG tier III indicators and therefore the assessment of the availability of these indicators may need to be reconsidered when the final definition and methodology become available.[8]

44. NSOs should identify potential data providers for statistical indicators within their national statistical system, data sources and data availability. In some cases, NSOs may choose to rely on non-official data sources.

45. Additionally, NSOs may examine their existing reporting practices, taking into account their coordination role. To avoid duplicate reporting, international organizations might report statistics on behalf of a country if the NSO agrees. NSOs routinely provide national and sub-national statistics to UN agencies. These UN agencies then produce comparable, global statistics in specific regions according to their mandates. As interest in statistics has increased in magnitude and scope, the volume and complexity of these data flows have increased. The Steering Group recommends that these data flows and the responsibilities of the relevant bodies be clarified in readiness assessments and, where appropriate, refined and coordinated. The questionnaire sent by UNSD to UN agencies and other international organizations (whose replies were compiled in May 2016) and member states of the IAEG-SDGs could contribute to this preliminary work.

46. International organisations can assist in readiness assessments by reviewing their own databases and identifying statistics they generate with inputs from NSOs. For instance, Eurostat has created an inventory of indicators within the European Statistical System (ESS).[9, 10] UNSD issued such an inventory in July 2016 for a subset of indicators, as supplied by agencies. OECD has undertaken a pilot assessment measuring distances of OECD countries to SDG targets. This was based on a selection of indicators aligned to the

[8] For Tier I and II indicators, availability is linked with capacity building; Tier III indicators require development of commonly agreed methodology. Further details in Annex I.

[9] ESS members are all European Union and European Free Trade Association countries.

[10] http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/SFSDG

extent possible with the UN global indicator framework, and used country-supplied data in OECD databases.[11]

47. The Steering Group has prepared a common template for conducting readiness assessments that may be useful to CES members.[12] The template could help NSOs identify indicators already available, indicators that could be produced within the short term, and indicators that will require longer term development. Additionally, assessments could also investigate the nature and extent of current data flows from NSOs to UN agencies.

B. Identifying and addressing data and methodology gaps and conceptual issues

48. The Steering Group can assist CES countries in assessing data and methodology gaps and identifying conceptual issues. UNECE, together with other international organizations in the region, can compile national readiness assessments conducted by member NSOs to identify common areas where further work is needed, as well as areas where achievements of some members can be used by others.

49. Good governance, technical guidance and quality control are necessary to ensure comparability of data and help countries to develop new statistics when necessary. Meetings organised under CES should remain the primary venues to share experiences and explore potential solutions within the region. For the EU and EFTA countries, coordination through the European Statistical System (ESS) is important since the production of missing indicators and filling of data gaps may require new legislation and/or methodological guidelines.

C. Addressing data disaggregation requirements

50. Agenda 2030 emphasises the need for disaggregated data to ensure that "no one is left behind." Therefore, the assessment of data availability should consider also availability of the requested disaggregations.

51. According to a UN work stream on data disaggregation,[13] the disaggregations necessary for each SDG indicator should be clarified. Any CES work in this area will be done in close collaboration with the IAEG-SDGs work stream on data disaggregation. The tasks at regional level will be to:

- identify regionally relevant spatial units (geographic areas) for disaggregation;
- identify disaggregated SDG statistics currently available at the regional level;
- investigate how the disaggregation of relevant indicators can be best performed, and
- review and disseminate national experiences and best practices for disaggregation.

52. The confidentiality principle is very important. Any disaggregation of indicators should consider the risk of identifying the confidential information of an individual respondent.

[11] http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/SFSDG

[12] Available at: http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/SFSDG/Statistics+for+SDGs+Home

[13] The first meeting took place during the IAEG-SDG in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in October 2016. In June 2016, UNSD organized an expert group meeting on data disaggregation.

53. In addition, there are other considerations that have to be taken into account when disaggregating data, such as legal provisions (NSOs may not be legally allowed to collect data on certain topics); political issues (data disaggregation may have risks for the protection of the rights of sub-populations); and data availability, access, cost and quality concerns (e.g., the survey sample may be too small to allow disaggregation into specific groups).

54. To be able to provide disaggregated data on vulnerable groups, NSOs may need to cooperate with data providers outside the national statistical system. These can be international organizations (e.g., see Case study 1 of UNICEF), private producers, academia or civil society. Such cooperation requires agreeing on principles regarding when and how such data can be used, taking into account the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (FPOS) and statistical quality requirements.

55. Therefore, in collaborating with the IAEG-SDGs data disaggregation work stream, the CES Steering Group could assign a subgroup to:

- examine SDGs, targets and corresponding indicators to ensure that the concept of "leaving no one behind" is sufficiently addressed within the indicator framework by proposing relevant disaggregations;
- propose strategies to obtain data on population subgroups; assess the suitability of data for disaggregation purposes, and
- review best practices and country experiences on selected disaggregation issues, particularly with regard to protecting respondent confidentiality and other legal requirements.

