

Report of the Workshop on statistics for Sustainable Development Goals, 12-13 April 2017, Geneva

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The document presents the key outcomes of the Workshop on Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals which took place from 12 to 13 April 2017 in Geneva, organized jointly by the Statistical Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD).

I. Attendance

1. The Workshop was attended by representatives of Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Serbia, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.
2. The meeting was also attended by representatives from the Eurasian Economic Commission, Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT), Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (Paris21), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD).
3. Participants from Member States received financial support from the 10th tranche of the United Nations Development Account project.

II. Organization of the meeting

4. Tiina Luige (UNECE) and Gabriel Gamez (UNSD) welcomed participants to the meeting.
5. The participants adopted the provisional agenda of the Expert Meeting.
6. The following substantive topics were discussed on the basis of presentations:
 - Setting the stage
 - Session 1: SDG indicators – global, regional and national frameworks
 - Session 2: Setting up a system for measurement of SDGs in countries
 - Session 3: Assessing the needs for capacity building
7. All documents for the meeting are available at: www.unece.org/index.php?id=45250

III. Summary of the discussion and main conclusions reached at the meeting

1. Setting the stage

Opening addresses: Tiina Luige (UNECE) and Gabriel Gamez (UNSD)

Presentations: Gady Saiovici (UNECE)

8. The first session provided background information on statistics for set the stage for SDGs to inform the upcoming discussions. UNSD presented the workshop context and the UN Development Account project. UNECE linked the workshop to the Expert Meeting held on 10-12 April 2017. UNECE also presented the results of the survey on national statistical offices (NSOs) strategies and plans' on statistics for SDGs in participant countries.

2. SDG indicators – global, regional and national frameworks

Presentations:

- A. Global SDG indicator framework and the work of IAEG-SDGs: Kanykey Orozbaeva (Kyrgyzstan)
- B. Establishing indicators for the CIS region: Elena Vosmirko (CIS-STAT)
- C. Practical criteria and recommendations for setting up national SDG indicators: Gady Saiovici (UNECE)
- D. Implementation and challenges in setting up national SDG indicators: Ala Negruta (Republic of Moldova), Olga Karmazina (Ukraine), Abdulakhad Nadirov (Uzbekistan) and Zafar Khojaev (Tajikistan)

9. The session was chaired by Kanykey Orozbaeva (Kyrgyzstan). The following points were raised during the session:

- A platform to share ideas on how to implement statistics for SDGs will be helpful; this platform could serve as a knowledge hub consolidating different information on the process related to measurement of SDGs;
- It is important that materials related to statistics for SDGs are also available in Russian; a suggestion for UNSD to elaborate a glossary of terms related to statistics for SDGs in the 6 official UN languages has been made;
- Coordination of SDG related work at the national level is very important. Coordination should involve multiple stakeholders, such as other statistics producers, academia, and businesses.

3. Setting up a system for measurement of SDGs in countries

Presentations:

- A. UNDG Guidelines to support country reporting on SDGs: Linda Hooper (UNSD)
- B. Experiences and challenges in setting up a system of measuring SDG in countries; the role of NSOs in national reporting: coordinating role, links with government agencies and data providers: Vjollca Simoni (Albania), Yurik Poghosyan (Armenia), Natalia Ignatova (Russian Federation)
- C. Support to country reporting on SDGs by UN agencies: George Bouma (UNDP)

10. The session was chaired by Elena Kukharevich (Belarus). The following points were raised during the session:

- NSOs have a key role in providing data on SDGs; in order to fulfil this role it is important to take some preliminary steps such as assess the availability of global indicators, and identify data suppliers and sources;
- There are still many concerns related to data sources and data quality;
- There is still much to be done in the process of nationalization of SDGs at different levels: (i) on the policy side; (ii) on the search of (technical and financial) resources; (iii) organization of work on SDGs; and (iv) on the coordination role of NSOs related to provision of statistics for SDGs;
- Meetings such as the workshop are useful as platforms for exchanging views and experiences.

4. Assessing the needs for capacity building

Presentations:

- A. Information on the work of HLG-PCCB, development of the Global Action Plan, and the statistical capacity building at the global level: Gulmira Karaulova (Kazakhstan)
- B. Priorities and coordination of capacity building within countries: Rasim Safarov (Azerbaijan)
- C. Capacity building related to statistics for SDGs in the region – Joint UNECE/UNEP environmental activities: Michael Nagy (UNECE) and Tómas Marques (UN Environment)

11. The session was chaired by Ala Negruta (Republic of Moldova). The following points were raised during the session:

- Cooperation between different actors providing and receiving capacity building in countries is essential;
- SDGs can be a point in common to organize statistical capacity building activities.