D. Recommendations for National Statistical Offices – Readiness assessments

(a) NSOs have an important coordinating role in conducting readiness assessments and reporting on global SDG indicators, although the exact nature of this role will vary with national circumstances;

(b) Mapping of data providers to statistical (and non-statistical) indicators will be essential to assess data availability. NSOs should focus efforts on statistical indicators. Other national data providers (in some cases, outside of the national statistical system) should be identified;

(c) Mapping of existing data flows from national data providers to international organizations should also be conducted, to the extent feasible;

(d) NSOs should identify circumstances in which to rely on international organizations to provide national statistics for SDG global indicators. This will reduce duplication of effort;

(e) NSOs should clarify the disaggregations required for each SDG indicator at the country level.

E. Actions for the Steering Group – Readiness assessments

1. Short-term (complete by the CES 2017 plenary session)

(a) Develop a template to assess national statistics and data flows between NSOs and international organizations;

(b) Provide a platform to share initial national readiness assessment results (e.g. at an expert meeting, or website);

(c) Summarize national readiness assessments conducted by CES members.

2. Medium-term (complete by the CES 2018 plenary session)

(a) Based on the regional summary of CES member national readiness assessment, identify common successes and challenges;

(b) Provide a platform to share national experiences with maintaining dialogue with relevant national stakeholders (data producers, data users, policy makers, civil society, non-governmental organizations);

(c) Provide a platform to share national experiences with reporting disaggregated national statistics for SDG global indicators;

(d) Identify common areas among CES member countries where national statistics for Tier 1 and 2 indicators exist but should be strengthened;

(e) Expand the production of harmonised Tier 1 and Tier 2 statistics among CES member countries;

(f) Propose strategies to address common data gaps for Tier 1 and 2 indicators among CES member countries, including gaps in disaggregated statistics;

(g) Propose plans to contribute to international metadata standards for Tier 3 indicators.

3. Long-term (completion anticipated after CES 2018 plenary session)

(a) Prepare periodic updates of the regional summary of national readiness assessments conducted by CES member countries;

(b) Propose plans for testing new methodologies using new and/or unreviewed data sources among CES members in coordination and collaboration with IAEG-SDG and HLG-PCCB.

V. Developing regional, national and sub-national indicators

56. The section provides guidance on establishing a measurement system for SDGs at national and sub-national levels. The regional perspective and regional indicators are also considered.

57. Agenda 2030 emphasises that follow-up and review of its implementation "will be voluntary and country-led, will take into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and will respect policy space and priorities."[14] Furthermore, the global SDG indicators "will be complemented by indicators at the regional and national levels which will be developed by Member States".[15] The UNSC 47th session further underlined that "national ownership is key to achieving sustainable development and that national reviews [...] will take into account different national realities".[16] UNSC also agreed

[14] Pparagraph 74(a) in http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1.

[15] Paragraph 75 in http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1.

[16] Decision 47/101 (j) from the 47th UN Statistical Commission (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/47th-session/documents/Report-on-the-47th-session-of-the-statistical-commission-E.pdf).

that the compilation of global indicators will be based to the greatest extent possible on comparable and standardized national official statistics provided by countries to the international statistical systems and that when other sources and methodologies are used, these will be reviewed and agreed by national statistical authorities and presented in a transparent manner.[17]

A. Deciding upon national indicators

58. Transformation of SDGs and targets into action at the national and sub-national level and their integration in national strategies and other policies will be crucial for the successful implementation of SDGs. The decision whether to have national SDG indicators lies with countries. It depends on national priorities in SDG implementation and the existence of a national sustainable development strategy.

59. The global SDG indicator list is designed to measure progress at the global level. National indicators may be justified where there are specific national priorities not addressed by the global indicators. The level of statistical development in a given country may make it possible to use more sophisticated indicators than at the global level. Or, global targets may not be ambitious enough (or too ambitious) to be relevant in specific countries.

60. National indicators may also be justified where global indicators would benefit from further development. Some global indicators (Tier III) require further conceptualization before broad data collection and statistical reporting is recommended. Additionally, some global indicators address only part of the relevant target and additional indicators are needed to fully cover the intended scope. In still other cases, subjective indicators (lacking from the global indicator set) could be considered. Countries may choose to supplement global indicators with national indicators to address these deficiencies.

61. National indicators may be justified to address national communication needs, for example establishing headline indicators for goals. These indicators could be selected from among the global SDG indicators or from among national indicators. A possible advantage of identifying headline indicators is easier communication with policy makers and general public. A possible disadvantage is that, headline indicators prioritize certain targets and therefore could send a message that some targets are more important than others, contrary to the intent of the global framework.

62. CES member countries vary in their national circumstances vis-à-vis sustainable development indicators. Some countries have had national sustainable development strategies and SDI sets for years. These countries may consider how to adjust the national SDI sets to take into account SDGs. The thematic structure of the CES framework for measuring sustainable development may help. As the production processes of national SDI are already well established, it would be efficient to make maximum use of them.

63. Further, national SDI sets may go beyond SDGs (sustainable development is wider than what SDGs cover). For example, human well-being may be important in a national context but is not reflected in the global goals.

64. Countries that do not have SDI sets can take the global SDG set as a starting point. Additional or different national indicators can be selected to reflect national priorities and

[17] Decision 47/101 (l) from the rapport of 47th UN Statistical Commission http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/47th-session/documents/Report-on-the-47th-session-of-the-statistical-commission-E.pdf.

circumstances. A national indicator might be established if the global indicator is not relevant or not ambitious enough in the national context, or is not yet available.

65. Some countries, or regions within a country, may decide to establish indicators and collect information at the sub-national level, especially countries with large regional differences or countries governed through federal systems. Cities may decide to establish indicators at the local level, especially to monitor Goal 11 "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable."

66. The case studies no 2 (Poland), 3 (Russian Federation), 4 (Switzerland) and 5 (Turkey) present examples of how countries are dealing with national SDG indicators.

1. CES framework for measuring sustainable development as a guidance tool

67. The CES framework[18] for measuring sustainable development can help in exploring how to complement the set of global indicators with regional or national indicators. A Task Force set up by the CES Bureau in 2015 adjusted the CES framework to align it with the SDGs and mapped the SDGs, targets and indicators to the themes in the CES framework.[19] The mapping groups indicators according to themes linked to the traditional statistical areas, such as health, education, labour, water, energy, etc., and to the themes often used in the sustainable development indicator sets of countries. The mapping systematically identifies regional indicators and areas where the regularly produced data can be helpful in providing statistics for SDGs.

68. Several countries already have national sustainable development indicator sets with clear links to the CES framework. The adjusted CES framework can be useful for analysing how these indicator sets could be revised to consider SDGs while maintaining continuity with the system used to measure sustainable development up to now.

69. Furthermore, the CES framework includes a list of 95 indicators for measuring sustainable development. One of the criteria for identifying indicators was data availability. Thus, the CES framework could help identify regional or national indicators where data would be available for a large number of countries.

2. Criteria for national and sub-national indicators

70. When developing national indicators, careful consideration should be given to complying with the criteria set for the global indicators; namely that "This [indicator] framework will be simple yet robust, address all SDGs and targets, including for means of implementation, and preserve the political balance, integration and ambition contained therein."[20] A balanced, integrated and holistic approach to the selection of national

[18] The CES framework for measuring sustainable development is presented in the *CES Recommendations for Measuring Sustainable Development* prepared by a joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Task Force and endorsed by the CES member countries and international organisations in June 2013. The CES recommendations provide a universal approach to measuring sustainable development drawing on three conceptual dimensions of wellbeing. It also takes into account the temporal dimension, considering the needs of the present ('here and now') and future generations ('later') and of people living in other countries ('elsewhere'). These dimensions are linked to policy themes that cover the environmental, social and economic aspects of sustainable development. The themes, dimensions and the structure that binds them together constitute what is referred to in this document as the 'CES framework.'

[19] See https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/2016/mtg/NewCES_18-Interim_report_on_SDGs_Revised.pdf).

[20] Paragraph 75 in http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1

indicators will be needed to guard against 'cherry picking' across SDGs. Outcome indicators are preferred, except where the target specifically addresses inputs.

71. In selecting national indicators, the right balance must be found between the benefit of additional information relevant for the national context and the reporting burden. National indicators should consider other sustainable development indicators currently in use for a given region (such as Eurostat's sustainable development indicator list). Relevant, nonduplicative indicators for which statistics are produced by official statistical systems following established standards and methodologies should be prioritized.

72. The global SDG indicator list predominantly comprises objective indicators. At the national level, subjective indicators could be considered. Subjective indicators of wellbeing, for example, have shown to be valid constructs and can be measured reliably. There is growing interest in understanding sustainable development by using both objective and subjective measures.

73. The following criteria for selecting national indicators should be discussed:

- maintain a balance between social, economic and environmental indicators to remain faithful to the intent and ambition of Agenda 2030;
- prioritize outcome indicators except where SDG targets specifically addresses inputs or outputs;
- prioritize indicators that are produced by the official statistical system following established standards and agreed methodologies;
- take into account existing sustainable development indicator lists by the relevant organizations in the region (such as Eurostat and CIS-Stat);
- select multipurpose indicators whenever possible to minimize the number of indicators,21 and
- minimize reporting burden, taking into account that a number of the global indicators may be produced by international organizations (especially qualitative indicators) and thus do not put a burden on national statistical systems.