12. Following the presentations, there was a tour de table where countries made short oral presentations on their most urgent needs and challenges in capacity building. The following points were raised:

- Albania raised needs for improving on metadata and reporting on statistical quality;
- Armenia asked for assistance in establishing mechanisms to derive indicators from administrative data systems;
- Azerbaijan mentioned need to have mechanisms to ensure quality of indicators derived from administrative data and of other non-statistical indicators;
- Belarus asked for guidance on how to set up a platform to report on SDGs;
- Bosnia and Herzegovina mentioned need for guidance on the creation of a road map for SDGs, creation on institutional mechanisms and how to assess statistical needs;
- Georgia welcomed the discussion on national platforms, and mentioned that capacity building should cover not only SDGs but strengthen different statistical domains. For this, sectoral assessments might be useful;

- Kazakhstan noted the sparseness of available information and that it is envisaged that the CES Road Map on statistics for SDGs will be used in the NSO work;
 - Kyrgyzstan asked for assistance in the implementation of the CES Road Map on statistics for SDGs, and suggested the creation a knowledge hub where different information could be available in a consolidated format;
 - Montenegro reported that it is currently receiving support from Eurostat; and that meetings such as the Expert Meeting and the Workshop on statistics for SDGs are very useful to exchange and present experience;
 - Republic of Moldova considered useful to have a technical discussion with UNECE to validate what has been done related to setting up a system to measure SDGs in the country; once validated, its experience could be shared. Republic of Moldova also informed that it is finalising a mapping exercise and will elaborate a work plan that prioritizes receiving technical assistance to deliver the missing indicators. Another important topic for capacity development would be disaggregation at the national level;
 - Russian Federation would welcome support in implementing methodologies for calculating the indicators; in particular because most of the material is not available in Russian. In addition, Russian Federation would welcome the development of a generic road map on statistics for SDGs that countries could adapt to the national context;
 - Serbia informed that it is still in an initial phase on providing statistics for SDGs. The NSO will draw upon its current experience of development of the European system of Sustainable Development Indicators. NSO is the coordinator of data production and has developed several tools which can be applied for SDGs, such as mechanisms for coordination between data producers, preparation of a web portal, and staff training to write quality reports on metadata.
 - Tajikistan would welcome assistance with methodological issues, recommendations and developing a statistical road map on SDGs
 - The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia noted as most urgent needs and challenges: (i) the need of stronger cooperation and coordination with international bodies; (ii) setting up partnerships with other stakeholders; (iii) need to adapt and improve data production; (iv) lack of adequate knowledge; and (v) human, financial and technical constraints. NSO would welcome additional training on the definition of indicators and data sources, as well as the provision of adequate metadata. NSO also highlighted that many surveys are not conducted regularly or are financed through donors; this can pose a challenge for the regular and timely production of SDG indicators
 - Ukraine requested to learn more about other countries' experience doing quality assessments on administrative data. Also, it would welcome support for the production of SDG indicators that require additional surveys. Lastly, it would welcome a technical platform consolidating information on statistics for SDGs;
13. Following the tour de table, several international organizations provided inputs and further detail on the activities they are developing in participant countries:
- EFTA is currently offering a course on indicator systems to South-Eastern European countries; in addition, EFTA asks its members countries which statistical trainings they offer and tries to match them with needs identified in Global Assessments;

- Eurasian Economic Commission has been compiling a report on SDGs, consisting of about 20 indicators common for its 5 member countries;
- Eurostat two main program technical assistance programs: (i) for candidate countries and potential candidate countries; and (ii) in the context of its neighbourhood policy;
- UNSD has recently discussed with UNDP the coordination of capacity building activities;
- UNDP is setting up in Tajikistan a platform to report on SDGs;
- CIS-STAT welcomed the suggestion to have consolidated information in different languages on websites.

14. UNECE took note of the issues reported by countries and will consider them in the planning of future capacity building activities. In particular, UNECE will work jointly with the Steering Group on statistics for SDGs on the development of a template for a generic road map on statistics for SDGs. UNECE will further explore the possibility of adding materials in Russian to its Wiki on statistics for SDGs, and will consult with partners such as CIS-STAT on how to best organize access to the SDG-related materials in Russian.