B. Considerations on regional indicators in the UNECE region

74. Agenda 2030 states "The goals and targets will be followed up and reviewed using a set of global indicators. These will be complemented by indicators at the regional and national levels which will be developed by Member States."[22]

75. In its 2016 session, the UNSC emphasized that the "global indicators proposed are intended for global follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and are not necessarily applicable to all national contexts. Indicators for regional, national and sub-national levels of monitoring will be developed at the regional and national levels."[23]

[21] Though multipurpose indicators help minimize the number of indicators, they may be less useful for informing policy decisions, since multiple dimensions of outcomes would be implicated by design.

[22] Paragraph 75 in http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1.

[23] E/CN.3/2016/34, decision 47/101 (i) E/CN.3/2016/34, decision 47/101 (i) (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/47th-session/documents/Report-on-the-47th-session-of-the-statistical-commission-E.pdf).

76. It is important to clarify what is meant by regional indicators. These are not global indicators adjusted for a given region for comparison and publication. Rather, regional indicators are intended to uniquely reflect regional information priorities.

77. The selection of regional indicators depends on decisions at the policy level about the scope and focus of regional review and follow-up. It may depend on political rather than statistical considerations.

78. The UNECE region is heterogeneous. Different country groups and international and supranational organizations in the region may have their own priorities and indicator lists. For example, EU announces in the Commission Communication on "Next steps for a sustainable European future"[24] a regular monitoring of SDGs in the EU context from 2017 onwards, and the development of a reference indicator framework for this purpose. OECD has carried out a pilot study on measuring distance to SDG targets based on data available in OECD databases. CIS-Stat has established SDG indicators for CIS countries based on a recent survey on relevance and availability of global SDG indicators in these countries.

79. Should a political demand emerge for regional indicators for the UNECE region, these should therefore use a bottom-up approach based on the indicators set up by Eurostat, OECD and CIS Statistics Committee and the decisions of countries on their national indicators. Regional indicators for UNECE would have to be in line with the indicator sets of the other international and supra-national organisations in the region.

80. Interest in regional indicators may also originate from international agencies with mandates from their member countries to work in particular areas (See Case Study 7 from UNFPA on regional indicators).

C. Dissemination and publication

81. National and sub-national indicators for monitoring of SDGs (as well as global and regional indicators) should be published by NSOs in a transparent manner. The same system used to report or publish the global SDG indicators should be the reference system for the national and sub-national reporting on SDGs.

82. For information purposes, it is desirable for NSOs to post summary information about SDGs on their websites in their national language(s) and/or English.[25]

D. Recommendations for NSOs – National and sub-national indicators

(a) NSOs should identify indicators to measure the achievement of SDGs and targets in their countries, especially in priority policy areas.

(b) National and sub-national indicators for the monitoring of SDGs (as well as global and regional indicators) should be published in a transparent manner by NSOs.

[24] http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/communication-next-steps-sustainable-europe-20161122_en.pdf (COM(2016) 739 adopted on 22 November 2016; section 3.3)

[25] See, for example, the approach of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany (https://www.destatis.de/EN/FactsFigures/Indicators/SDG/SDG.html).

E. Actions for the Steering Group – National and sub-national indicators

1. Short-term (complete before 2017 CES plenary session)

(a) Identify CES member countries that intend to or are establishing national SDG indicators;

(b) Provide a platform (e.g. at and expert meeting) to exchange experiences on the selection of national SDG indicators and/or adjustment of existing SDI sets to align with SDGs.

2. Medium-term (complete before 2018 CES plenary session)

(a) Identify guiding principles for selecting national SDG indicators and/or adjusting existing SDI sets to align with SDG indicators;

(b) Present guiding principles on selection of national SDG indicators and/or adjusting existing SDI sets to SDGs.

3. Long-term actions (complete after 2018 CES plenary session)

(a) In consultation with the UNECE High-level Group on the Modernization of Statistics, consider broadening data sources, expanding surveys and using administrative data to facilitate reporting for national SDG indicators.

VI. Reporting of global SDG indicators

83. The section considers how reporting is organised at national and regional levels and for the supra-national organisations in the UNECE region. It also discusses links with reporting at the global level. Systematic reporting of SDG indicators is needed for effective monitoring of Agenda 2030. To ensure consistency and avoid duplication, it is important to have a coordinated approach between the different levels, taking account of existing reporting mechanisms.

84. The section focuses mainly on organization of reporting from the country viewpoint, considering the most efficient approach to minimize reporting burden and avoid duplication. The goal is to develop general guidance and criteria for the reporting of SDG indicators.

85. Different countries may choose different reporting options depending on statistical capabilities and national context (see Case Studies 7, United Kingdom and 8, Mexico). To facilitate the process of reporting the global SDG indicators, general guidelines on the reporting framework should be provided.

A. National reporting mechanisms

86. Several countries are developing national reporting platforms (NRPs) for SDG indicators (see Case Studies 9 - United States, 10 - Poland and 11 - United Kingdom). Additionally it is likely that data reporting platforms will be developed by international organisations such as UNSD and other UN organisations. Therefore, coordination is necessary.

87. An SDG indicator reporting platform can have three components: (i) a data collection or submission portal that allows different data providers to submit/post data; (ii) a production data base and (iii) a dissemination portal where users can find tables, texts and

publications. The implementation of a dissemination portal may also be part of a communication strategy (Section VIII).

88. The CES Steering Group proposes that SDG indicator databases and dissemination platforms used by countries for reporting purposes meet the following specifications, which align with FPOS[26] and Agenda 2030:

- **Comparability**: NRPs should present data that are produced according to internationally agreed methods so that they can be used for compiling regional and global indicators (based on FPOS 8, 9, 10).
- **Transparency:** NRPs should permit posting of relevant metadata and other background documentation regarding limitations of the underlying statistics. This should include descriptions of any revisions of the data (why they were made and by whom) (based on FPOS 3).
- **Timeliness:** NRPs should permit reporting of statistics as they become available by member countries (that is, on a continuous basis). Where statistics reported by a country have not yet been standardized for international comparability, this should be clearly indicated by the platform (based on FPOS 5).
- **Public accessibility**: NRPs should permit public access to the compiled indicators (based on FPOS 1, 7).

89. NRPs should facilitate the posting of data required for calculation of global trends and indicators, and, coordinated with NSOs, data produced by other organizations on a country's behalf. NSOs may limit the provision of country data to the global and regional indicators only. In addition, countries may use established data delivery mechanisms such as data collections arranged by Eurostat, OECD or UNECE in accordance to these organizations' mandates and responsibilities to deliver data either on country level or pre-aggregated by UN-regions (based on FPOS 1, 2, 4, 5, 6).

90. Approaches to NRPs could differ among countries. Nevertheless, to assure their usefulness for reporting purposes, the CES Steering Group suggests the following minimum requirements:

- data for compiling the indicators should be taken from official statistics whenever possible
- time series from 2015 onwards, and
- inclusion of basic metadata (definitions of indicators and data sources).

91. To facilitate international comparability and ease of access, NRPs should be designed to promote interoperability of statistics and metadata. This will significantly facilitate the work of international agencies to collect, aggregate and analyse the data for SDGs reporting at global and regional levels. It will also facilitate sharing of statistics, metadata and data science contributions across countries more generally.

92. In the case of countries that do not already have NRPs for SDGs, the minimum requirements could be accomplished by including SDG indicators in existing databases or by publishing a table with the SDG indicators (e.g., in Excel format).

93. Countries should aim to present all SDG indicators available at the national level in their NRPs, regardless of data sources (official statistics as well as data from other

[26] http://unstats.un.org/unsd/dnss/gp/fundprinciples.aspx.

providers should be included). Metadata on data sources should be presented together with data.

94. If proxy indicators are used in a country (see Part D in this section), they should be labelled as such in NRPs to distinguish them from official global indicators.

95. Ensuring appropriate mechanisms for data validation and quality control is essential. NSOs are responsible for data from official statistics and their quality. For data from other sources, NSOs do not have the authority to apply quality assurance mechanisms directly (such as during the collection of the data). In these cases, it is essential that NSOs review and document the data quality and the methods used to produce the data.

B. Data flow models

96. Reporting the SDG indicators and the related data flow models need to be considered at different levels: global, regional, national, sub-national and thematic levels.

1. Data flows at the national level

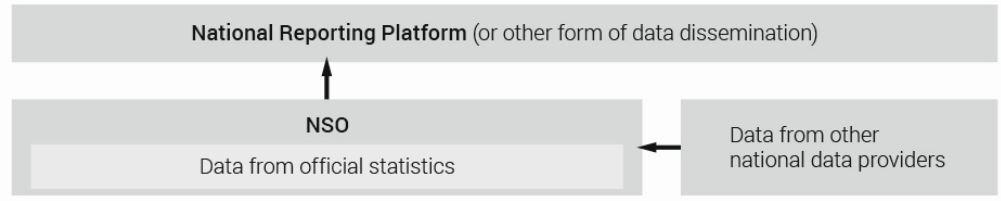
97. At the national level, different scenarios for data flows are possible. These depend on the structure and level of development of the statistical system in the country: centralised, decentralised or a combination of these. The data flows for SDGs indicators probably will be based on the already existing mechanisms.

A. Data Flow Model 1: The NSO is a coordinator of all SDG indicators

98. A recommended model is that the NSO coordinates all SDG data provision in the country (i.e., statistical and non-statistical indicators are gathered by the NSO from all country data providers and disseminated together). This is linked with the existence of an NRP; the agency maintaining the platform naturally becomes the coordinator of SDG data provision. The NSO's coordinating role is linked with assessments of data availability in the country (Section IV). If NSO leads such assessments, it will need to clarify the data sources in the country and establish links with all the agencies providing data. Additionally, NSOs can attend national policy discussions regarding reporting priorities and sensitivities.

99. According to this data flow model (see Figure 1.) NSOs publish all SDG national statistics via NRP or in the form of a table. Any agency interested can 'pull' the data from NSOs. In this case, there are no 'push' data flows from national to regional or global level. Such a solution will reduce reporting burden for the country.

Figure 1.
Data Flow Model 1

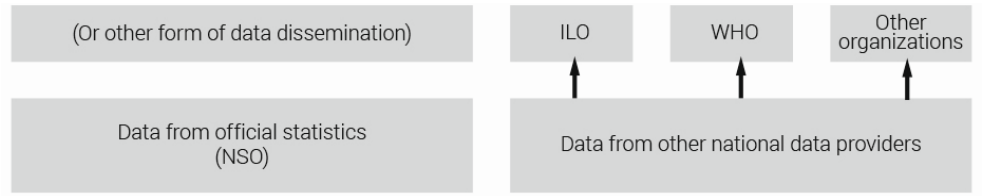


B. Data Flow Model 2: NSO and other agencies in the country both report SDG statistics

100. In practice, other agencies producing data in the country often send them directly to the international organizations responsible for specific indicators, possibly bypassing NSO. For example, the Ministry of Health may send data directly to the World Health Organisation and the Ministry of Labour to the International Labour Organization (ILO).

101. It is possible that NSO will take responsibility for only those SDG indicators for which NSO produces the underlying statistics and leave the rest to other agencies. Another possible model is that NSO will coordinate all statistical indicators and that non-statistical indicators will be provided by some other agency (e.g. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a special agency/unit set up for this purpose) or by international organizations (see Figure 2).

Figure 2.
Data Flow Model 2



102. The quality assurance process is a fundamental aspect of data flow models. Agencies responsible for data flows at the national level could have different roles in quality assurance: (i) acting as a "post-office" and simply making data available on NRPs (or sending it to international level); or (ii) undertaking various degrees of quality control, from basic validation to full quality control. The CES Steering Group recommends that NSOs clarify their role in this process.

103. In the case of the second data flow model, NSOs need to be informed about the other data flows to ensure coherence between these data and official statistics. There may be legitimate reasons why data differ but these differences should be known and explained.

104. The CES Steering Group recommends (based on the Declaration endorsed at CES 2015) NSO to be a strong coordinator on the national level for the global SDG data. Several data flow models can achieve this, so the model chosen should be the one that best accounts for national circumstances. For example, the implementation of the first model supports reporting transparency and enables international comparability of data. Moreover, the model emphasizes the central role of NSOs and contributes towards coherence of data. On the other hand, such a solution requires significant resources at NSOs. For some indicators, NSOs may lack the required expertise and non-statistical indicators may require national policy input rather than provision of objective statistics.

2. Data flows from national to regional and/or global level

105. The data flows at regional and global level are still under discussion. Agenda 2030 recommends basing the flow on existing reporting mechanisms as much as possible since there are already many reporting mechanisms in place (for international statistical data collection, different reporting obligations following UN Summits, international conventions, etc.). These will continue to exist and clarification of their linkages to SDG reporting will take some time. It can be helpful for NSOs to try to get an overview of such obligations at the national level.

106. Therefore, the Road Map cannot yet provide guidance on the international reporting mechanisms until this has not been clarified at the global level. Instead, the discussion will consider the international reporting requirements from the viewpoint of ensuring efficiency, minimizing excessive reporting burden and maintaining country ownership of data.

107. Between national, regional and global levels, the data flows can be organised according to different models. The fundamental principle should be to avoid duplication or creation of parallel reporting streams, if established flows already exist. The following data flow models are possible:

(a) Data could be sent from countries directly to the global level via UNSD. However, this would require resources for UNSD to collect the data that UNSD has indicated it does not have;

(b) Data could be sent from countries to UN organizations at the regional level that then compile the data and forward it to the global level (UNSD). This would require resources for data collection at the regional level. Such a model is used successfully, for example, in the case of national accounts data submission.[27];

(c) A central SDG database (maintained by UNSD, for example) could be compiled using data from international organizations responsible for different subject matter areas. This is, in fact, the case with the current SDG database maintained by UNSD (the database was released in summer 2016 and data are added as they become available28).

108. In the case of MDGs, international organizations were responsible for all data. In some cases, the organizations (or their country offices) ran their own surveys in countries that NSOs were not always aware of. In some cases, national agencies (such as ministries of health or education) sent the data directly to international organizations, without going through NSO. This resulted in data in international databases differing from country data in some cases by as much as 30-40%. Even if it were desirable to do so, this approach could not be simply expanded to include SDGs, as they cover a wider range of subject areas and all countries. It would require countries to send data to as many as 17 different organizations (assuming a different organization was responsible for each SDG), possibly using different questionnaires and following different reporting mechanisms.

109. Quality assurance at international level will require a process for harmonizing data provided by different countries. Any adjustments made to data to improve comparability should be recorded in metadata. Metadata for most of the SDG indicators submitted to date by international organizations are available at the website dedicated to SDGs[29] but their descriptions are incomplete and need improvement.

110. Countries, in agreement with their NSOs[30], may choose to rely on reporting by other entities. The IAEG-SDGs started a discussion on data flows at its 3rd and 4th meetings in March and October 2016. At that time, it seemed that UNSD and other UN agencies would favour a situation where UN agencies were key data transmitters. In this case, existing data flows to these agencies should be used to avoid double reporting. It would not be necessary (but entirely at countries' discretion) to re-post national data on a dedicated NRP.

111. The custodian agencies may use the online databases of other organisations such as UNECE, Eurostat and OECD to retrieve data that already exist there. On the other hand, Eurostat and OECD do not plan to establish themselves as data hubs for the global SDG indicators for the countries of the European Statistical System or other countries.

112. A different approach to data flows could apply to a sub-set of the indicators. Some indicators could be submitted via established data flows involving UN agencies (e.g., UNDP, WHO, ILO, UNESCO, etc.).

[27] Through a joint questionnaire, Eurostat collects the data from EU countries, OECD from OECD countries, UNECE from the remaining countries of the region and UNSD from other countries.
[28] http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/.
[29] http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/metadata-compilation/.
[30] *CES Declaration on the Role of NSOs in SDG Monitoring* (ECE/CES/89/Add.1) (http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/2015/CES_89_Add.1-E.pdf).

113. From the country viewpoint, it is important that regional and global data flows meet the following criteria:

- reporting lines are clear and duplication is avoided;
- NSOs have an opportunity to validate the data that are published about their country by international organisations;
- quality control procedures are in place for published data;
- data are produced and disseminated according to the FPOS, and
- metadata are available to document the methods and classifications.

114. The CES Steering Group recommends that NSOs clarify which data flow model would provide the most efficient transfer of the data from the national to the global level considering their national circumstances.

C. Collaboration with international organizations

115. According to Agenda 2030, regional organisations should contribute to regional follow-up and review of the SDGs but also support the process of the global follow-up and review[31]. To accomplish these tasks, horizontal cooperation between actors at the regional level as well as vertical cooperation between actors at national, regional and global levels is required.

1. Ensuring comparability of statistics and metadata

116. Clear responsibilities should be defined to ensure comparability of data and to avoid inconsistencies between data produced by NSOs and by different international, regional and supranational organisations. Data flows to global organisations should concern only global indicators. Likewise, data flows for regional indicators should be organised at the regional level.

117. The fact that many of the data and metadata relevant to the SDG indicators have already been collected and stored in a database by Eurostat for ESS countries should be borne in mind for the sake of efficiency, consistency and control of reporting burden on NSOs. The same applies to data collected and stored in OECD databases.

2. Standardization of data transmission

118. The Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) may be a useful resource in ensuring standardization of data and metadata reporting to regional or global SDG databases. SDMX is a set of technical standards and content-oriented guidelines, together with an IT architecture and tools, used for the efficient exchange and sharing of statistical data and metadata. This has worked well across multiple country reporting platforms.

119. A working group on SDMX for the SDG indicators has been established under IAEG-SDGs. It is tasked with developing an SDMX solution for SDGs. In autumn 2016 the group was set up and a chair appointed. The first meeting took place in Aguascalientes, Mexico in October, 2016.

120. To support reporting for MDGs, SDMX was expanded to include a Data Structure Definition (DSD), facilitating data exchange between UNSD, UNESCO and the World Bank. Another MDG-related initiative, CountryData, was developed to support data

[31] Paragraphs 80 and 83 in http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1.

exchange with NSOs.[32] Indicators and metadata from NSOs are delivered to the CountryData platform, where they are then compared to international statistics and metadata to identify and address discrepancies.

3. Collaboration on regional statistical products

121. To put in place an effective SDG reporting system within the UNECE region, collaboration is needed in different areas to ensure that member state priorities are taken into consideration and duplication of reporting effort is avoided.

122. UNECE currently maintains a small database providing macroeconomic, gender, transport, timber and MDG data. This database could be extended to include SDG indicators.

123. OECD maintains a wealth of data relevant to SDGs in its various statistical databases. It has supplied data and metadata for the UN's global indicator framework, both directly and in collaboration with other agencies. It recently published a pilot study, "Measuring Distance to the SDGs Targets"[33] using a total of 86 indicators included in its databases to assess the distance OECD countries have to travel to reach the targets. Further work on SDGs may be considered in the context of decisions on the OECD's future Programmes of Work and Budget.

124. From 2017 onwards, the European Commission (Eurostat) will carry out a regular monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals in an EU context. This is a separate exercise from the UN global and regional monitoring. Eurostat is developing a reference indicator framework for the EU SDG monitoring, as announced in section 3.3 of the EU Commission Communication on "Next steps for a sustainable European future."[34]

125. As much as possible, the EU SDG indicator framework will use indicators based on European statistics but will also include indicators from other sources provided they satisfy agreed minimum requirements (e.g., regularly published by its producer, having a documented methodology, using methods that satisfy statistical quality requirements etc.). The EU SDG indicator framework will create no additional burden to the EU Member States. It will focus on indicators that are already available or on which work is already ongoing for other purposes and that have a good chance to become available in time to be included in the EU SDG monitoring starting in 2017. Therefore, EU Member States do not have to establish new data flows to Eurostat, nor to set up national reporting platforms for the purpose of EU SDG monitoring.

126. To avoid inconsistencies in data analysis and aggregation for the reports of the international and supra-national organisations in the UNECE region, maintaining good cooperation among Eurostat, OECD and UNECE is important. The regional offices of the thematic UN agencies (UNESCO, ILO, WHO, etc.) should be involved in data collection (see Case Studies 12 by UNICEF and 13 by UNFPA). Academia and data analysts in general may provide methodological support.

[32] https://data.un.org/countrydata.

[33] http://www.oecd.org/std/OECD-Measuring-Distance-to-SDGs-Targets-Pilot-Study.pdf.

[34] http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/communication-next-steps-sustainable-europe-20161122_en.pdf (COM(2016) 739 adopted on 22 November 2016)

D. Special reporting situations

1. Data providers from outside official statistics

127. In several cases, NSOs routinely complement statistics calculated from official surveys or registers with data collected by third parties, such as other levels of government, businesses, research institutes, media outlets, NGOs, etc. These approaches may also be used when reporting national statistics for SDG indicators.

2. Reporting non-statistical indicators

128. Some SDGs are to be monitored by non-statistical indicators (e.g., YES/NO indicators). The approach to reporting of such indicators will differ among countries depending on the chosen data flow model. When NSO coordinates all SDG indicators in the country, non-statistical indicators should be included and presented together with statistical ones.

3. Using proxy indicators

129. In some cases, data providers for a particular country may have statistics or other forms of information that are similar to, but not exactly the same as, a specific global SDG indicator. These are called "proxy" indicators and countries may wish to report them when reporting the global indicator is not possible. Proxy indicators should be clearly noted as such when reported. If reporting of both the proxy and global indicator is possible, the decision to do so will be affected by timing and funding considerations. Other considerations will include the frequency of use of the "proxy" indicator in policy making and breaks in time series, among others.

E. Recommendations for National Statistical Offices – Reporting of global SDG indicators

(a) Countries should determine reporting approach and data flow models at the national level (centralised in one focal point or decentralised);

(b) NSOs should consider the development of NRPs for SDG indicators;

(c) NSOs should meet the following minimum requirements when reporting SDG indicators:

- data for compiling the indicators should be taken from official statistics whenever possible;
- time series from 2015 onwards, and
- inclusion of basic metadata (e.g., definitions of indicators and data sources).

(d) NSOs should direct users to their websites to find national statistics and national metadata prepared for global SDG indicators. NSOs also should direct users to UNSD's website to find country-specific statistics and metadata that have been adjusted for international comparison;

(e) NSOs should maintain networks so that the development of the system for SDG indicators from all country providers can be understood and so that investments can be of use to the country as a whole;

(f) Special attention should be paid to ensure coherence of data reported at all levels and to provide the required metadata.

F. Actions for the Steering Group – Reporting of global indicators

1. Short-term (complete by 2017 CES meeting)

(a) Establish a task force on NRPs;

(b) Through the task force on NRPs, provide countries with best practices on NRPs; enable exchange of experience regarding NRPs; and define guidelines for countries to facilitate decisions about reporting approach and the development of NRPs.

2. Medium-term (complete by 2018 CES meeting)

Establish a process to decide whether and how to establish regional reporting platforms.

3. Long-term (complete after 2018 CES meeting)

Coordinate the CES reporting framework in order to ensure consistency of data and metadata at regional level.